

**Oral History Interview of:
Jim Goss**

**Interviewed by: Daniel U. Sánchez
October 1, 2014
Lubbock, Texas**

**Part of the:
*University Archives***

© Southwest Collection/
Special Collections Library



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

**Southwest Collection/
Special Collections Library**

15th and Detroit | 806.742.3749 | <http://swco.ttu.edu>

Copyright and Usage Information:

An oral history release form was signed by Jim Goss on September 24, 2014. This transfers all rights of this interview to the Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library, Texas Tech University.

This oral history transcript is protected by U.S. copyright law. By viewing this document, the researcher agrees to abide by the fair use standards of U.S. Copyright Law (1976) and its amendments. This interview may be used for educational and other non-commercial purposes only. Any reproduction or transmission of this protected item beyond fair use requires the written and explicit permission of the Southwest Collection. Please contact Southwest Collection Reference staff for further information.

Preferred Citation for this Document:

Goss, Jim Oral History Interview, September 24, 2014. Interview by Daniel U. Sánchez, Online Transcription, Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library. URL of PDF, date accessed.

The Southwest Collection/Special Collections Library houses almost 6000 oral history interviews dating back to the late 1940s. The historians who conduct these interviews seek to uncover the personal narratives of individuals living on the South Plains and beyond. These interviews should be considered a primary source document that does not implicate the final verified narrative of any event. These are recollections dependent upon an individual's memory and experiences. The views expressed in these interviews are those only of the people speaking and do not reflect the views of the Southwest Collection or Texas Tech University.

Technical Processing Information:

The Audio/Visual Department of the Southwest Collection is the curator of this ever-growing oral history collection and is in the process of digitizing all interviews. While all of our interviews will have an abbreviated abstract available online, we are continually transcribing and adding information for each interview. Audio recordings of these interviews can be listened to in the Reading Room of the Southwest Collection. Please contact our Reference Staff for policies and procedures. Family members may request digitized copies directly from Reference Staff.

Consult the Southwest Collection website for more information.

<http://swco.ttu.edu/Reference/policies.php>

Recording Notes:

Original Format: Born Digital Audio

Digitization Details: N/A

Audio Metadata: 44.1kHz/ 16bit WAV file

Further Access Restrictions: N/A

Related Interviews: Dr. Goss was interviewed 15 times between September 2014 and March 2015. This is Interview Two of the series.

Transcription Notes:

Interviewer: Daniel U. Sánchez

Audio Editor: N/A

Transcription: Paul Doran

Editor(s): Jason Rhode

Final Editor: Daniel U. Sánchez, Jim Goss

Transcript Overview:

This interview features Jim Goss, who discusses his early life growing up on a ranch in Oregon, his early career choices, encounters with Jim Crow laws, and his time with the U.S. Air Force.

Length of Interview: 01:18:05

Subject	Transcript Page	Time Stamp
Goss' grandfather, engineer Charlie Darley	5	00:00:31
Deciding what to do with his life	6	00:11:30
Developing and farming the land in Oregon	8	00:15:41
The Depression in Oregon	10	00:26:20
Experiences on the Flying E Ranch and the Air Force	12	00:32:40
Encountering Jim Crow laws in Texas, civil rights issues	13	00:42:11
Time with Air Force Security Service, going to Europe	16	00:53:31
Leaving the service, returning to America	19	01:10:02

Keywords

Oregon, ranching, politics, The Depression, Korean War, Cold War, civil rights, Jim Crow

Daniel Sanchez (DS):

My name is Daniel Sánchez, today's date is October 1, 2014. We're doing our second interview with Dr. Jim Goss. We had left off with the Air Force, but Jim's going to go backtrack a little bit and fill us in with some more information on his grandfather. Jim?

Jim Goss (JG):

Okay, last time, I guess I was getting in a hurry to get to the Air Force, but I talked quite a bit about my grandfather, Charlie Darley. And he was the one that was an engineer with the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Corps of Engineers, and was involved in irrigation, agricultural development, and things like that. And just wanted to add a footnote to that: He lived to be ten days past a hundred-and-one; and anyhow, when he was ninety-seven years old, the Utah State University caught up with him—and I'd mentioned that he'd had a couple years of grade school, and then simply had gone and talked to the president of the Utah Agricultural College and asked if he could come to school, and he did, and he went there two years in a program in engineering. But then the Bureau of Reclamation sent representatives around looking for irrigation engineers to start the Bureau of Reclamation, and so they hired him in 1906, after he'd had two years of training there, and he started his career out in southern Oregon with the Klamath Reclamation Project in southern Oregon. Well, in 1977, when Grandpa Charlie was seventy-three years old, the college got in touch with him, and discovered that he was the oldest alumni of the engineering college, and the dean of the college got in touch with him and arranged to give him an honorary degree in engineering. So anyhow, the dean of the college came out from Logan, Utah, to Oregon, and made a little presentation, and invited him to come to the next graduation at Logan, Utah, at the university, to get his honorary degree. So he went there with the support of I think seven of his granddaughters, who all had t-shirts that said "Charlie's Angels" on them (laughs), and it was his rooting section at the graduation. So at, well, I guess, ninety-eight degrees, he got the honorary degree, and was recognized for his contribution to engineering, and to the development of southern Oregon, and his job as an engineer, not only for the government, but also for several of the counties and cities in Oregon, from 1906 on up until the 1930s. And in 1929, that's when he got together with my father's family, and he started an irrigation development, and turned a dry land farming area, into an irrigated truck gardening area in Willamette Valley in Oregon. And so the whole family, both sides of the family, benefited from that. And that's where I grew up in what was a combination ranching-farming operation that sort of grew and grew. And my father, and his father, and this other grandfather Charlie, were primary movers in the development agriculture there in the Willamette Valley, just outside of Salem. And started row cropping the Blue Lake variety of green beans, and sweet corn, and strawberries, and black caps or black raspberries, and tomatoes at some times. And then there was the operation of the cattle and sheep on the dry land parts of the place. So I grew up in this situation; I think I mentioned that my grandfather Charlie became my role model, and has been my role model all through my life, and encourages me to look forward to twenty, or thirty, or forty more years, and things like that. But as I look back on it, I begin to think about choices; that

is, my grandfather Goss, who was a rancher, a rancher at heart—even though later on he became more of a farmer than a rancher—advised me to—well, remember that I mentioned that I was a stutterer, and dyslexic, and my grandpa Goss said, “Well, Jim, you can’t talk much, and you can’t figure—you’re good with animals, why don’t you stay on the ranch, and stay with that.” And then my grandpa Charlie, who was the engineer, said “Jim, you can do anything you want to do.” And it was like having a devil on one shoulder, and an angel on the other. And of course, I took the advice of Charlie, and made the choices to sort of go my own way, and see what I could do. And when I think about it, life is about choices like that, and all of us go through situations where you have to make choices. And I made the choice of trying to go to college, I talked a little about that, and my dad, of course, would have liked me, in some ways, to stay on the farm and ranch, and help develop that. But my dad was real interesting. I guess from the time I was a teenager, running a farm and ranch operation, you’re running on a pretty narrow margin, and you have a tremendous investment, and not much cash flow. And so, as any farmer or rancher knows, that isn’t independently wealthy from some other source, you generally have to deal with the bank all the time to get loans, to put in the next year’s crop, and buy your seed cattle, and sheep, and things like that. And it’s very important to have your credibility with your local banker. So, from the time I was a teenager, my dad took me with him to talk to old Jake the banker in Salem, at the main bank in downtown Salem where he did business there. And let’s put it this way, begged for enough money for a loan to put next year’s crop in. So he did that purposely, because he wanted me to see what it was all about. And he really didn’t want to put me in that situation. So he encouraged me to go on and get an education, and learn to live by my wits without this big investment in this problem every year. So I saw, from a very early age, what it took to do that kind of work. And I had my second thoughts about that very early, and also, I didn’t like the weather in Oregon very much, and I’d been to California, and Arizona, and other places. And I think by the time I was twelve or fourteen, I’d decided that I’d like to do something else. I’d worked hard enough on that place until I was nineteen, and I wanted to do something else. So my dad encouraged me, but, of course, encouraging me and my brother and I both to do things and get out of that business, that meant that without our economical labor, our cheap labor, of two sons, he was going to have a hard time running the operation with hired help. So these were hard decisions. My brother went in the Air Force, I guess, in about 1952, and so I was the one left at home with the major load, helping my dad at, I guess, I would have been about seventeen. And, well, I’d been doing a man’s work every year since I was about twelve on the place. And then I talked last time about going off to the University of Oregon, with several scholarships and so on, and I didn’t know what I wanted to do. And then I went off to the University of Arizona for geological engineering, and decided I didn’t really like the engineering part of it that much, and I was interested in historical things, historical geology, the history of life. And I was very interested in issues like evolution, and things like that at that time, and I was curious about these things. But I made that decision to drop out, and go in the Air Force to think about it for four years. And—but simply, I didn’t know what I wanted to do, and I don’t think many young people know what they want to do when they get out of high school. And I thought, at that time,

that, well, that was the end of the Korean War, and I thought the best thing for everybody in the country probably would be universal military training. When kids got out of high school, they ought to have two or three years of discipline—and I still think that way. I think we'd be better off if we had some discipline training for young people about that time, and gave them an opportunity to think about it. So, that sort of brings me up to date I think on—well, and then my grandfather had his hundredth birthday party; the dean came to his hundredth birthday party at my grandfather's place in Oregon, all the way from Utah. The dean kept running back and forth visiting with my grandfather, and presented him with a Utah State University baseball cap, and a certificate, certifying that he was captain of the baseball team in 1903.

DS:

Oh, was he?

JG:

Yeah, he was captain of the baseball team at Utah State in 1903, and was the oldest alumnus of Utah State University. So, we had quite a celebration at his birthday.

DS:

Do you know Mike Gustafson? You probably know his dad, Bill?

JG:

No I don't think so.

DS:

Well anyway, they're both professors here on campus, but Mike's also a director of the College Baseball Hall of Fame. So you can tell him, "Hey Mike, put my dad in there." (laughs)

JG:

"Put my granddad in there."

DS:

That's if you'd want him in a Baseball Hall of Fame named after George Bush.

JG:

Oh, I don't know about that.

DS:

Since you're a staunch Democrat.

JG:

That's kind of political, I'm afraid he'd turn over in his grave.

DS:

Exactly, because you had mentioned he was also a staunch Democrat, right?

JG:

Yeah, well, but it depended on the way the wind blew, because back in the 1920s, he ran for a county surveyor in Umatilla County in Oregon, under the prohibition ticket, the Prohibition Party. And that was interesting, since he made his own beer and whiskey. (laughs)

DS:

I guess he was going to get an exemption? (laughs)

JG:

Yeah, something like that. (laughs)

DS:

Well, I was going to ask you, when you were talking about the irrigation and all that, how hard was it for them to talk everybody into "Oh, let's do this, let's try this here?"

JG:

Oh, well that was hard; see, my grandfather Charlie bought this place where there had been an attempt to begin farming, as a dryland farm. But it didn't make it, so he got some financial support to buy this place, to develop it into irrigation. It was the movement after the work that he'd done at the Bureau of Reclamation. His job was to reclaim land from marshy areas, or get irrigation to dry areas. So he got this sort of abandoned area, and started with one square mile that had—I don't know if you want to go into all this history—but it had been a land claim in Willamette Valley, in about 1840; this is at the end of the Oregon Trail. And the first claimants of land into that area were the missionaries that came from New England out there, to the end of the Oregon Trail. And they started trying to develop a new New England out there. And anyhow, they got these land claims from the government, and a congregation of those missionaries named Condit had this land claim, this mile square. And anyhow, he built a church, and built his home, and dry farmed it; raised wheat, and oats, and timothy, which is horse feed, and horses, and cattle in this mile square. But it was dry land, with just a few small springs on it at that time. And so my grandfather got possession of this mile square, and then he started communicating with people that he had confidence in, to be possibly farmers. And my dad's family had been ranchers in eastern Oregon, but they'd had hard economic times back there, around the turn of the century, and they were into the Depression at that time, 1929 is when they moved into that area. And my grandfather Goss had moved to Eugene, to town in the Willamette Valley, and was just

a common laborer working in construction. He really wanted to be a rancher, but the economic times were bad. So, Charlie invited my grandpa Goss, and my dad, and his brother up to take shares in it, take a section of it, a part of this land, and begin helping with the irrigation project. So, several of my uncles were involved, and the first job was to survey it, to lay out the irrigation system. And at that time it was gravity irrigation. I don't know if you've been around gravity irrigation, but whoever is providing the water, the water company—that is, these people he brought in were all part of the board of the water company. And they appointed a watermaster, and of course my grandfather was the primary surveyor. And he had a couple of my uncles who worked with him as surveyors. And the job was to get the water high enough out of the Santiam River, which was a tributary of the Willamette, to run a main ditch to the highest point on that operation, because it's all gravity. Well, the Spanish, and the Mexican people that settled the Southwest know all about this. So it's a simple pattern of getting water to the highest point, and then running laterals off of that main point, to all of the parcels of land within this area, and then developing a strategy of head gates, so you can move the water from one place to another as it was needed. So I grew up with that group, as they were putting it together. In grade school, my grandfather would get me out of school to hold that stadia rod for them to survey, with the level, to make sure that the water was running downhill. That's what it's all about. So anyhow, it was mostly an extended family operation, with my grandfather in charge of it. And anyhow, we got this large plot of land under irrigation, and—I showed you some pictures of the pole beam yards and things like that. And then the war years came along, and the economy got better, and we kept expanding the operation, buying more property, leasing property, and I guess at one time we had about two hundred acres of these beans in cultivation. And there were pole beans built on the trellis, or you'd pick them as the beans matured, so you'd pick them about six times during the season. And as I grew up, I did all the different jobs necessary in doing that kind of work, and then also by the time I was sixteen, I was running crews of migrant workers harvesting the beans—it was all done by hand back then. Later on, it was done by machine, and they went to bush beans instead of that. And of course, they lost the quality of the beans, too.

DS:

Oh, did they?

JG:

Yeah, that's what they always seem to do; by the time they pick beans with machines, and by the time they pick tomatoes with machines, and things like that. They have to make the tomatoes as hard as baseballs so they'll—

DS:

Resist bruising and all that?

JG:

So they'll resist the bruising, and so on. So, there's just been so much quality lost when they moved to machine harvesting, rather than the labor-intensive ways that things used to be done.

DS:

Yeah, well, in fact you mentioned something about that to Andy, I think, last time, when you were looking at that photograph, and he asked you about the trellis system. I believe he said you'd take it down every year, and then put it back up?

JG:

Yeah, yeah, in Oregon there, you have lots of trees, so you can cut posts. You have to be a logger, too (laughs)—so, you set the posts at each end of the field, and then run a top wire and a bottom wire, and then you'd hire a crew to twine it; that is, with twine, with cord, string, all down between these two wires, to provide the trellis for the plants to grow up. And, of course, by the Fourth of July, the plants are up to the top wire, and then by about the middle of July, you start harvesting, and the beans mature on the bottom first, and then gradually move up, and move up, and move up. So, you can pick them every few weeks, pick them six or seven times. And I remember once when I was sixteen, I was keeping track of it, and I was driving a truck by then to the cannery, and—well, I remember one summer, I hauled over four hundred tons of green beans to the cannery, at four or five tons per truckload. And then we had sweet corn, and that was picked by hand for a while, but then moved to automatic pickers on that too. It's just like what happened down here in this country when they moved from picking cotton by hand to stripping it. Put all kinds of people out of work, and a lot of people were angry about that. In fact, we got a lot of people coming up from down here to help us harvest crops up there, who'd been put out of work by the stripping machines down here. And they had stories about people getting shot off of their cotton-picking machines and things like that. And so, well, that's another story.

DS:

There's always a resistance to change.

JG:

Yeah, always a resistance to change. And people were being put out of work in one place, and that gets to be a problem. So anyhow, well, I talked a little bit about the refugees from the Dust Bowl, and the Depression. And we had them, and then as we got into the war years, of course, a lot of those people were able to find better jobs in the shipyards in the Portland and Seattle area and things like that. And all kinds of people got involved in the war industry. And when those people started going in that direction, that's the first time during the war that we got—well, for example, the Hispanic people coming all the way up there. You saw that picture, there wasn't a Hispanic person in those three hundred—and there wasn't a black person. And so it was an interesting time up there; that is, the first African American I saw was when I took a trip with my

parents to San Francisco, and saw them working on the train; porters, and things like that; and they just weren't out in the community. So as I began to travel around a little bit, I began to wonder about that: "I guess black people just didn't like it up there or something like that." It was only later that I find out that back then there was still a Jim Crow law on the books in Oregon, but I hadn't even thought about—but after the Civil War, the legislature in Oregon passed a Jim Crow law that no blacks—well, it actually says "Negroes"—were allowed to own property in Oregon. So I didn't even have any conception of things like that, but later on it became obvious to me why there weren't black people up there—they couldn't even own property in Oregon. And you don't think about there being Jim Crow laws in the North, but there were laws like that in Oregon, that were prejudicial. So I guess that experience, growing up on that farm, and I got a responsibility real quick for being crew boss with crews of migrant workers. And I always looked forward to the summer when the migrant workers came, and we had a—at first they came and brought their own tents and things like that; later on we provided tents with good bases; later on we built cabins. And it was after I was actually in the service that things were happening, like Cesar Chavez actually came to the valley there, and went around to check the migrant camps, to see how they were. And my folks met Cesar Chavez then, and he gave his seal of approval for their camp, that they were doing things right and humanely and things like that. So, but I was off in the service at that time. So my dad sort of depended on me a lot to work with people, that is, I knew these people—and looking back on it, I didn't have any prejudices just because we had Indians living in the community, we had Indians working on the place all the time, we had every culture, tradition in the country working for us at one time or another. I never even thought about prejudices about different people, I just grew up not having that experience. I had to think about it later, about my experience at school in that country. There wasn't one—in my high school graduating class, I went through the annual a while back, and there wasn't one African American in my whole high school. And there wasn't one Hispanic-American in my whole high school. There were several Indians, but my experiences were limited, really limited. So that's where I started out, and of course, on the farm I learned to do all kinds of jobs: mechanic, welder, irrigator, truck driver, tractor driver—all these things.

DS:

Well, you know, we had talked a little bit about that last time, and then you'd gone off to your first attempt at college. And then we were getting ready to go into the service at that time. Do you want to pick up with that right now?

JG:

Yeah, that's—

DS:

We're about half an hour into it today, so—

JG:

That's okay.

DS:

So that's a pretty good place to start.

JG:

Okay, ready to go into that now. Now, I was nineteen and didn't know what I wanted to do. I didn't know what I was qualified for, I didn't know what I really wanted to do. I had all these curiosities; I'd had this scholarship in drama, I'd had this scholarship in journalism, and I was interested in geology—I just didn't really know what I wanted to do, and I didn't know what I was basically qualified for. And I think most people eighteen or nineteen don't know, or make a wrong choice. So I would encourage young people to take time in making your choice, and follow their curiosities for a while. And the draft was after me since I had dropped out, and all of my cousins my age had deferments and things like that and were going on to college, but I didn't know what I wanted to do. So I came back to the ranch at the end of, well, mid-Christmas time, and told my folks that I dropped out. I'd told you that I'd stopped at Wickenburg; a friend of mine, Vic Kelly, went rodeoing, and also he was manager of a guest ranch, a dude ranch, the "Flying E Ranch," they called it, little airfield that they flew into. The ranch was owned by Lee Eyerly, who had an operation at the airport in Salem, the capital of Oregon. And he was an inventor, and builder, besides being a flyer, and interested in airplanes, and a dealer in airplanes. He was an inventor of carnival rides. You've probably seen the Loop-O-Plane or the Roll-O-Plane, and the Octopus, these old carnival rides. Well, Lee Eyerly, in Salem, Oregon invented those. And he had his factory there in the edge of the airport. And he was also a rancher, and raised horses and racehorses. And also he was a member of the Oregon Governor's Guard, which was like the Texas Rangers; they called it the Governor's Guard, but they had a drill team at rodeos and things like that that did these drills at rodeos on horseback. And anyhow, this guy had started the Flying E Ranch for Eyerley, that was his brand, an "E" with wings on it. And my friend Vic Kelly was his manager of it, so I sort of came back and told him that I didn't want to go home yet, did he have a job for me? So he made me a wrangler there, and there was about a six-mile trail from the Flying E Ranch down to the old Vulture Mine, which was a gold mine that Henry Wickenburg had established, that had all kinds of an interesting history. So for several months, I was a wrangler, taking dudes down the trail to the Vulture Mine on a trail ride and things like that. I really enjoyed that, would have liked to have liked to have stayed there. But anyhow, I came back to Oregon, and I volunteered for the Air Force, and on January 11, 1954, I got on a bus at the post office in Salem and waved goodbye to my dad. And the bus took us up to Portland, and we had our physicals and were sworn into the Air Force. And I remember my dad, I was looking out the back window of the bus, and he was waving back there, and I had real mixed feelings about that, because I knew his older son was gone, and now I was gone—what was he going to do running that place by himself? But he gave it a good try, and I had mixed

feelings about that. But you have to make choices along the way, and after I was sworn in in Portland, they gave us train tickets, and I took the train to California, and on south to Los Angeles, and then across to San Antonio, Texas. And that's when I came to San Antonio, Texas in about, would have been January 12, 1954. And went through basic training at Lackland Air Force Base, and then after basic training, I was transferred to Kelly Air Force Base, there next to Lackland, on Military Way, San Antonio. And I fell in love with San Antonio, I really enjoyed San Antonio. But I guess I should mention another experience. I brought this along—during basic training, the first two weeks—well, the first thing they did was make you take off all your clothes and put on your military fatigue uniforms. And they made us send all of our clothes back to our parents, or wherever we wanted to send them. So I guess when I went in the Air Force, I had a pair of Levi's, a t-shirt, a University of Arizona jacket, and cowboy boots. I had to pack all them up and send them back. And I knew I was in Texas, so I hated to send my cowboy boots back—I'd grown up in cowboy boots; my feet are shaped like cowboy boots—and wear those old clumsy Air Force fatigues; brogans they called them.

DS:

Yeah, and what are you wearing today? You're wearing boots, right?

JG:

I've always worn boots. So I don't think anybody's seen me hardly without boots. So, well, going back to boots, I guess my birthday is on September 14, and every year on September 14, we were at the Pendleton Roundup, and the outfitter there is Hamley's Outfitters. And when I was growing up, since the whole family was there, on my birthday every fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth of September, my Granddad Goss, the rancher, would buy me a new shirt, a new pair of boots every year for my birthday. So I always had boots that fit me; I kept growing so I needed a new pair of boots every year. So yeah, my feet are pointed like that. Well, the boots were even pointier back then. And anyhow, after two weeks, they turned us loose for our first liberty, or freedom, in San Antonio. That is, when we came into town, they just picked us up in an Air Force bus at the train station, and rushed us off to Lackland. But I remember in the train station, for the first time, I saw things like signs that said "Colored Only", and "White Only" on the restrooms in the train station, and things like that. And I wondered what color—"Colored Only"—so that was new to me. So that first Saturday—of course, I was anxious to get into San Antonio and off the base, and use all my time off the base as I could—and I went out to the bus stop out in front of the main gate there at Lackland Air Force Base. And it was early in the morning, I guess, it was about six or so, and the bus was waiting there, and I got on the bus, and I paid my fee—I don't even remember what it was, about a quarter—then on into town from Lackland. And I went back and then sat down in the back seat of the bus. And the bus driver was a very courteous Hispanic gentleman, and he looked back there and noticed that I was the only one on the bus. He said "Come on up here, sit up here." And I said, "Well, I like to sit in the back of the bus." And he said, "Well, you've got to come up here, you've got to sit up here, because I

can't move this bus if you don't sit up here in front." What? Never heard of such a thing. And then I brought this along, because I went up there and I said, "What's this all about, why can't I sit in the back?" He said, "Well, it's against the law." And I didn't know there was this law then, and he actually had a copy of this, and he handed it to me and let me read it. So it says, "Article 1661.1, Motor Buses. Separation of races in motor buses. Every transportation company, leasee, manager, receiver, or owner thereof operating motor buses in this state, as a carrier of passengers for hire, shall provide and require that all white passengers boarding their buses for transportation or passage shall take seats in the forward, or front end of the bus. Filling the bus from the front end, and all Negro passengers boarding their buses for transportation or passage shall take seats in the back, or rear end of the bus, filling the bus from the back, or rear end." And there was a line painted across the floor of the bus. So it didn't say it in this rule, but if the back seats filled up with African Americans, they couldn't go over that line. But if the front end filled up with whites, then they were allowed—it was unwritten—but they were allowed to fill it on up, on back; that's what they were told. "The term Negro is used herein includes every person of African descent as defined by the statutes of the state of Texas. And all persons non-included in the definition of Negro shall be white persons within the meaning of this act." So this was my first exposure to a Jim Crow law, and the bus driver in San Antonio started me off on some of my concerns, that I've had for the rest of my life, and the rest of my career.

DS:

So how did you get your own copy of this?

JG:

Well, this is part of the original discrimination suit that we had here in Lubbock.

DS:

Oh, okay, that'll be great when we get back to that. That'll be great to have when we get back to that, also.

JG:

Yeah, yeah, so we get back to this again and again. It's signed by Daniel Benson, who was of course a lawyer on that case. They got together all of the Jim Crow laws, to demonstrate that—

DS:

That it was that pattern of discrimination.

JG:

The pattern of discrimination in Lubbock. And this Jim Crow law was not repealed until August 28, 1967. So there I was, in 1954, seeing this for the first time. I just couldn't conceive of such a thing. I hadn't even thought about anything like this, a nineteen-year-old kid who hadn't been

exposed to Jim Crow in any way. And I read it, and: “You mean you can’t move the bus?” He said he couldn’t move the bus until I sat in the front. And the only buses that I’d been in, until I went in the Air Force on that bus ride, were school buses. And when I rode on school buses, to games and things in high school, things like that, I always sat in the back of the bus. I always tried to get as far away from authority as you possibly could. (laughs) And you’ve got better windows back there, you’ve got a better view, you can do what you want back there. And so I never had anybody to tell me to—

DS:

You’re preaching to the choir, okay? (laughs)

JG:

Yeah, yeah, I know I’m preaching to the choir with you. But I think you want to hear my side of these stories.

DS:

Yeah.

JG:

Don’t you?

DS:

Oh yeah.

JG:

So I’m talking my growth of social responsibility, and my entry into civil rights concerns, and things like this. So I remember my words as, “That doesn’t seem fair, I like to sit in the back of the bus.” And the gentleman said, the bus driver said, “I didn’t say it was fair, I said it was the law.” So he was very straightforward. “Didn’t say it was fair, I said it was the law.” And of course, nothing was in here about Hispanic people, in this definition of Negro of course, there were just whites and Negroes; there wasn’t any discussion of Hispanic people. And as you know, they sort of fell between the cracks. And classified as white by definition here: “All person not included in the definition of Negro, shall be termed white persons within the meaning of this act.” But then as I got to know San Antonio, for example I went to the old Aztec Theatre down towards the Alamo, and I found out that—well, later on I went to town with some of the members of my flight at basic training, and one was black and one was Hispanic. And we bought tickets to go to the movie, and I could go in the front door, but both the African American and the Hispanic person were told to go to the alley and go up the stairs to the balcony. So I saw that the segregation was extended also, and related to Hispanics too, in situations like this. So—

DS:

And I was going to say, I t's kind of like a situational thing. As it clearly states there, "For the purposes of this act," where Hispanics fell.

JG:

Yeah, yeah, so anyhow, this was my first introduction I guess to Jim Crow, and it was really interesting. And of course I stayed most of that first year in training at Kelly Air Force Base at the security service headquarters. And just observing how things worked, President Eisenhower had just integrated the Armed Forces. That is, he said there would be no more segregation in the Armed Forces. I was the first flight at San Antonio that was integrated at Lackland Air Force Base, the first basic training one. Because before that, before January 1954, African Americans were trained at Biloxi, Mississippi. They sent the blacks to Mississippi, they figured people in Mississippi knew how to handle them, I guess. And Hispanics, most of the Hispanics I found out, were sent to training in California someplace. So I was in the first flight in basic training at Lackland Air Force Base that was integrated. And so Lackland Air Force Base was integrated, but you step off of the Air Force Base, and you were in Jim Crow. So it was a dilemma for me (laughs), and so ridiculous.

DS:

You know, if it was one for you, just imagine what it was like for those—they were among that first group that integrated the service there.

JG:

Yeah, yeah, yeah, really was. So anyhow, that was my beginning in the Air Force. I got assigned to the U.S. Air Force Security Service, which is Air Force communications intelligence, and brought that along with the logo of the group. So they gave aptitude tests in basic training, to decide what field they should put you in for training. And I don't know why, except that I guess the Air Force decided they needed more Russian language and area specialists, so they decided I'd be a good Russian language and area specialist; I had never saw a Russian, or knew any Russian or anything. So they sent me to security service headquarters, which was right there next to Lackland Air Force Base, and I got into the pre-language program that they had there. They gave us six weeks of training in the structure of the English language before we started on the next language. And then we had six weeks of attempting to teach us some Russian. And those that didn't wash out in English, or wash out in the Russian, they sent to either the Army language school in Monterey, or the Air Force language school for Russian in Syracuse University. So they sent me to Syracuse University from there. And it was an intensive six-months program in Russian language and area; nothing but Russian, eight hours a day. We were encouraged to speak Russian as we were studying it, in the dorm that we were all living in, and we got reprimands, or demerits, if we were caught speaking English, things like that. It was really intensive, they had native Russian speakers who were generally not communists; that is, they

were members of families that had escaped communism and come to New York and things like that. But we had one professor who had been a professor in a Russian university of Russia, and then we had another one that had been a cavalry officer under the czar before the Russians took over. He taught us culture, and he taught us Russian folk songs, and military songs, and things like that. So we were encouraged to sort of live into the Russian culture. And not only the language, but this cavalry officer led us in singing Russian folk songs, and drinking songs, and things like that, and taught us how to smoke cigarettes like Russians, and how to drink vodka like Russians, and all these things. And then they, after that—well, just a little aside on that, when I graduated, when my class, the Russian language and area at Syracuse, graduated, they had us go through the graduation, and the Russian newspapers *Pravda* and *Izvestia* actually published “Congratulations to the graduates out of this program,” with all of our names listed in their Russian newspapers. So we knew that when we graduated from there, the KGB, the Russian intelligence had all our names, and—

DS:

Knew all about you.

JS:

Had us on the list, and knew all about us, and had investigated us. And, of course, by that time, the CIA had investigated us too; that is, to go into what we did. We had to get top secret code word clearances. So, when I got out of that program, I had a top secret code word clearance, the highest clearance that you can get from Air Force intelligence, or in the government in general. And then they decided where to send us, and they sent me to Germany. The Korean War—they’d had what they’d call “the truce of the Korean War.” It was never really finished, they had a truce. So, and the Vietnam War hadn’t really gotten moving yet, so they sent me to Germany, and our job in Germany was primarily keeping track of the Russian aircraft movements in Eastern Europe. We didn’t trust the Russians, it was the Cold War. And at the time, of course, Germany was split in two; there was an east zone and a west zone, and we had an air corridor from Frankfurt into Berlin, and they had what was called the Berlin airlift. We took supplies through that air corridor, through the Russian-held territory, to support the people in Berlin, because Berlin was split into two. So we had sort of an easement that we were allowed to fly across the Russian-held area. So we were stationed on a mountaintop in what was called the Rhön Mountains, in a lodge that had been built by the German Air Force. And it was built to train pilots and gliders. Under the Treaty of Versailles at the end of the First World War, the Germans weren’t allowed to have powered military aircraft. So when Hitler took over the country, he started training pilots in gliders on this mountaintop, and started preparing them for the next step, which was him getting enough courage to start building military aircraft, to start his war plans. So this was a real nice lodge up there, built for training the pilots; and also it was a ski lodge in the wintertime. And we were stationed up there, and our primary job was keeping track of the radio communications of the Russians in Eastern Europe. But several times we got called out for

different things. I was there during the Hungarian Revolution, and we were called down to the border of Czechoslovakia, in a place called Hof, to interview people that were coming out during that Hungarian Revolution. And we were trained in our work at Kelly Air Force Base in interrogation, how to interrogate people. And then I was also called down during the Suez Crisis, when they were blocking the Suez Canal. So there were different things we got sent around for. I was sent to Turkey for a while—we had atomic warheads on missiles set up in Turkey that were targeting major cities in Russia. And of course they had rocket batteries set up in different places targeting our installations in Western Europe. There was a rocket installation within sight across on the next mountain range with their rockets pointed at us, and we had our rockets pointed at them. So, whoever pushed the button, it was all going to go. So it was an interesting situation. So I got sent to Turkey, and then I got sent to Tripoli in North Africa, and then I was in England a while. And I had a nice situation in that we worked shift work, and we worked eight straight shifts, and then we had four days completely off to do what we wanted. And soon as I got over there, and had enough money saved up, I bought a 1956 Volkswagen, so I had a car. So in four days, a day going, a day coming, you could—Europe is so small, you can go all over the place. And gasoline was cheap, we got gasoline through the military for forty cents a gallon, I think. And so I had an opportunity to go to France, and go to Spain, and go to Denmark, and go to Amsterdam, and see the country. And besides the Russian, I've lived in Germany, and some of the times I lived off base with the German families that surrendered places from Germans. And I developed enough colloquial German to get along, and sing German drinking songs.

DS:

So you like to sing?

JG:

I like German beer. And I gained weight—when I went in the Air Force I weighed about a hundred and forty pounds; when I got out of the Air Force in Germany, I weighed two hundred. (laughs) But beer over there's like food. And well, I guess I was twenty when I went over there; had my twenty-first birthday in Germany, but it didn't matter, you're already eligible to drink beer and things like that. So all in all, I really enjoyed my time in the service. I guess I got cynical about a lot of things—of course we weren't supposed to tell anybody, that is, we had top secret clearances; we weren't to tell anybody what we were doing up there, but it was obvious what we were doing. The Russians knew what we were doing, and we knew what they were doing, and it was kind of a comedy. And the Russian radio nets that communicate with the aircraft; we'd be there waiting for one when they turned on their transmitters in the morning. And we got to know their operators by their voices—they'd start up their radios and they'd call us dirty names on the radio. They knew we were listening, and we were listening and they were listening. And during those days, they'd worry about when one of our airplanes got accused of violating their territory. And to talk about it now after all these years, but and then our government would say we didn't violate their territory, and things like that. But we

systematically violated their territory, to get their code words; that's what a top secret code word is—you had the knowledge of the code words that were used in military communications, both American and Russian. And every once in a while, the different radio transmitting stations would change their code words, and then you didn't know who they were, or where they were. So we had a radar unit that kept track of the aircraft, and pinpointed radio stations. So they'd change their code word, and we'd have to find out what the code word for the different stations was, so we'd just send an airplane in there, and all the radio stations came up and tracked that airplane, and we got all the new code words. So it's just standing operating procedure. And well, I didn't like the idea of the government telling the public that we didn't do things like that. I'm for open government and for open communication, and things like that. I don't think the government should be doing things that they're not fully in communication with the people about it. So I learned a lot of things about the way the government works while I was in there; and I knew I didn't want that for a career. And so, I guess I got out in October of '77, and I started back to school in the fall of '78. So when I got out of the service—

DS:

You meant '57 right, and—

JG:

'57, yeah. Yeah when I got out of the service in '57—well, I got out in October, so it was too late for me to get back to school in that semester. So I had the GI Bill, so I had a ride for the rest of my college education on the GI Bill; I had the Korean GI Bill. And I took all my savings in 1957, and I took factory delivery on a new Porsche at Stuttgart in Germany. Beautiful Porsche, sixteen hundred—I ordered it just the way I wanted, metallic blue, with red leather upholstery. And anyhow, I brought that back at government expense, they shipped it back to Brooklyn Navy Yard. And when I was discharged, I came back to New Jersey, and got discharged, and went down to pick my Porsche up, and drove it across the country from the Brooklyn Navy Yard, to Salem, Oregon where my folks were—in sixty hours. Went about three thousand miles in sixty hours. But I stopped along the way and tried to make decisions, make choices. I didn't really know if I wanted to go back to the ranch, or if I wanted to go to Arizona and go back to that Dude Ranch, or whether I wanted to go to California and spend some time with another friend I had down there, who was a master woodworker; made all kinds of furniture and things like that. I remember stopping several places and deciding which way was I going to go—was I going to go to Arizona, or California, or back to Oregon, back to the ranch. So I decided that I'd have the most security, at that time and place, by going back to the ranch, because I knew I had a job there, and would be able to get back in school and things like that. So I had the GI Bill, had quite a few college credits from the work in Syracuse, so I had a head start, and I just had two more years to finish in school to get my degree. So I went back to the ranch, and worked for the next two summers—well, I worked for the rest of that year, and started back to school in the fall of '78 then. And by that time, I'd gotten married. And by the time I'd finished my bachelor's at

Oregon, I had two children. And then I was ready for the next step in my career. I guess this is probably a good place to stop, because I want to spend some time talking about—there was two years of finishing college at the University of Oregon, and then going on to graduate work in my career.

DS:

Okay, all right.

JG:

So how long have we gone?

DS:

We've gone an hour and fourteen minutes.

JG:

That's probably long enough for—

DS:

Okay, and several of those dates—is it '70-something—Jim actually meant '50-something.

JG:

Oh, did I say '70?

DS:

Yeah.

JG:

Yeah, '50.

DS:

We'll stop there.

JG:

'57, '58, yeah.

DS:

Yeah, yeah.

JG:

Yeah.

DS:

Yeah you got off somehow, and I was going—

End of interview

