

**Oral History Interview of  
B.A. Hyatt**

**Interviewed by: David Marshall  
March 14, 2013  
Lubbock, Texas**

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## Transcript Overview:

This is the second installment of B.A. Hyatt's oral history interviews. In this segment B.A. recounts attending primary and secondary school in West Texas, his upbringing, and religious beliefs. B.A. also talks about his time spent serving in the U.S. Army, and later his vocation as an Assembly of God Minister. B.A. then discusses his career in the nursing home business.

**Length of Interview:** 02:36:51

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### Keywords

West Texas farming, WWII, Assembly of God ministry, nursing homes

**David Marshall (DM):**

The date is March 14, 2013. This is David Marshall interviewing B.A. Hyatt at his home in Lubbock, Texas. We talked last week, so this is part two. Last week we talked about a lot of your family, going back to great-great grandparents, and then your grandparents at Murchison farm, Wichita community—great information there. Things I had not heard and I don't think we have any information on it at the Southwest Collection besides what you've donated in paper form. So that's good information to have. But today I'd like to talk a little about your parents, and then especially about you.

**B.A. Hyatt (BAH):**

All right.

DM:

So if you could tell me about your parents, your mother, who I believe was born out there, wasn't she?

BAH:

Well, my mother was three years old when they moved to that place.

DM:

And this is Nettie, right?

BAH:

This is Nettie. And then, a few years later, the Hyatts moved to the community and farmed on the place nearby. My dad, Boon Hyatt, was ten years older than Nettie, and her parents objected to their relationship, and fought it all the way, but they finally were married. When she reached eighteen years old they married.

DM:

What was Boon doing in the meantime? Was he working on the farm?

BAH:

Boon was a cowboy and farmer. And he was born in Denton. His father was born in Denton. His grandfather was one of the first businessmen in Denton when the city was formed. He was a sheriff in that county during the Civil War, and raised his family there—in fact, raised two families there. I think we mentioned some of that the last time. So we'll move on from there. Jess Hyatt, my grandfather, when he was nineteen years old, was found on the census in Stonewall County. I thought it was interesting he was listed as a cattle herder. Apparently the term cowboy hadn't been invented at that time, but he was a cattle herder in Stonewall County, and then went back to Denton and married and began raising his family there. The oldest three or four children

were born in Denton before they started roving around. Went to Oklahoma first and two of his children died from the flu and are buried in Palmer, Oklahoma.

That's an interesting story that I developed and began trying to find out where Palmer, Oklahoma was, because the family said the boys were buried there, and I was told there never was a Palmer, Oklahoma. But I don't give up easy, so I stopped at the welcome station on I-40, east of Amarillo, and just asked the lady there if they knew anything about Palmer, Oklahoma. She said, Never heard of it, but she reached under the counter and pulled out an old ragged book and opened it up, and said there was a Palmer, Oklahoma, and it had a post office for a few years, and it was north of Sulfur, Oklahoma, which is a long way from there. Now, one of my aunts was supposedly born in Elk City, so I was looking in the Elk City area. But when I found Palmer, it's nothing but a cemetery there now. And we didn't find the graves because apparently they were not marked. But we did find the cemetery.

DM:

Was this the influenza epidemic of 1918, or would that have been too late?

BAH:

No, it was in 1897, I believe was the year that those two boys—one of them was a twin of my Uncle Lon and the other was just younger than my dad. He was the third child in his family, and they were, oh, pre-teens when they died. So I began trying to find out why Elk City and why Palmer over there, and the family tradition said that the twins were born on the 82 Ranch, and I've not found an 82 Ranch in either Texas or Oklahoma. But Palmer, Oklahoma would be just north of Denton over in Oklahoma. And apparently they traveled from there through the Elk City area on their way to Texas. Now, whether they stayed in Elk City any length of time, I've not established that. But next they were found in Jones County in Texas. And the last two children of the family were born there. And then they moved to Roscoe, and were in Roscoe for several years. My dad and his brother just younger than him played baseball on the team there in Roscoe and were quite well-known as ball players. And they moved from there then to Dickens County. So my parents were married in 1917 and for one year they farmed in Dickens County with his parents, and then the place sold and they all moved to Lubbock at that time. And he rented a place halfway between Lubbock and where Texas Tech was later built, so I would establish that around Avenue Q somewhere, but I've not found the place. And his mother, Jess Hyatt's mother, my dad's grandmother, was buried in Lubbock according to the family. But I could find no trace of her death, no death certificate, no way that I could find anything about her, until one day I was down at a meeting at the library when the association—the Genealogical Association meets once a month, and someone mentioned funeral homes had been a good source of information. I thought, Well, Rix Funeral Home is the oldest funeral home I know anything about in Lubbock. So I stopped there at Rix on the way back to the house that morning, and they pulled out a book of their records and said, You're fortunate she died in 1919, because we just started keeping records in 1918. And sure enough they found her name in the book, and cemetery plot and all.

Lubbock cemetery has lost that record. They do not have it, but Rix Funeral Home does have it. So that was 1919 when she died in Lubbock.

DM:

Is it a marked grave?

BAH:

It's not a marked grave. The only markings are what Rix Funeral Home have and the cemetery doesn't even have a record of that. So anyway, they did have a copy of an invoice sent to my grandfather, mailed to Jess Hyatt, Lubbock, Texas. And it was a bill for the funeral. So I have found where she was buried, not the exact spot. But getting back now to my parents. After they'd farmed with the family for one year in Dickens County and then moved to Lubbock, and when Boon was working on a ranch and couldn't have her with him, well she stayed with his parents here in Lubbock. Then they, for one or two years, lived in the Long S dugout that's been restored at the Ranch Heritage Center. They lived in it for at least one year and then moved to Culberson County, close to Van Horn, and worked on the Figure 2 Ranch there for one or two years. And then by that time, my grandfather, J. A. Murchison was getting in bad health and they moved back to Dickens County to get closer to him. And also my dad was beginning to have a lot of rheumatism problems riding horses and all, and decided that he was getting too old for that, so they rented a farm in Dickens County and farmed a year or two. And somewhere along during those years, there was a reconciliation between him and his father-in-law. So the oldest child, my older sister was born in 1924 in Dickens County on the old Braddock place, which is near what's now East Afton. Then they moved down to the Murchison place for a year or two to take care of her father who'd had a stroke. And I was born there on that place in 1928. They didn't have any children from the time they married in 1917 until 1924. There was a miscarriage during that time, but the oldest child, Ethel, was born in 1924, and I was born in '28.

DM:

The second child?

BAH:

The second child in Dickens County. And then after my grandfather's death—he died six months before I was born, died in January of 1928 and I was born in June. And they apparently finished out that crop year, and then rented a place at Anton and moved here on the plains and lived in Anton. That's my earliest remembrance, is in Anton in 1930. And I don't know if I really remember this or if I've heard it so much that I think I remember it, but when my brother was born in 1930, on the old farm about four miles out from Anton, and I had gotten in the habit of getting in bed with my parents every morning. When I would wake up, I would get in bed with them, and that morning, they told me, You can't get in bed with Mama because the baby's in there. And there had come a big rain the night before, and I said, Throw him out in the mud. So I

don't know if I remember that or if I have heard it so much I feel like I remember it, but I do remember a few things about that place. It was a box and strip shack with a lean-to room built on to it.

DM:

The main part was how big. Two room?

BAH:

I think probably two rooms. I don't remember that much about it, and the only people I remember from those days was an older couple, Drew Neal and his wife and they had an unmarried daughter in her twenties, and they came over and played 42 with my parents. That's the only people I remember from that time. And then about 1933, I suppose it was, it must have been '33 that he left the farm and moved into town in Anton. We rented a little house there, right across the street from Dr. Curlee. Dr. Curlee lived in what to me was a mansion. I'm thinking now that it was a standard type two bedroom house from those days. It was stucco, I remember it being stucco. And we lived across the street from them on the edge of Anton, had some milk cows and horses. My dad hired a team of horses out on the WPA roadwork, and for one year lived there in Anton and he with a team of horses, and then his work made a living for the family for that one year.

DM:

Before we move on, can we back it just a minute? Can you tell me a little more about that box and strip in east Afton? You said it was maybe a two-room, then a lean-to added. Were those bedrooms?

BAH:

Well, now that was in Anton.

DM:

Oh, that was in Anton?

BAH:

Right. And the box and strip house of course was just a box and boards, which were one-by-twelves standing up on the ends, and then one-by-four strips nailed over the cracks. And no framework to the house. The roof then was put on that. I don't remember even the layout of the house, because I was only five years old when we left it.

DM:

Do you remember how it was heated?



BAH:

It was heated with a coal stove. That's the only heat. Cooking was on a kerosene stove. I don't really remember much about that house. But in Anton we lived also in a box and strip house, and it was small, I don't remember the size of it. But my youngest sister was born while we lived in that house. And Dr. Curlee delivered her. That day, we were kept outside all day. My brother and sister and I had to play outside because Mama was in process of giving birth. Dr. Curlee came in and then left and then came back later, so we had to stay outside all day that day.

DM:

Did you know why you had to stay outside?

BAH:

I believe that we did. I really don't remember for sure, but I think pretty well that we did know what was going on.

DM:

You mentioned Dr. Curlee's house. Would you venture a guess as to the square footage of that house? What was considered a large house in your mind at the time?

BAH:

Well, anything with more than two rooms was a large house to me. I don't know that I ever was in that house, but I'm pretty sure that it was kind of a standard for those days. There were a lot of stucco houses that were just oblong houses, and would have two, possibly three bedrooms. But I don't really know the square footage of the house. But it seemed large then.

DM:

Did you all have any livestock in town?

BAH:

We did have livestock in town, had a little corral there at the house, and we kept the cows in at night, and then staked them out in the grassland there on the edge of town. I suppose it belonged to the city or county or something, but we'd take the cows out and stake them every morning and bring them in at night. The horses of course were working on the roadwork, and when they came in at night, we had to have water ready for them. We had a hand pump and had to pump water by hand. So we'd fill up all the washtubs and when they came in, those horses drank a tub full apiece. (DM laughs) And then we pumped water for the cattle, and that was the chore for my brother and sister and I. And at that time I was six years old and my brother was four years old, and it took both of us on that pump handle to pump it.

But Dr. Curlee's grandsons stayed with them during that summer, and he liked to pump water. He would come over, and he was about twelve years old, and he could pump water faster than

we could, and I often wondered why he liked to pump water. But after I got older, I realized he had his eye on my sister who was four years older than I was. He was twelve and she would have been eight, and he liked to come over and pump water so she could see how strong he was make a hit with her. (DM laughs) For a number of years I wondered why he liked to pump water. And then after one year living there, and during that year, my dad was deputy sheriff for a little while also. And then he rented a place west of Levelland in the Fairview community and we moved there in—it must have been 1935. We were there five years, farming that place.

DM:

Did you start school at Anton?

BAH:

I started school at Anton. Went the first half of the first grade in Anton, and then we moved to Levelland. I had a great teacher—I don't remember her name—in Anton. But I was in the A class, doing well, then moved to Levelland and the teacher asked me questions, and she was a gruff sort of a person and got me intimidated right from the first. So I failed the first grade. And then the next year, I was promoted in mid-term—well, to the third grade in mid-term and made it in half a year so I caught up again.

DM:

What was it about the first teacher that you liked? What was it about—

BAH:

She was just a kind and understanding person. But the one at Levelland, I suppose we got off to a bad start immediately, because she asked me, "Well, what book had you been reading in Anton?" And I said, "Jack and Nell." She said, "Jack and Nell? That's not—you should have been in a higher book than that if you were in the A class. I thought Anton was a good school." And it started off in that frame of mind, and I didn't figure it out at the time, but there were two Jack and Nell books. One was the very beginner, which I had the first month I was in school in Anton, and then another one, "Jack and Nell and Friends," which was advanced, and the A class had it at Levelland after I was there. But I was put in C class and kept down, so we just got off to a bad start.

DM:

Levelland school—was it bigger than the Anton school?

BAH:

It was quite a bit bigger. That might have also been some of the problem, because the classroom was overcrowded and the C class might have got neglected.

DM:

How many students do you think were in your class starting out in Levelland?

BAH:

I would say between thirty and forty.

DM:

How about in Anton?

BAH:

At Anton, I don't really remember the size of the class, but I believe there were two grades in one room at Anton. I do remember the layout of the classroom.

DM:

Well, so you were at Levelland for five years, you finished your elementary education there, I guess?

BAH:

Well, I was in the sixth grade when we left at mid-term. I went the first half of sixth grade at Levelland, and when we moved back to Dickens County, I went to the Wichita school, which was a two-room, two-teacher school. Had seven grades, and there were only two students in the sixth grade, myself and one other one. And a teacher had the first four grades, and then the older kids, the next three grades were in another room, had a different teacher.

DM:

Well, that was a big change.

BAH:

That was quite a big change. That teacher was an older man, and he was really hung up on diagramming sentences. That's the only time in my entire schooling that I had any schooling on diagramming sentences, but that was his specialty. So we learned to diagram sentences whether we learned anything else or not. Of course, just moving in, I was the new guy in the community, and I was real popular with all the kids there. And then when we went to Dickens the next year, I was the country boy because I was twelve miles out from town, so I kind of got intimidated again there. The first day we got our books—and I remember a boy sitting across the aisle from me, all at once he said, "Hey country boy, what are you doing stacking your books up like I've got mine?" We had been told to stack all of our books on the desk and the teacher would come by and check them, and then we could put them in the desk. So I looked and he had stacked his books exactly like mine. He was a bully type fellow, and he kind of got his bluff in on me right then. He seemed to just enjoy tormenting me for quite some time, but before the year was out,

we were wrestling one day, and found out that I could handle him easy enough. I was a farm boy, I worked on the farm and was in pretty good shape, and he had more of an athletic build and all, but he wasn't as strong as I was. So when I took him down and held him down a little while, we became good friends and went on clear through high school and graduated together and were friends after that. I've often heard that the way to deal with a bully is to whip him and then he's your friend. With me, it worked.

DM:

Then at school, high school was pretty much at Dickens, then?

BAH:

All of my high school was at Dickens.

DM:

You graduated from Dickens?

BAH:

Graduated from Dickens in 1955, I guess it was.

DM:

Well, let's talk about that school a little bit, if you don't mind. Nineteen fifty-five, what was the size of the graduating class?

BAH:

I said '55, [but] it was '45. Nineteen forty-five and we had nine students in the class that year: four boys and five girls that graduated together.

DM:

Were most of those kids living in Dickens, or were there some ranch kids?

BAH:

There were a couple farm kids, a couple of the girls that lived in farms out from Dickens just a few miles, and then I came from the Wichita Community, twelve miles out, and the rest of them lived in Dickens.

DM:

How did you get in to school?

BAH:

The school bus would come by our place early in the morning, coming from the Deer Lake Community down to Wichita and then would go by the Wichita school, drop off the kids that went there, and make another route through another part of the community and pick up kids, come back to the school, drop them off and high school kids go on to Dickens.

DM:

Okay. You did mention a bit of that last time.

BAH:

That was a ninety mile bus route.

DM:

That's a lot of the day right there.

BAH:

Round-trip.

DM:

Well, did you ever find that you needed to stay and help with things around the farm? Did you ever take out of school for that purpose?

BAH:

Not after we moved to Dickens. Now, at Levelland, we did every year take two weeks off from school. My dad would hold us out of school for two weeks to help gather the cotton crop. But two weeks is all he'd ever hold us out of school at a time. So at Dickens though, I didn't have to do that.

DM:

What was the school like at Dickens? Was it a big brick building?

BAH:

It was a brick building, which seemed fairly big, but I'm sure it wasn't as big as it seemed to me. I found that in most of my memory, it's that way. Things that I think were big turned out to be pretty small later on.

DM:

Is it still there, the school?

BAH:

No, it was torn down—I think 1955 or 6 was the last year they had school there and the building was torn down. The only marking left is a historical plaque the historical community put up there.

DM:

By the way, was the heating there coal?

BAH:

The heating there was from a furnace in the basement. It was a coal-burning furnace. Had a janitor that kept the fire going down there and all, and gathered up the trash, swept up the floors, all of those things.

DM:

What were your favorite subjects at Dickens?

BAH:

Well, it really didn't make any difference what my favorite subjects were. There were fourteen—or sixteen—subjects, seventeen counting home ec. and agriculture. In the four years, I had to take all of them, except home ec. And the girls took all of them except agriculture. But I always liked history and geography, and math to a certain extent.

DM:

Well, the history and geography I know has borne out in later years as much work as you've done on history in more recent years.

BAH:

Those were my favorite subjects.

DM:

Was there a—there was a vocational agriculture class, I guess.

BAH:

Well, it was just agriculture. It wasn't a vocational ag. We didn't have livestock and all through the school. I did join the 4-H Club and fed a calf or two for the shows on that, but that was not connected to the school.

DM:

Were those South Plains Fair shows? Is that where you would show them?

BAH:

I took one to the South Plains Fair. The others were a local county show.

DM:

Did they have an FFA program?

BAH:

Not in Dickens. Spur did.

DM:

What about athletics? Were you involved in any athletics?

BAH:

I never got involved in athletics to amount to anything. I went out for football one year, but never played in a game. But living out in the country, I had responsibility for milking the cows at night and I had to be there to do the chores, so I couldn't be into the after-school activities, and just never got involved in athletics.

DM:

And if your ride home was the bus, you had to be on the bus to—

BAH:

Had to be on the bus, and if I stayed in town, then I had to catch a ride home some way. So I just didn't do it because I was more oriented to the farm life.

DM:

Do you remember—besides athletics events—do you remember any kind of academic contests between Dickens and other area schools? They would call them U.I.L competitions now, that kind of thing.

BAH:

Yeah, I'm trying to think of the term we used for that. There were competitions on that.

DM:

Were they spelling, math—?

BAH:

I believe that public speaking and spelling were two of the main ones, and I was not a public speaker. In fact, my last year in high school, the superintendent of the school was also my English teacher, and he had us all give a speech before the class. After that he said, "Now, I'm

going to show you what work can do in the way of public speaking. I'm going to pick out the poorest example I've ever seen of a public speaker and work with him for a few weeks and show you how much improvement. B. A., will you come to my office?"

DM:

Golly. Some of these teachers weren't very nice. (laughs)

BAH:

He didn't say one of the worst examples, he said *the* worst example of a public speaker. So he said, "Get you a book—go to the library and get you a short story book and read a short story, and then come in to my office and tell it to me." I got the book, I read the story. I still remember it, it was *The Piece of String*, and the main character was Father Hauchecorne, which found something—found a piece of string on the street. He was conservative and he thought, "Well, that'll be good for something." [He] picked it up and put it in his pocket and someone saw him, and at the same time something else disappeared and he was accused of being a thief, and went through the story. So I went in and told that to the teacher the first time, and he said, "Well, you need to read it again, study it again. Come back tomorrow." So every day, I'd go to his office and about the third day, he said, "Well, I'm real busy today. Just sit down in that chair outside the office and read your story through again." And this went on for two or three days, and then I thought, "I'm just going to skip and see what happens." Nothing was ever said. He never brought me back before the class. When the Lord called me to preach, he could do what the teacher couldn't, because I have had some experience in public speaking.

DM:

And the interesting thing is you're well-spoken, a nice, steady speech, and very organized in your mind, and it seems unusual that you would have been so different as a child. Do you think you really were?

BAH:

At that time, I would not have gotten up to make a speech for a thousand dollars.

DM:

But that was shyness, I guess.

BAH:

It was shyness. I always had an inferiority complex along those lines. Other people took it for arrogance. There is just a hairline between inferiority and arrogance, and they can be mistaken for each other. People thought I was stuck-up; really I was shy.



DM:

You're not shy now. How did you overcome your shyness?

BAH:

It was a long process, and I was past fifty years old before I got to where I could stand before a crowd without fear and trembling. Now I would do it, but I always had the anxiety until I was working on a job where I had to go to five different divisions of the company I was working for and give a presentation. And it really was making me nervous. And I just determined in my mind, Well, I'm going to do it, I'm going to overcome it. If I'm scared, I'm scared, but I'm going to do it. And some way, just my determination and my expression of saying, I'm going to do it, seemed to have overcome that. Still even today at times that anxiety comes back. I suppose we're all that way to some extent. But I did overcome it in that period of time.

DM:

It's an amazing thing. You hear things like this occasionally, but it's very difficult for someone to change their personality traits. But people do, and it's always just about sheer determination, it seems.

BAH:

It's sheer determination. Just like when I quit smoking at age twenty-two, I got to the point where I did not want to be a slave to tobacco and I realized that I was becoming a slave, and I said, With God's help I'll quit if it kills me. And I really kind of thought it would, but before that I had quit smoking for four months at a time. Still wanted cigarettes, but when I made that statement, "With God's help I will quit this," and I pulled out my smoking tobacco and threw it as far as I could across the cotton field, and the craving was gone almost immediately.

DM:

So determination of the mind.

BAH:

Determination of the mind, absolutely. And I do credit God's help. And I didn't ask Him to take away the craving, I asked him to help me overcome the craving. That's what happened. I overcame it. Within two weeks, I had totally forgotten about it.

DM:

It was not an attempt to gradually end this thing, it was, "I'm done." It was a cold-turkey kind of thing.

BAH:

All of the major decisions in my life have been on that basis, coming to a point where it's a hill to die on. Either I do or I don't. It's amazing how a person can change and overcome some kind of situation by sheer determination.

DM:

Can you tell me about—we've been talking about your school years. I'm interested in influences in your life. That's why I was asking maybe about your favorite subjects in school and this kind of thing, something about your teachers. What about at home? Were there religious influences, political influences, anything that you can point back to and say, that helped make me what I am today, or, that isn't at all what I am today? Can you—

BAH:

Well, in our home we were Christian people. We went to church every time church was held. From my earliest remembrance, I was always in Sunday school and church until I got pretty well grown and dropped out for a few years there. I did have that influence of learning the Bible stories, learning various things, and my mother was my Sunday school teacher at times. Probably the best teacher I ever had. But she was a stickler for keeping the family in church. At Anton and Levelland we went to church and then when the move to Dickens was about to take place, the only way she would consent to move back to Dickens is that we stay in church. So it was twelve miles in to Dickens, and we would go to church every Sunday. We went to Sunday school and church.

DM:

Not at Wichita Community?

BAH:

Not at Wichita Community. There was no church there. Church of Christ did hold services on—not every Sunday, but once a month I think in the school house. But we went in to Dickens to the Methodist church there. My dad drove in until we boys got old enough to drive, and then we would drive in, and he stayed out to run the store. Before that, keeping the store open seven days a week was almost a necessity in a country store situation, and my uncle would come up and keep the store while we went to church on Sunday morning. But church did have an influence in my life, and some of the things I learned in Sunday school and church still stick with me today. I remember a little card that we were given that had the Ten Commandments in rhyme: "Thou shalt have no god but me, before no idol bend thy knee, take not the name of God in vain, do not the Sabbath day profane, give both thy parents honor due, hate not that thou no murder do, abstain from words and deeds unclean, steal not for thou by God are seen. Make not a sinful lie or love it, what is thy neighbor's dare not covet." So if anyone asks me what is the seventh commandment, I would have to run this little poem through my mind and then answer the

question. So a lot of those things that I learned in childhood did stick with me through life and made me a lot of what I am today.

DM:

In this particular case, you're talking about a period of how many years from the time you first learned that poem until now?

BAH:

Oh, I'm sure that I learned that when I was maybe six, seven years old, somewhere along there. And also, during the Depression years and the Dustbowl years in Levelland, we didn't have electricity, we didn't have radio, we didn't have a lot of the things that now we consider everyday activities. But I remember a set of cards called *Authors*. And these cards had the names of famous authors and stories that they wrote. Someway we matched it up and made a game out of it.

DM:

Louisa May Alcott, Nathaniel Hawthorne, there's a card game called *Authors*.

BAH:

You're talking about the same game that I'm talking about.

DM:

I remember that from maybe playing it in the sixties and seventies. It's a long term, and how far back it goes, I don't know.

BAH:

I don't know either, but I remember that set of cards. My parents never would let us have regular playing cards back in those days, that was gambling.

DM:

But this was education.

BAH:

But in their mind this was educational. And then we had another set of bird cards that had pictures of songbirds, and some way we matched them up and made a game out of it, so we learned quite a bit along that line. And at night [when] it was too hot to stay in the house, we'd sit out under the stars and look at the various constellations and formations, and I learned from that.

DM:

Did you learn some of the constellations?

BAH:

Just the basics—the Big Dipper, the Little Dipper, the North Star and a few things like that. But I never really got into studying the stars a whole lot.

DM:

By the way, was there a Boy Scout organization or anything like that in Dickens or Levelland?

BAH:

There was, I believe a Boy Scout troop in Dickens part of the time. Again, I was out in the country, so I didn't take part in that.

DM:

I ask because talking about constellations reminded me that was one of the things learned in Boy Scouts.

BAH:

Right. No, I never was in the Boy Scouts to speak of. I think I went to one or two meetings, but not very much.

DM:

Well, it's an interesting thing. When I was in Boy Scouts, constellations were a fun and interesting thing to learn, and it was part of being able to navigate your way around. But it's not something you hear much from kids anymore as far as I can tell, and it seems that we had a lot more sky to look at, before there were— (laughter) and living in the country now, it's the same thing, but in the city, where most kids live—

BAH:

In the city you can't see the stars at night.

DM:

No. Interesting. I wonder if that had something to do with your rural background at the time.

BAH:

I think it probably did. I feel fortunate to have grown up in the country. I really do, and I feel like I, to some extent, robbed my children, bringing them up in town, because they missed out on some of the things. However, I did get them out in the country all I could. It wasn't like some town kids. One thing that just came to my mind—at Dickens, I lived with my Uncle Roland and

my grandmother because she was old and he was crippled and I did chores on the farm. But he was a man that liked to have young people around him, and he would always take us once a year on a fishing trip. We would load up in his pickup and go down to South Bend, on the Clear Fork of the Brazos and camp and fish for two or three days. One year he told us that, "Now, each one of you,"—my brothers and two sisters and myself—"Each one of you can take one friend with you this year." So I asked one of my classmates from Dickens to go with me, and my brother invited his brother and my sister invited someone to go with her. The youngest sister I don't believe took anyone with her, because she was still real young.

And some fifty, sixty years later at a reunion, a school reunion, one of the brothers of this—no, I guess he was the younger brother that my brother invited to go told me at that time, said, "I remember going on that fishing trip with y'all. We never did anything like that. It was such a privilege to be part of your family for a little while there." And they would come out and we'd go off down to the creek and go swimming and things of that kind. And even though Dickens was a small town, he still operated like a town boy. I didn't realize it made any impression on them. Every year we'd go fishing and we had a good time. We rented an old boat and we rode around in it, caught a few fish, one thing and another, but it really made an impression on those town boys that went with us.

DM:

I can imagine, yeah.

BAH:

And for him to remember fifty, sixty years later speaks of the value of family life.

DM:

It sure does, and being in the outdoors. Really, those impressions are of lifelong importance. Something interesting you said, that your parents didn't care much for you playing, didn't like you to play cards, but they did play 42. So they saw a different—distinguished somehow between—?

BAH:

I don't think either one of my parents ever got into card-playing much, but to them it was gambling because people played poker with cards and things of that kind for money. And in the 42, it was just for a good time, fellowship with neighbors. There was no monetary value for those who won.

DM:

Right. It didn't have a bad reputation because it wasn't used for gambling like cards were used, I guess, that kind of thing. Your mother, was she specifically Methodist or did she just prefer the Methodist church—?

BAH:

She grew up as a Methodist. Now, the Murchisons were Presbyterian before they came to Dickens, but at Dickens there was no Presbyterian church, so they joined the Methodist church. My mother was in the Methodist church at that time. At a later time, after I was grown, I got into the Pentecostal movement, into the Assemblies of God, and my mother did go with me there.

DM:

I was curious because some people will sometimes only stick to one denomination and they won't be involved in any other—I just didn't know if she had a really strong specifically Methodist influence on you or not.

BAH:

We went to the Methodist and Baptist church. Most everywhere we lived, that was the choice we had, were the Methodist, Baptist or Church of Christ. That's about all there was anywhere we ever lived. And we went to both the Methodist and the Baptist and occasionally to the Church of Christ revival meetings and things of that kind. But we never were really into one denomination mindset.

DM:

This is getting maybe a little more personal, so answer it if you want to or not if you don't. But besides the attending church, besides these religious aspects, what about a spiritual personal life? Was there a time of prayer, either individually or as a family—not at church but out at the farm?

BAH:

We never really developed family devotions in our family. We prayed individually and off and on prayed table grace at the meals and would have times when we would do some study together. Now, in the early years we did have Bible readings at Levelland because we didn't have radio then. After we got radio, that kind of took the place of a lot of family devotion time in a lot of families. But we never were strong on family devotion. I think we should have been, and if I could do it over we would in my own family.

DM:

How about you individually as a child? Were you a prayerful person? Did you consider yourself to have a spiritual life beyond going to church, just a personal spiritual life?

BAH:

Not at—well, it was more of a habit thing at home when I was a child. But later on I got away from that until I came to the point that I realized I had to make some change in my life and then I began a systematic Bible study reading.

DM:

About how old were you at that point?

BAH:

At that time, I was twenty-two years old, and that gets back tying in to quitting smoking. When I said, "With God's help I will quit it," there was a change in my life. My whole desire changed, and from that time on, I decided to really read the Bible. I had gotten to the point [where] I knew all the Bible stories, but didn't really know the meat of the Scriptures. But I started reading every night, every day I read, and I did pray from that time on.

DM:

Is this also the time that you became involved in the Pentecostal, or was that—?

BAH:

Yes, it was.

DM:

Big changes in your life then, at this time.

BAH:

Big changes in my life at age twenty-two. I was on the verge of becoming an alcoholic at that time. I started drinking some, even though I didn't in my younger years. My family never was into that style of life, but I had gotten away from them when I—

DM:

Interesting timing, too. I have worked at the university a lot of my life, and I've noticed that from age twenty to twenty-two—a huge change in people's lives. I really think that it would be better for most eighteen-year-olds leaving for college to wait two years to start college because they go through this transition in the middle of their college career that often causes them to change their majors. It's a common age.

BAH:

I have noticed that, too, that twenty-two seems to be a magic number there. And I use the word magic sparingly because I don't want to get mixed with superstition, but there's something about age twenty-two that I've noted changes in a lot of people's lives.

DM:

I know it's not everybody, but aren't you glad it was you?

BAH:

I'm glad it was me.

DM:

Well, let's talk about other early influences before we talk about later in your life. Were your parents—did they have any strong political affiliations or did they like or dislike certain presidents in their administration or anything like that that you can recall?

BAH:

Well, no political affiliation that I know of. They were Democrats until later years.

DM:

That's the standard trend, pretty much.

BAH:

In this part of the world, it was. Everybody was a Democrat in this part of the world. But I remember the gubernatorial election—must have been 1938 when W. Lee O'Daniel ran for governor. That's the first time I really remember my dad getting involved, and he was for someone else. He wasn't for O'Daniel there, but I remember that election time and how O'Daniel won it without a run off. And Light Crust Doughboys when he was running a second time, he had them, they'd sing: "There ain't gonna be no run off; don't have them anymore; we quit having run offs when O'Daniel ran before." Along about that time, the county elections were pretty much topics of discussion, and I remember on election night at Levelland, we would all go into town and there on the courthouse square in Levelland would be just a party-like gathering, waiting for the returns from the election to come in. I was just a kid, of course. We were more interested in running and chasing each other around the courthouse square. But we would, when they were going to make an announcement, we would all stop and listen to who's winning the races. I remember a few things like that.

I remember a sheriff named Hoffacket in Levelland, and don't remember a lot of the county officials, but county elections and state elections were prevalent. As far as the presidential election, when Franklin Roosevelt was elected, he was president so long that there wasn't much chance of anybody else beating him, so I don't remember much involvement in presidential elections back in those days. But I do know that when Franklin Roosevelt died, my grandmother cried just like he was a member of the family because she had lived through the Depression and credited him with doing away with the Depression. I have a different idea of what happened. I don't think it was him, I think it was World War II that actually overcame the Depression era. But she gave him credit for it, and she was heartbroken when she got word of his death.



DM:

By the way, do you remember anything about the Agricultural Adjustment Act that came in and killed off livestock or plowed up the cropland?

BAH:

Blue Eagle NRA—and I don't really know the full significance of that, but I know there was a lot of talk about it, and I do remember the killing of the livestock. We didn't have any killed at that time, we just had our milk cows and we kept them, but I do remember hearing about that, knowing about it.

DM:

How about REA—rural electrification—when did it come in to the Dickens area?

BAH:

It came to the Dickens area before World War II, and was coming closer to us all the time. It got within three miles of us when Pearl Harbor was bombed and it all shut down, so it was after the war when we got electricity over at our part of the community.

DM:

Maybe in '45 or '46 would you say?

BAH:

It was.

DM:

You know it reached some places in the fifties, so.

BAH:

Actually, it was, I believe, '48 or '49 before we got electricity. I know that it was after the war.

DM:

Do you remember what you—you were fairly old by then, in your twenties, I guess.

BAH:

No, I was sixteen when I graduated from high school in May. I became seventeen in June after I graduated, and the war—that was in 1945, and that's when World War II came to an end in '45, so I was almost seventeen years old. Some of my classmates were drafted, because they were just a few months older than me. The draft stopped before I reached eighteen.

DM:

I bet they didn't make it overseas, though. They probably went into basics, but didn't make it overseas. Did you ever—

BAH:

One of my classmates, the one who went fishing with us, was drafted into the army, he did go overseas, and he died in Germany. I don't know the full extent of it, but they found him hung with his own belt in the restroom where the doors locked from the inside. And they first called it suicide and then later on there was some thought of foul play of some kind. It was after the war. He wasn't in the fighting, but he got in early enough to get into Germany. I suppose the aftermath of the war—

DM:

Still a fairly dangerous time to be around there. Everything in disruption.

BAH:

Right.

DM:

Well, during your high school years—your high school years spanned the war years that the U.S. was involved, '41 to '45. Were you concerned during this time that as soon as you got out you would be snatched into the military and go off to war? Or were you hoping for that?

BAH:

I didn't worry about it, I knew it was a possibility, and it's just something we accepted. That we have a country that's worth fighting for, if my call comes, we'll I'll go. I was drafted later during the Korean War, but if it had come down to it, we would have gone right along with it. In fact, there was a lot of *esprit de corps* during that time. We had our war bond drives and would get together and hear political speeches. If you went to the movies, you'd see a newsreel of what was going on in the war—

DM:

Now, was this happening in Dickens?

BAH:

In Spur there was a movie theater, ten miles from Dickens.

DM:

I remember. That theater still stands, I believe.

BAH:

It was reconstructed a year or two back. We had a program down there I think the year before last. Seeing the inside of that.

DM:

Harry Bob [Martin] took me in there one time, quite a while back, before they really were doing much.

BAH:

Yeah, well he was our speaker, I think, when we had that meeting down there, that reunion at Dickens.

DM:

But anyway, so you did feel the impact of war, or at least saw information about the war in school or at the theatre. How about in the classroom?

BAH:

In the classroom, there was talk of it. And one event that I remember—there was a friend of mine who's a few years older than I was, but he had been held out of school to help gather the crops and got behind. And he was several years older than me but in the same class with me, and he was drafted into World War II. I think he had dropped out of school at that time, and he was killed in Germany. I remember my senior year in typing class, we were taking a fifteen minute test of typing, and about halfway through it the teacher walked into the room and said, "Stop." Everybody quit typing and she said, "We have just received word that David Stubblefield was killed in action." So that's the closest the war ever really came to me, but there was a spirit of patriotism. I've often said that if we were to go to war now, I'm not sure that we could win because we don't have the patriotism in America today that we had back then. But everybody was behind the war effort. And if we didn't have enough money, \$18.75 to buy a twenty-five dollar bond, we'd buy stamps. Ten cents apiece and put them in a book until we got enough to buy a war bond. Had the war bond drives. There was a lot of people behind the effort at that time.

DM:

Were there bond drives at the schools, encouraging kids to save some pennies?

BAH:

There was some interest through the schools, but mainly a community type thing that probably would be in the school house, but—

DM:

Do you remember any classroom announcements, the “U. S. just invaded the Normandy beach,” or “Pearl Harbor just happened,” this kind of thing?

BAH:

A few things of that kind. One thing that stuck in my mind the last year I was in Levelland before we moved back to Dickens—the war was building up in Europe at that time, and I remember a teacher bringing a newspaper to school and we had current event reports. Different ones would pick out a story from the newspaper and present it, and the teacher walked in that day and held up a paper and the headlines across it said, “Great Britain wants war.” And that’s when Britain was getting ready to declare war on Germany. That stuck in my mind through the years.

DM:

Well that would. There were massive events that would really affect a child, I think. I don’t know.

BAH:

And when Pearl Harbor was bombed, that did make a big impact. In fact, it changed everything for a lot of people at that time. We had family acquaintances that were in Pearl Harbor at that time. In fact, one fellow that I’ve known throughout my life after we moved back to Dickens—I didn’t know until a few years ago that he was in Pearl Harbor when the bombs were dropped. His name was Bob Porter and they were in the oil business, had a wholesale dealership for Phillips 66 and I knew him throughout the years, but didn’t know he was at Pearl Harbor until shortly before he died. And then my aunt’s youngest brother was killed in that time frame. A number of people from the Dickens school were killed in the war. And when that would happen, we would be notified and there would be talk about it.

DM:

That brings the war to life, makes you realize that it’s a real thing, I guess, more than just what you hear in the news.

BAH:

Quite a few people that I knew in high school that were just a little older than me were in the war and some were killed.

DM:

You graduated in ’45, did you say?

BAH:

Right.

DM:

Okay. And then you, as I recall, continued to work on the Murchison farm with your uncle?

BAH:

I did. I worked on the farm for several years after that. In 1947, I was having severe headaches, credited it possibly to climate, and I went to Arizona in the summer of 1947. I guess I was nineteen years old at the time, and worked on a ranch out there, hoping that climate change would help my headache situation. And it didn't do much for it, so I worked just for one summer and I came back for a visit intending to go back to Arizona, but my uncle needed me so bad on the farm with him being crippled like he was and all that I stayed there until I was drafted into the army in 1954.

DM:

That was a fair amount of time then you spent out there.

BAH:

It was.

DM:

Well, he made a lot of improvements, and I believe we've talked about that last time. The irrigation, tractors, I think he got a small tractor or two, a reservoir.

BAH:

Yeah, and I started driving the tractor when I was twelve years old there. Had started driving the team when I was seven years old at Levelland. Drove tractor at twelve, and worked around the place, did a lot of improvement, helping improve the place. Dug a ditch to pipe water from the windmill to the house when we got electricity in 1949 or '50, along there. I taught myself to weld after we got a welder. I did our welding there on the farm, and then the neighbors got to bringing their stuff over there because it's twenty miles into town, so I did quite a bit of welding for them. Just learned a lot of things there on the farm through doing.

DM:

Picked up some skills. Great thing about a farmer, you become self-sufficient.

BAH:

I learned to lay blocks, learned to run a motor grader—

DM:

Can you tell the story about the blocks, the cinder block building?

BAH:

Well, we wanted to build a shop and settled on the dimension of twenty-four by thirty concrete block shop. Went to Lubbock and bought the blocks and hauled them down there and stacked them out, but couldn't get anyone to lay the blocks. Nobody knew how to lay blocks, except one man that we knew of. So my uncle tried to get him to come over and build the shop, and he said, "I just don't have time to do it. I'll come over there and lay it out and lay the corners and then let your man build it." So he came over there and laid the corners for that shop, and told me or showed me how to put a string up and lay the blocks to the string from one corner to the other, and then he went his way and I built the shop.

DM:

Laying the mortar and everything, that takes a little bit of a touch. You developed it quickly enough, I guess.

BAH:

Well, I knew how to pour concrete before that, but it was a different mix for the mortar, so I did mix the mud and laid the blocks.

DM:

Was it on a slab or concrete footing?

BAH:

Yeah, it was on a concrete slab. We poured the slab. Hauled sand from the creek to make the concrete, poured the slab and built the blocks on top of it. And it still stands today.

DM:

Well, there you go. Can't complain about that.

BAH:

Over a half century, it's standing.

DM:

Can't complain about that construction job.

BAH:

We put the roof on with timber beams and rafters and then sheet iron on top of that.

DM:

Corrugated, or was it—?

BAH:

It was corrugated. I remember in building that, I built up a beam and bolted it together and put it through the middle. And one pipe that I used to hold the beam up in the middle to give us room to work all around it. And then I was up on this beam doing some welding one day, and all at once I realized that it's getting hot here. And I raised the welding hood and looked and down beneath me was a fire. I had a bucket of gasoline there that I used to wash parts and wash the grease out of them and those sparks dropped in it and it came up there, so I got down and put a piece of plywood over the top of the bucket and put the fire out and got up there and finished my welding.

DM:

You were roasting up there, huh?

BAH:

Yeah, it was getting pretty hot.

DM:

You're kind of in a different world with the welding hood on, aren't you?

BAH:

It wasn't really—it wouldn't have set anything else on fire, the bucket would have just sat there and burned, but it was under me and I was getting warm.

DM:

Well, so you got a lot of hands on experience out there on the farm, but then in '54 you were drafted.

BAH:

Up until then, I had been deferred because of my uncle's disability.

DM:

Alright, okay. That answers my question because you were already twenty-six or so and the war, the Korean War, police action or whatever they were calling it, it was going along, it was already about there.

BAH:

Yeah, it was and I remember going to the draft board one time, and they said, "We realize it's important to have someone on the farm. Don't you have a brother?" I said, "I have one brother." He said, "Well, why can't he take care of the farm?" I said, "The main reason is he's in Korea. He's in artillery in Korea in actual combat at the time." So I was deferred again.

DM:

(laughs) Well, that was a good answer. Where was he? Do you remember where he was over there?

BAH:

I don't really know. He talked about a few of the places. They had track-equipped artillery piece. A big gun that traveled on tracks, they drove that thing and they would go out and fire. He never knew where they were hitting, they were firing miles away. He wasn't in combat to that extent, but one time he said that the enemy had crawled in through the night, crawled in through their trip flares, and when they woke up in the morning, they were in their foxholes, and there was a little skirmish there. That was the only real hand to hand battle he was in, but he was in the artillery behind the lines firing. And they had one event when the bomb was dropped right into the middle of their camp, but there was a ditch through the camp and the bomb went down in the ditch. Shrapnel all went through the top of their tents and no one was hurt.

DM:

It just went up out of the ditch and didn't get—that was fortunate, very fortunate. Well, anyway, so you went in in '54, it was toward the end of the Korean War.

BAH:

It was December of '54 when I was drafted into the army and took my basic training at Fort Bliss, and then took advanced training at Fort Bliss, and became a radar operator. From there I was stationed in Washington, D.C. Rode a train from Fort Bliss to Washington. When we left Fort Bliss, twenty-four hours later we went through Texarkana. (DM laughs) We were halfway to Washington by the time we got out of Texas.

DM:

That's a long way. Eight-hundred and some-odd miles. Let's you know how big Texas really is, doesn't it?

BAH:

So we left El Paso in the afternoon, got into Fort Worth at breakfast time, and my two sisters lived in Fort Worth. We were going to be there for about an hour and I phoned them, they came down and had breakfast there with me at the train station and we went on. That night, pulled in to



St. Louis and stopped there, they just backed the [railroad] car in, cut loose from it and went on. And we woke up the next morning in the St. Louis station, and they put the car on another train and went from there on to Washington, D.C. going through West Virginia in the nighttime. I heard a train whistle and pulled back the curtain on the car I was in and looked and the engine of our train was coming back down beside us, there on those bins going through West Virginia on hairpin curves turning back and forth. Later on, I remember telling a friend who was going to West Virginia, "If you find a level place in that state, let me know where it is, because I didn't see it." It's really hilly.

DM:

I guess this might have been your first time to see mountains outside the little mountains over at Fort Bliss, the Franklin Mountains or whatever.

BAH:

I had been to Arizona when I was twelve years old or thirteen, and so I had seen mountains. But that was my first and only train ride. I never rode the train before or after that event.

DM:

This is different kind of country than you were used to, it's humid and wooded. Did you feel all of that?

BAH:

Got into Washington and the first summer there, I had never seen anything like that. Humidity at ninety percent and temperature above ninety, it was miserable. No air conditioning. The second summer I was there was the coolest summer they had ever had. It was pleasant all summer. But the first summer was miserable hot.

DM:

Tell me about your responsibilities there. You've shown me the drone target, I think the drone target plane that you—

BAH:

I was a radar operator and learned that at Fort Bliss and on the train on the way to Washington, we had a Jewish boy from New York City, from Brooklyn. He was the most obnoxious person I have ever been around in my entire life. Dominated the conversations, knew everything about everything, and was just a pain to be around. And I thought, "Well, he's in the gun platoon, and I'm in radar, so I won't have to be in the barracks with him." And we got to Washington, and he and I were sent to the same unit, and I still thought, "Well, I won't have to live with him anyway." And got there and two weeks after we were there, the radar mechanic was getting out, and this boy had flunked out of radar mechanic school, but he was the nearest thing they had to a

mechanic, so they put him in the radar mechanic and he moved into the barracks with us. We became good friends through the years, and I would help him. I could understand more than he could about mechanics sometimes, and I'd go over after hours and work for hours helping him with the mechanics of the radar, and he did a fair job, got through it through his enlistment. But I never would have tolerated him if I hadn't had to, but I learned to like him. That taught me a lesson in life to not be too judgmental about people too early on. We spent the rest of our enlistment there together.

DM:

Interesting. This is the second time that something similar to this happened—with the bully in school first of all—so that's a good lesson.

BAH:

Well, there was another bully story before that that I skipped over in Levelland. There was a boy, his name was Joe Potts, I still remember that. He may still live in Levelland, I don't know. But he was the school bully, and everyone was afraid of him and one day he was picking on me and some of the high school boys were there and they got in a ring around the two of us. They said, "You're going to fight him. You're not going to let him do you that way." Well, I didn't want to fight him, but I looked at them, and they were big. I mean, they looked like giants. They said, "If you don't whip him, we're going to whip you." So I stood up to him, there wasn't a lick hit when he saw that I wasn't going to back down, he broke and run, went between one of those boys' legs, and he never bothered me again. (DM laughs) But I never would have fought him if it hadn't been that they said "You're going to fight him or we're going to get you."

DM:

It turned out all right, though.

BAH:

It turned out all right.

DM:

In the army, can you tell me about the target practice a little bit?

BAH:

Okay. We would go twice a year to Bethany Beach, Delaware and fire at targets. We would load up everything on the trucks and march over with the equipment like we were in a battlefield and go to Bethany Beach. We crossed the Chesapeake Bay Bridge there, which was five or six miles long. I'd never seen a bridge like that in my life. We'd go down to the beach and be there for several days firing at targets out over the ocean. There were two kinds of targets: one was a sock pulled behind a twin-engine bomber on a long lead, and we would fire at it, and another was a

radio-controlled RCAT, they were called, radio-controlled air target, and it was flown with radio control and we would fire at it over the ocean.

DM:

So you were firing live rounds?

BAH:

Firing live rounds, just like real combat except we were firing at targets and not enemy planes.

DM:

But it was all by radar?

BAH:

All by radar. In fact, when we would fire, the last round we were going to fire had already left the gun before the first round would explode out there where we were firing. So there wasn't any of seeing where you hit and then change your aim, because it'd already happened. We could control the aim with the equipment there. The radar set that I was in had three controls, one for the azimuth, one for elevation and one for range. Three operators sitting side-by-side, turning little wheels to lock on to the target. And when we would get the target on the set and lock onto it automatic, then we could just sit there and watch through the optics while it was firing, it automatically fired. We were firing a pattern behind the target because they didn't want us to shoot the target down, because it'd take two hours to get another one up there and waste a lot of time.

DM:

As long as you hit right behind the target then you were okay?

BAH:

They wanted a good pattern—four guns were firing at the same time, and they wanted these four rounds to burst right behind the target, so I found out that we could advance the azimuth just a little bit and it would change the location of these patterns. And I did move the azimuth ahead one time and shot down a target. (DM laughs) I didn't tell them that I did that, but they had to put another target up.

DM:

Well, you know the bomber that was pulling a sock target—did you call it a sock target?

BAH:

Yeah.

DM:

What did the poor crew do to get that kind of duty? Because things go wrong.

BAH:

They could go wrong, I guess, but—

DM:

Things could go wrong. It doesn't sound like a very appealing duty.

BAH:

It was a long lead, and they were a long way from the target, so it would almost have had to be deliberate to lock on to it. But the sock had a metal woven into the fabric so the radar would pick up on it.

DM:

How big was it?

BAH:

I never saw one of them up close, just seeing them through the optics of the set, it appeared to me to be about twelve or fourteen feet across. And it was long. Looked like the size of a freight car almost up there.

DM:

So it replicated maybe the size of a plane?

BAH:

Possibly so.

DM:

Well, even though the Korean War was pretty much over, this was still the height of the Cold War. Were there concerns about any kind of attack on the eastern seaboard?

BAH:

There actually was some concern. At that time, there was some kind of controversy going on in Egypt, I don't remember the details of it, but I know that was a hot spot for a while. For most it was a hot spot. It was still the Cold War like you said, and they were cautious.

DM:

Well, and being in Washington, D.C. too. Prime target for a possible nuclear attack, you know.

BAH:

We were in a figure eight of gun sights around Washington, Baltimore, and then outside of that perimeter was another larger figure eight around of Nike missiles. And of course the missiles could fire at high altitude, but they could not fire down at low range, so we were there in case a plane came in under the missiles. We were supposed to protect the capital at that time.

DM:

Well, I've heard of flying under the radar, but your radars were such that you could pick up people coming in on the surface, pretty much, or could they come in even below your radar?

BAH:

If they came in under our radar, they would have been in so much clutter that we couldn't tell what was what. If they were flying at tree-top level, we would have a hard time picking them up because of so much other stuff cluttering the radar. That's what they're talking about, "under the radar." I suppose in a sea-level operation that it'd be awfully hard to actually fly under the radar, because—but if it got too close to the ground, then it would pick up clutter, so the radar became useless.

DM:

Okay. Did they have any kind of off-shore radar installations, something mounted on a ship, for example? Or were you kind of the first line of defense there?

BAH:

Well, I'm sure the navy had ships that were equipped outside of that, but we would have been the first line of land defense.

DM:

When did you leave the army?

BAH:

I got out the sixth of December of 1956. Went in on December sixth of '54, so it's exactly two years.

DM:

Well, a year later you married?

BAH:

Well, I married in February after I got out of the army in December.

DM:

Carlene Beaver?

BAH:

Carlene Beaver from Eureka Springs, Arkansas.

DM:

How did y'all meet?

BAH:

We met—she was a lady evangelist who held a revival at Matador.

DM:

Oh, okay. Was she traveling through, then?

BAH:

Well, she was actually—came to West Texas with her pastor from Eureka Springs, Arkansas. He was from Silverton, Texas. He came out to preach a revival at Silverton and to build a new church there, and she came along to help with the singing in the revival and then she stayed and preached a few more revivals before she went back to Arkansas.

DM:

Oh, okay. So you met at a revival at Matador, I believe you said—

BAH:

I was going to church at Roaring Springs, and drove in to Roaring Springs that Wednesday evening, and the pastor said, "Well, we're going to dismiss service tonight and I'll go on over to Matador to the revival." So we went over there and this young lady evangelist [was] preaching a revival, and that's actually where we met. And then after that revival she stayed with my pastor who was a lady minister, and stayed with her for several months and preached other revivals in the area. Actually, we never really dated to speak of then, but we were acquainted, and I did take her down to meet my parents one day—or my father. My mother was with me at the time I met her. And then she preached a revival in our home church at Roaring Springs, preached at Crosbyton, at Jayton, and several other places around, and I was being drafted into the army. Shortly before I went to the army, she went back to Arkansas after she finished her preaching here. We wrote to each other then during my army years. And when I took a leave, I came by, she was preaching a revival at Tulsa and staying with her cousin there, and I stopped at Tulsa and saw her.

Then—I'm trying to remember if there were two different occasions there. But anyway, on one occasion in 1956, I took a leave and came to Tulsa and stopped and saw her and then came on

home, and then when I started back, my mother was going to ride with me back to Washington just to see the Capitol and the scenery there and then fly back home, so we spent the night in Tulsa. After church that night, Carlene and I went out for a drive and came back semi-engaged. Then we got serious in our letter-writing from then on. That would've been like in August, possibly, before I got out in December. So my mother and I went on to Washington and then she saw the Capitol and sights around there. I took her out to Bethany Beach where we fired at the targets, and then she rode a plane back to Fort Worth where my sisters lived and they met her there.

When I got out of the army then, I had a buddy that was driving my car back and forth. He lived off base, had his wife and two children there, and living off base, so he didn't really have any way to get them home back to Texas and I said, "Take my car and take them home and then leave my car at my sister's house in Fort Worth." And he said, "I can do that," so that's what he did, and the last two weeks I was in the army, I didn't have a car. He had my car and had gone to Texas. So when I got out, I flew to the Dallas-Fort Worth area and picked up my car. Never saw him again, but my car was there when I got there.

So we then began making plans for getting married. I took a job in Brownfield helping a carpenter, working there for a little while, and rented a duplex and bought some furniture. This friend that I was working for bought a trailer house and was moving into it, and he traded his furniture in on the trailer house, and I bought his furniture at a very discounted price and had it all in the apartment and arranged like I thought it ought to be. But when I went to Arkansas and got married and came in the first night we spent in this duplex. I went to work the next day and when I came back, every stick of furniture had been moved, it was all in a different place. I found out then I didn't know how to arrange a house for a wife.

DM:

(laughs) Well, now this is interesting because she moved from Eureka Springs, which is a pretty part of the country, to a kind of country that's very different.

BAH:

Someone said, "Do you think you can get a girl from the Ozarks to live with you in Brownfield?" And I said, "If she'll live with me there, she'll live with me anywhere." (DM laughs) In the fifties, we did have some pretty severe sandstorms.

DM:

Yes. The drought of the fifties. How did she react to this? Was this an adjustment?

BAH:

She was a whole lot like her mother, who couldn't stand to see any dust around on anything. I've seen my mother-in-law get up in the morning and find a little speck of dust and she'd clean the house before she fixed breakfast. And Carlene was a whole lot like her, but it didn't take long

before she realized in West Texas, you put up with the dust, you don't clean up the dust. She's done well adjusting through the years, and we moved a lot and lived in a lot of different places, and she's adapted well to all of them.

DM:

Well, she was already adapted to the ministerial life, which I guess—

BAH:

At that time, when we first married, I had never really been a minister. I had started my study course, studying by correspondence from the Berean School of Bible that came out of Springfield, Missouri. I was studying that for my credentials, and we got married in February and worked at Brownfield. I was working there, she preached a revival at Plains, and we drove back and forth every night, working, and then come in, take her to revival and back.

Then the district council was coming up in April, and I applied for my credentials as a minister in this council. We went to Amarillo for the council, and I met with the people there—the officials. And the district superintendent said, "If you're going to be in the ministry full-time, we want you to have a license. If you're not, you need to have a provisional license," which is called an exhorter's permit. And I said, "We intend to go into the ministry." And he said, "You never have pastored a church, what makes you think that you will now?" I said, "Well, it takes a little bit of time to adapt after coming out of the military and getting started." He said, "I realize that. If you're going to be in the ministry, we want you to have a license from the start." He said, "There are three churches that are open in the district, and you're welcome to go to any of them and talk to the people there." So I chose the one in Turkey, Turkey, Texas, and went there and talked with the people.

I still didn't know whether I was going to have a license or whether I'd have an exhorter permit, but we went and talked to the people there and preached for them on Sunday. It had been raining, was real muddy and not very many people came because the roads were muddy. And they asked me to come back the next Sunday. So we went back the next Sunday and preached for them again, and I preached one service and my wife the other. And we had an election then that night and were voted in 100% as pastors and we pastored in Turkey, Texas for two years.

Our first child was born while we lived in Turkey. She was born at Matador. There was no hospital in Turkey, so we went to Matador. Dr. Stanley had a hospital there. Dr. Stanley was an old-time type physician. He said, "A man's place is in the delivery room." And his assistant was going to have a child born, and he said, "Dr. Stanley, I can't go in there." He said, "If you don't go, I'm not either," and he started pulling off his lab coat, so he went in. But the doctor told me that I belonged in the delivery room, so I did see my first child born. That was a new experience to me because I'd grown up on the farm and learned to live with cattle better than people, and had never really been around babies at all. And I thought they'd break. But Carlene pretty well taught me right away. She had younger brothers and sisters and knew about babies and she taught me that they weren't as fragile as I thought they were.



So when Patsy was born, we were pastoring in Turkey, and we would take her to church in a bassinet and she would lay there in the bassinet during the service. Someone said, "Well how can that baby sleep through a service like this?" I said, "She doesn't know anything else. She went to church the first time when she was three days old." Now, Carlene didn't go when she was three days old, but her mother was there and we took the baby and went on to church anyway just a few blocks from the house. So she had been in church all of her life. It was just part of life. Our second child was conceived while we were at Turkey, but later on we had moved back to Brownfield and were pastoring a little church there when he was born. Carlene went back to Matador for the baby's delivery. So I missed out on that. When the time came, I couldn't get there in time. I walked in the next morning and Dr. Stanley said, "Well, you missed the party." So anyway, we pastored at Brownfield for a while. Then my father was in critical health, they were living on the farm at Dickens again then with Roland. So we moved back for one year and lived in Roaring Springs to be close to him while—during the last year of his life. After he passed away in April of '61, I finished out the year doing some work that I'd contracted for and then we took the church in Big Lake, Texas and moved to Big Lake and were there for a year.

DM:

This is a really interesting thing, that you and your wife preached different services. Was this the case at all of these churches? Different services? It was a husband-wife team preaching, not something that would have happened in most denominations at that time, at least, I wouldn't think.

BAH:

I intended for her to do most of the preaching and for me to work and make a living and gradually work into it. But as it turned out, when she got pregnant she got morning sickness and for seven months she was too sick to preach or do anything else. The last couple of months she did real well, but the first few months of that pregnancy she wasn't able and I had to step up to the plate and do all the preaching.

DM:

How was it? This was a different experience for you. You had done the study, but still—

BAH:

Well, I had preached before I went into the army and during the time that I was in the army, but not in a structured situation where I was responsible for every service. But we just—what you have to do, you have to do, so I did.

DM:

Were you also—would you lead singing as well?

BAH:

I do not sing. The district official one time asked me to lead singing at a meeting and I said, "I don't lead singing," and he said, "How can you pastor a church if you don't lead singing?" I said, "I married somebody that can." (DM laughs) So we had other people to do a lot of that, but Carlene through the years did a lot of the singing and playing the piano, but I do not sing. I tried, but it didn't work out. I asked her one time, "When I lead singing, why does the pianist always stop and look at me?" She said, "You start off in one key and then change to another; she doesn't know what to do." (laughter) So I'm not musically inclined. But I did the preaching that had to be done, and then later on as the other children came along and Carlene wasn't as sick, she did help out a lot through the years and we alternated preaching. But the more children we got, the less she was able to take care of all of it, so I did most of the preaching then.

DM:

There were four children in all, right?

BAH:

Four children in all. At Big Lake, we had the two children when we moved there. We were beginning to notice by that time that something was wrong with Patsy. She would have little jerking spells and she had just about quit talking. I bought her a tricycle when she was two years old and she never could learn to ride it. She could walk straddled on it and sit on it, but she never learned to pedal it. And we kind of knew something was wrong, and she kept getting a little worse all the time, started having seizures.

And I, at that time, was doing some selling to help make ends meet. The church in Big Lake didn't pay very well and I was selling life insurance, traveling around quite a bit, and I made a trip to Matador and talked to Dr. Stanley who delivered both of our older babies. He referred me to Dr. Jack Dunn in Lubbock. And I came by to see Dr. Dunn, who'd been in Big Lake for about a year now, and he said, "Well, bring her in for a test." And they ran an EEG on her, and said, "Every part of her brain is affected in some way. We don't know why or what happened, we don't know anything."

She was walking and talking at age one. By age two, she had just about quit talking altogether, except for just a few words. She did have brain damage, and we never found any reason for it, never knew why, and nobody could ever find anything. We took her to the Bluebird Clinic in Houston, and they couldn't find anything further. So she was getting to where it was hard to manage her in the church services and all. She took constant attention. So after I talked to Dr. Dunn, well he referred me to Milam Training Center here in Lubbock, and I went by and talked to them and they said, "If you bring her in, we'll do an evaluation and see what we can learn and see if we can help you." So I went back home in Big Lake and told Carlene, "We have an appointment next week to take Patsy to Lubbock to Milam Training Center. If they can help her, if they can do anything for her, we'll just move to Lubbock."

So we did resign the church and moved to Lubbock. I took a job at a fence company to keep food on the table, and get her into training. She went through Milam Training Center and into the Ballinger work session at the Ballinger school. And then when a state school opened in 1969, she was one of the early admits there, and spent the rest of her life in Lubbock State School. But we had another child born at Big Lake before we moved. And then after we moved to Lubbock, our fourth child was born, Irvin and Roger. So we had the four children, three boys and one girl.

DM:

How long were you with the fence company?

BAH:

I think about three years that I worked for Pioneer Fence. Started out in the warehouse cutting pickets and wound up as the job foreman and spent a couple of years with them.

DM:

I bet that's a business that boomed here because they eventually passed a regulation for mandatory wood fences, didn't they?

BAH:

In parts of town, anyway. And it was a big business then. The company was located at 19<sup>th</sup> and Q, and was there for a lot of years. In fact, I drove by that site this week and saw that all the buildings were torn down. It's a vacant lot now, and I don't know why, because there's been some kind of a business on it. But at that time it was Pioneer Fence Company and I worked for them for a number of years and then went into the insurance business again. Worked at Montgomery Ward for one year, or a portion of the year anyway, doing whatever I could to make ends meet and still doing some preaching along, but not regularly, just filling in for others.

DM:

In the area or in Lubbock?

BAH:

Anywhere within driving distance of Lubbock, but we did live in Lubbock until 1971. I had gone into the nursing home business by then. And the way I got into it, really I sold a life insurance policy to the administrator of the Levelland nursing home, and he was telling me about the company he was working for, which was a Christian organization and they were into it more for the care of the people than they were for making money.

DM:

Is this Challenge Ministries Nursing?

BAH:

This is Challenge Ministry. It was called Assembly Homes at the time I went into it. It started out under the name of the Assembly of God, because the man who organized it was an Assembly of God preacher, and all of the board of directors were Assembly of God men. But because it was not under the financial authority of the overall church, they requested it be changed in name, which made a lot of sense. So it was changed to Challenge Ministries.

DM:

This was the thirteen-state organization, or became thirteen states?

BAH:

The thirteen states I mentioned mixed two or three companies together. I could kind of separate them for you, but—Challenge was—the administrator at Levelland was into that, and he was going to be transferred to a new home that was being built in Kansas. And when I delivered his insurance policy, I said, “This is something I might like to get into.” And he said, “Well, the man you need to talk to is in Lubbock right now at the Howard Johnson Motel.” So I came over the same day and met Reverend “Jake” [Jacob] Myers who was the personnel director for the company. I filled out an application, and he said, “We’re going to have some openings on down the line. Right now we don’t have anything, but we’d like for you to start learning.” They were opening Lakeside Nursing Home in Lubbock at that time, which is still here. I went over and began helping the administrator at Lakeside, just to learn the business. No salary, no income, just learning a little about it. It wasn’t long then until this one in Kansas was ready to open and Mr. [Arley] Floyd was being transferred up there, so I went to Levelland and training with him one month and he moved out and left it with me.

DM:

You were administering the entire nursing home? Were you the head of—the director of the nursing home?

BAH:

I was after one month of training. The most helpless, lonesome day of my life, I believe. Drifting along there for a while, and I thought, Well, boy, this is—everything’s going good. And I didn’t realize that I wasn’t doing my paperwork and keeping all that. I was just putting it in the tray and letting it stack up, and all at once the home office is wanting a lot of stuff that I knew nothing about, and I had to go back and dig through it real fast and catch up.

DM:

That wasn’t part—that was left out in the month’s training.

(both laugh)

BAH:

Right. In fact, my month training was sitting there watching him, what he did, and I had no hands-on experience at all. And I had told Reverend Myers, I said, "I would like to, as you expand and take more facilities here, I would like to be a field representative and be over a group of them." He said, "You have to have experience first," and I said, "I realize that." But I ran the Levelland home for one year. And along in April, after I took over, they were having a meeting in Minnesota of all the administrators and they wanted us all to come in, and they chartered airplanes to take us up there. I had never ridden in a small plane in my life, just had ridden the one airliner from Washington, D.C. to Dallas when I got out of the army. And I rode front-seat with the pilot all the way to Minnesota in this Cherokee Six. I thought, Now what if that man had a heart attack and died at the controls? Nobody in this airplane knows how to fly. If I'm going to be doing this, I'm going to learn to fly an airplane.

So I started taking training in Levelland while I was there during that year, to learn to fly and finished it later on as I came to Lubbock. That was my first experience with a live plane, sitting right up where I could see out the windshield. I loved it. From then on I was addicted. So I did learn to fly airplanes as a result of that. One year later, I was promoted to field representative and was in charge of the group of homes in the West Texas area. Had one in Fort Worth, one in Malvern, Arkansas, one in Liberal, Kansas, and one in Louisiana, in Lake Charles, Louisiana.

DM:

Pretty scattered about.

BAH:

I had twenty-four homes to look after, and I saw my family about twice a month.

DM:

And you flew to all of these?

BAH:

No, I did not fly to all of these. I drove to most of them for quite some time. It was a year or so later before I got to the flying bent. But I got experience that way.

DM:

Did you prefer that over running a single facility?

BAH:

Well, I had mixed emotions about that. When you're running a single facility, you get attached to the people. And this way I was going all the time, changing, but it was interesting. And I had some experiences that I'll tell you about. Three experiences in fact that were unique. One was

when we opened a new home in Arlington, Texas, and hired a lady who had owned her own nursing home at one time, and had a lot of experience. She was an older woman and she told me, "B.A., I know how to run a nursing home, you won't have to bother with me. You can spend your time doing other things, and working with the other people, but there's nothing that can happen in a nursing home situation that I haven't been through before."

So I kind of took her at her word and let her go at that for a while, and one day she called me and said, "B.A.! Help! I need help! I've never seen anything like this!" And I said, "Velma, you've seen it all. You know everything about running a nursing home." And she said, "But not this! You've got to come over and help me!" And I went over, and said, "What is happening?" At that time I had an office in Fort Worth and was working out of there over a group of homes, and she said, "We have a nurse on the night shift that is doing abortions in one of the empty rooms down on the empty wing and I've never experienced anything like that." Well, I hadn't either. We had to do something, and of course we got rid of the employee and kind of swept it under the rug, didn't publicize that fact. But that was one of the first major things I had dealt with as an overseer of a group of nursing homes.

DM:

What was the biggest challenge in this kind of thing? Was it personnel?

BAH:

Personnel was the biggest challenge because wages are not the best in the world, except for the licensed individuals. And keeping a staff was the big challenge.

DM:

How often would you hear from a family that didn't feel that things were going the way they should? Did you have family complaints?

BAH:

That was part of the business. It went with the territory. Mostly, I let the administrator handle that as far as they could, and then helped them out when the time came that they needed help. I walked into a facility one time, there was a young man there, talked to him just a few minutes and the phone rang and I took the phone call, and after a while, he said, "B.A., how do you do that?" And I said, "How do I do what?" He said, "For two hours, you've sat there making one decision right after another. How do you do that? I've been taught that you weigh all the options and you ask yourself what should be done, and you're just making decisions." And I said, "Well, I have to make decisions. Something came up." "Well, how do you always make the right decision?" I said, "I don't. If I make a wrong decision, I make another decision to correct it." He was into the school thing, well, I'd never had any training, I just knew dealing with people, you've got to do something.

DM:

Practical experience.

BAH:

I didn't realize I was a decision-maker. I just thought I was rocking with the punches and going along. So I did a lot of traveling in those days—

DM:

What were the other two situations?

BAH:

The other two? You want to get on to that, okay. A lot of things happened in the meantime, but let me give you one that's not in those other two and then I'll get back to these two. This was a new facility we took down in East Texas. I had never heard of the town of Jasper in my life. Even though I'd lived in Texas all my life, I'd never heard of Jasper. And the company took a home at Jasper and one in Woodville, and so the personnel director told me, "You need to get down there and visit those as soon as you can and get acquainted with him." And I was on my way down there, had stopped in Palestine to do some work there in two facilities we had in Palestine, and got a phone call that the administrator in Jasper had disappeared. I needed to get there as soon as possible. So I dropped everything and went to Jasper. The young lady who was the administrator when they hired her had disappeared. This was like on a Tuesday morning and she hadn't been seen since Friday afternoon. So I talked to the staff members and nobody seemed to know anything except she's gone. All at once, the phone rang, and it was the state regulatory department, they'd heard the rumor that she was gone. And this secretary, a twenty-year-old girl had been running the home since the administrator vanished, and she said, "Oh, yes we do have an administrator and he has a license." I had brought my license in and hung it on the wall and this twenty-year-old girl thought that she could be prosecuted and sent to prison for running that home without a license. She was scared to death, but she wasn't going to leave those residents. She was taking care of them, doing a good job, a fine young woman. But she was so thrilled when she answered the phone and they said, "You don't have an administrator?" And she says, "Oh yes we do!"

DM:

I bet she was glad you didn't dilly-dally about getting down there. What happened with the—did she just walk out on the job?

BAH:

What happened was, to make a long story short, she was a person that had been dominated by her parents. She was twenty-four years old and not married, and was still living with her parents, and they didn't like her boyfriend and she ran off and got married. So when we finally got ahold

of her and found out, she was in Indiana somewhere. I talked to her on the phone—never did meet the lady but talked to her on the phone. I said, “Well, we’re going to prosecute you if you don’t show up—you took some checks to the bank.” She said, “Oh. They’re in my car.” And she had had these checks and was on the way to deposit them when she met the guy and they left town together and got married. So she sent the checks back to us, nothing malicious on her part, she was just careless.

DM:

It all turned out okay, then.

BAH:

It all turned out okay except I had to run that home for a while until we could find somebody.

DM:

Oh, that’d be a tough part of your job, then, having to step in.

BAH:

It was, and I ran that one for a while. I ran one in Liberal, Kansas between administrators there, the one in Malvern, Arkansas between administrators.

DM:

This was a demanding job.

BAH:

Let me drop in another thing that’s come to my mind about Malvern, Arkansas. I ran the home there for about two months, I think—or three, between administrators, and I met two people there with the same name. One was a banker, one was a county agent. Both of them were named Floyd Parker. So this rocked along. I knew both of them and moved on in my life. Later on, after I was already in a later stage of my career, my son here in Lubbock called me one time and said, “Dad, when are you coming to Lubbock?” And I said, “Oh, I’ll probably come this weekend.” And he said, “I have someone I want you to meet.” And I said, “Well, who is she?” And he was twenty-eight or twenty-nine years old at the time. So he said, “A girl from Malvern, Arkansas that I’ve met.” And I said, “What’s her name? What’s her dad’s name?” He said, “Floyd Parker.” I said, “The banker or the county agent?” He said, “The banker. How did you know?” I said, “I knew both of those Floyd Parkers in Malvern years ago.”

DM:

(laughs) That’s amazing.



BAH:

She had come out here, her sister and brother-in-law were here. He was stationed at Reese [Air Force Base], he was a pilot, and she had come out to live with them and work with them a while, and my son met her. I had known her as just a little three or four-year-old girl, and here she's about to be my daughter-in-law. (DM laughs) So I thought it'd be interesting just to drop that in there. But moving on, after Challenge Ministries over-expanded and got in trouble and eventually wound up in bankruptcy, I had already resigned from the company.

DM:

How many facilities did they have?

BAH:

They had got like thirty-five or more. Got themselves in trouble and I realized that it was a sinking ship and tried to get out and get away from it as far as I could before it sunk. So anyway, I moved back to Lubbock and went to work for MBFA, which was a home health business here.

DM:

Let me see if I have the initials right: Medical Benevolence?

BAH:

No, it was Missionary Baptist Foundation of America, is what it was, MBFA. But they were just the overall name for a non-profit group that started West Texas Home Health. And I went to work here with them. And they were moving into the nursing home field also, and had the Parkview home here in Lubbock out on Parkview Drive, and I had to run it for a few weeks there between administrators.

DM:

At least this time you had a lot of experience.

BAH:

I had a lot of experience by then. Went in out there one morning, and we had an RN director of nursing who was a very outgoing, professional type, RN, but she was young, inexperienced, and she was just in tears that morning. Went in there and she was crying, and I said, "What in the world's wrong?" And she said, "Well, we've got a prostitution ring operating out of this nursing home. That man in a wheelchair," and described him, "He's a pimp." And I said, "What do you mean, a pimp?" "Well he is. He gets on the telephone and he calls people in here at midnight hours, has men coming in here." And I said, "Well, who are his wares?" And she said, "My aides!" And she just broke out crying.

DM:

She said what?

BAH:

My nurse aides. "My aides."

DM:

The aides! Oh, my—

BAH:

So he was calling—

DM:

Supplementing their income.

BAH:

Yeah, they were supplementing their income late at night. So here I dealt with abortion, now I'm dealing with prostitution.

DM:

About the time you thought you'd seen everything, I guess.

BAH:

The other one was with drugs later on. That's after I'd been around the world and back and I was in Wheeler.

DM:

It was someone dealing drugs out of the nursing home?

BAH:

Absolutely.

DM:

Employees there?

BAH:

No, it was a patient. He was a young man that had been in a motorcycle accident and was paralyzed. He was a quadriplegic; he couldn't move his arms or legs, but he had a brilliant mind, and he could carry on a good conversation. And it turns out that he was in touch with his sister in California by telephone, and he had certain employees that he would let make phone calls for

him. He wouldn't just have anybody make them. And he was having drugs shipped in from California to a post office box, and then he had one or two of my employees that were working with him, and they were selling these drugs. And that all came out and I had to deal with that. So here are three major problems that I dealt with over the years.

In that, I put him on the gurney, took him down to the courthouse to be arraigned. What do you do with a quadriplegic that's done something illegal? How do you handle him if you try him and send him to prison, what prison do you send him to? And I don't really know what ever came of that, except that we did get it shut down, the employees were fired, some of them were prosecuted, but the county—or state, or whoever it was, never did really carry through with that.

DM:

I wonder where they sent him?

BAH:

He was still there when I left.

DM:

He stayed at the nursing home?

BAH:

He stayed at the nursing home.

DM:

Awaiting arraignment, I guess.

BAH:

Well, he'd been arraigned, but awaiting trial, and trial just never was—never did come up. And I was thinking the other day, I need to find out whatever happened to him, because he was still there when the nursing home sold to another owner and I left at that time.

DM:

It sounds like the problem, the underlying problem might have been what you mentioned earlier, the not being able to pay enough to get really good people in there as staff. I mean, they were trying to make money on the side. Is that it, or—?

BAH:

That was part of it. But really, that many people living under one roof, it just snowballs. Bad things happen as well as good things and it has to be dealt with along the way.

DM:

Did you have to start at some point doing criminal background checks and that kind of thing?

BAH:

Oh yes, that all happened in the last few years I was administrator. We had to start doing all of that.

DM:

State regulations must have become more and more strict through the years too, I would think.

BAH:

They did. When the Medicaid program came in, and made it where there's a lot of money to be made, actually care started digressing at that time, I feel like. There are those that would argue that point with me, but the dedicated people that were trying to do something to take care of the aged and the infirm were doing a better job without all the government regulations, but there were those who weren't. There were those who were taking advantage of it, and I can see both sides of the issue.

DM:

I can imagine that your workload increased significantly when state regulations became tighter.

BAH:

Tremendously, yeah. And at that same time, the licensure law came in, the administrator license. When I first started, an administrator didn't have to have a license. All he had to have was three letters of recommendation: one from a minister, one from a doctor, and one from—who was the third one? A business, or bank, I guess it was. That's the only requirement. So I came in under that requirement, and when the licensure law was implemented, I had two years to pass the test and get my license at that time and I started studying for that. There was a training course, and I took a few college classes for getting the administrator license, and I became preceptor for administrators in training. There was one stage of my employment that I was a full-time preceptor. I had four administrators that were in training, and I had to spend so many hours with each one of them each week, so that's four days a week that I was in four different facilities, and then I had one day to catch up on all the paperwork and all of that.

DM:

Was this still with MBFA?

BAH:

No, this was with Challenge, actually.

DM:

Challenge, okay. At MBFA, were you over a group then again? A group of how many?

BAH:

I was. I was the vice president. I had one man above me in the organization. Started out with just three or four nursing homes, but then expanded rapidly. But then MBFA did the same thing Challenge did, over-expanded. And at its height we had two facilities in Wisconsin, two or three or four in Arizona, and the rest in Texas. And I was over all of them to some extent.

DM:

How many in Texas?

BAH:

I'm not sure just what the height was. But what really sunk that organization was a group of homes we took from the Woods organization in the Wichita Falls-Vernon area down in there, a group of six homes that were taken at once. And I was supposed to be in charge of the acquisitions. And I had looked at those and could not come to terms with the people on the lease arrangement and turned them down. And I was in Arizona then, taking care of some things out there and the man who was above me in the company was approached and he leased those facilities that I had said will not work. They actually are what sunk the ship and brought about the biggest bankruptcy that Lubbock County had ever experienced.

DM:

Were you out of the organization by the time that all happened?

BAH:

I was, but I didn't get far enough away from that one. I made the mistake of leasing a couple of homes from them when I left. When it was filed for bankruptcy, the trustee pulled those back in, sued to break my leases, and I wasn't big enough to fight him. My attorney said, "You can win this case, but it'll take ten years, fifty thousand dollars or more to fight it," and I couldn't do it. I had to just knuckle under and walk away. At that time, I was bankrupt, literally, but I didn't file it. I hung in there and tried to pay my debts all the way through, but it totally broke me on that. And then after a number of years I wound up working for another corporation out of California that was opening up in Washington state. So I spent one year in Washington state, working for them. And they did the exact same thing, over expanded, got themselves in trouble, but I was already gone from there and that didn't affect me.

DM:

Well, then you went to Wheeler to one facility, is that correct?

BAH:

One facility.

DM:

That sounds wonderfully refreshing, you know?

BAH:

It was. And that let me get back into the ministry and pastor churches and do some preaching while I was running that facility. But that is where I dealt with the drug situation, at Wheeler.

DM:

That was—I have the dates, '83 to '86, and then '87 to '95, does that sound right for Wheeler?

BAH:

That sounds right. I opened that home in January of '83, and ran it until '85. The man that owned it had three facilities in the Fort Worth area, and he brought me in down there to run the one in Burleson and help in overseeing the others. That is when I then made a deal with the people in California about the Washington situation. I was only in that position for four or five months, then I left. And then Wheeler got in trouble while I was in Washington, and I came back and took it over again in '87, and ran it until '95. The fall of '95 was when it sold to a big corporation that I didn't want to work for. And at that time, I'd had open-heart surgery and was old enough to retire, so I moved to Lubbock, bought this house and lived here ever since.

DM:

But continued in the ministry? Did you continue in the ministry at all at that point?

BAH:

Yes, I did, up until I began having trouble with my voice. You might not believe it after me talking for an hour here, but—

DM:

Well trying to project it to an audience.

BAH:

—but when I try to preach, I'm short of breath. And standing up, too. Here I'm sitting down, but with the heart problems I had, I had shortness of breath and--

DM:

I understand that. It's a great amount of energy to stand up and project your voice to an audience.

BAH:

So I haven't done much preaching in the last few years, but up until, I would say three years ago, I was active to some extent.

DM:

Since that time you've been doing a lot of family history, I know. What are other activities you are interested in since retirement? How do you spend your time?

BAH:

I spend most of my time doing research on family history and doing some writing. I've had to learn the computer on my own. I've had no schooling on computers, and I still am not there. But I can kind of get through it.

DM:

No one is there. I don't know anyone who is there. You can't get there. You can't get there when they change things every day. But that's part of the self-education that has popped out in this conversation a few times. Self-education in the ministry, for example. I bet the G.I. Bill didn't pay any of that, either, or did they?

BAH:

The G.I. Bill paid for my training to learn to fly an airplane. After I got my private license, then it paid for me to go on to a commercial license, paying a percentage. Actually, I made some money there. Because when I was overseeing so many homes, there were some far enough away that I did fly to them, and the company would pay me travel pay, and VA was paying for my schooling, so I actually made a little bit out of that surplus.

DM:

Okay. Well, I have exhausted my questions, but there may be something else you want to interject here that I don't know to ask. Is there something we have not talked about at this point?

BAH:

It's been a long life and an enjoyable life. A lot of adventure and a lot of things that I have bypassed that would make interesting stories, but we can't get them all into one conversation.

DM:

Well, maybe we'll add to this at some point, you know. If you will think of these things, jot a note, then I'll come back and we can talk about some anecdotes, some events in your life. Now that we have the chronology, we can fit those into place.

BAH:

And after I moved here in '95, I did some work with the owner of the Wheeler care center that I worked for after he sold it to another corporation. He and I decided to develop some assisted living facilities, and we built one in Keller, and one in Hillsborough, and did a little promotion there. Then I totally got out of that. Worked for an RV salesman for a couple of years, and then just kind of dropped it all and went into doing family history.

DM:

Well, that's nice. I know you enjoy that.

BAH:

I've been mainly developing family history since 2007.

DM:

Well, now I should mention this on the record that at the Southwest Collection, we have some of your writings, and we have some of your material, and of course, we will always be bugging you for some more of that. So whoever listens to this interview can also look in the manuscript collections to find more information on your family history.

BAH:

And also I have a file in the library at Denton.

DM:

Okay. I'm glad you mentioned that. It's helpful to know where other materials exist. And you will have family that will listen to this interview I suspect at some point along the way, and they will need to know that as well.

BAH:

And also at the courthouse, old courthouse museum in Denton, they have records on some branches of the family. The Hyatt that was sheriff there during the Civil War, and the Daugherty family—his daughter married into the Daugherty family, and it's all there. The Figure 2 Ranch my dad worked on close to Van Horn was owned by a Daugherty. And I am supposing that when my grandfather at age nineteen worked in Stonewall County on a ranch, that it probably was a Daugherty, because one of the Doughertys had land in Stonewall County at one time. I've not verified that, but I know that my grandfather Jess Hyatt was raised by a Boone Daugherty in Denton, and some of his brothers or cousins, someone had these ranches.

DM:

Maybe you'll uncover some Daugherty records somewhere along the way that will shed some light on that.



BAH:

I don't know whether I've told you or not about my Korean—I mean, Vietnamese relative?

DM:

No.

BAH:

One of the Daugherty descendants married a Vietnamese lady during the war in Vietnam, and that is a very interesting story. They were both interviewed at the Vietnamese center here at Tech, so their interviews are material there. That is interesting, and it is interesting how I came in contact with him. I knew nothing about him, but I was in Denton to organize a family reunion for the descendants of the Sheriff S. S. Hyatt, and went in the museum there at the old courthouse, and told the young lady, I want to do some research on the Hyatts and Daughertys. And she said, "Interesting that two men would come in the same day to inquire about the same two families." So she gave me Sam Eaton's e-mail address, and I got in touch with him, and found out that we are second cousins twice removed, if that means anything. I've never figured it out, but that's what he says we are. So he was a descendant of Loretta Hyatt, who married Boone Daugherty. And I'm a descendant of that same line of Hyatts.

DM:

So more information about your family in the Vietnam archives at Texas Tech?

BAH:

Absolutely.

DM:

Okay. Anything else to add?

BAH:

I don't think of anything else right now, David.

DM:

Let me turn this off.

*End of Interview*