

**The David and Barbara Pryor Center
for
Arkansas Oral and Visual History**

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Arkansas Memories Project

John Marinoni
Interviewed by Scott Lunsford
August 4, 2017
Fayetteville, Arkansas

Objective

Oral history is a collection of an individual's memories and opinions. As such, it is subject to the innate fallibility of memory and is susceptible to inaccuracy. All researchers using these interviews should be aware of this reality and are encouraged to seek corroborating documentation when using any oral history interview.

The Pryor Center's objective is to collect audio and video recordings of interviews along with scanned images of family photographs and documents. These donated materials are carefully preserved, catalogued, and deposited in the Special Collections Department, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville. The transcripts, audio and video files, and photographs are made available on the Pryor Center Web site at <https://pryorcenter.uark.edu/>. The Pryor Center recommends that researchers utilize the audio recordings and highlight clips, in addition to the transcripts, to enhance their connection with the interviewee.

Transcript Methodology

The Pryor Center recognizes that we cannot reproduce the spoken word in a written document; however, we strive to produce a transcript that represents the characteristics and unique qualities of the interviewee's speech pattern, style of speech, regional dialect, and personality. For the first twenty minutes of the interview, we attempt to transcribe verbatim all words and utterances that are spoken, such as uhs and ahs, false starts, and repetitions. Some of these elements are omitted after the first twenty minutes to improve readability.

The Pryor Center transcripts are prepared utilizing the *University of Arkansas Style Manual* for proper names, titles, and terms specific to the university. For all other style elements, we refer to the *Pryor Center Style Manual*, which is based primarily on *The Chicago Manual of Style 16th Edition*. We employ the following guidelines for consistency and readability:

- Em dashes separate repeated/false starts and incomplete/redirected sentences.
- Ellipses indicate the interruption of one speaker by another.
- Italics identify foreign words or terms and words emphasized by the speaker.
- Question marks enclose proper nouns for which we cannot verify the spelling and words that we cannot understand with certainty.

- Brackets enclose
 - italicized annotations of nonverbal sounds, such as laughter, and audible sounds, such as a doorbell ringing; and
 - annotations for clarification and identification.
- Commas are used in a conventional manner where possible to aid in readability.

Citation Information

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Scott Lunsford interviewed John Marinoni on August 4, 2017, in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

[00:00:00]

Scott Lunsford: Okay. John. It's you and me again.

John Marinoni: Okay.

SL: John Marinoni and Scott Lunsford at the Pryor Center, the University of Arkansas on the downtown square in Fayetteville. Uh—we've—we are following up on an interview we started on the second, and today is August the fourth, 2017. And—um—some of this is because—um—you have great stories that you're telling, but also you brought an enormous amount of imagery—uh—more than we've ever seen anybody bring in, and also so well organized . . .

JM: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . and descriptive that we gotta—it was hard to pull away from looking at all that stuff and—and getting familiar w—with the history of your family. And then you've also provided this wonderful timeline that not only includes stuff that happens within your family, but what's going on with the country and—and the state and the town, and it's just a—and then all the offspring, all the brothers and sisters and their children and grandchildren. It's just a—an amazing amount of work that

you've done, and I—so I wanna thank you [*JM laughs*] for being so thorough with that. I—it's very unusual to—uh—have someone bring all of this quality and caliber of material for us to start with. And—uh—I just wanna thank you . . .

JM: Okay.

SL: . . . not only for this . . .

JM: It's . . .

SL: . . . for all that, but f—you know, I consider your interview with me a donation as well.

JM: Mh-hmm.

SL: So.

[00:01:36] JM: It's been my hobby for—uh—quite a long time of—uh—uh—tryin' to do what I can to preserve the—uh—uh—the memory of different people, especially—uh—close relatives in my family. Uh—especially my Grandmother Rosa. Um—uh—I—uh—somewhere along the line in the path of life, I realized that—uh—one of the real tragedies of—of death is that—uh—people will—uh—soon be forgotten. And—uh—they'll be—somebody's portrait on a tavern somewhere, and that's somebody's wedding picture from a hundred years ago, and you think, "Oh, no, I b— [*laughs*] that could be our picture a hundred years from now."

SL: Right.

JM: And—um—that—um—so—uh—I got very interested in—uh—preserving that, and—uh—uh—one thing I've done is—uh—in organizing these pictures and—uh—postcard con—uh—correspondence that my grandmother had with—uh—cousins over in Italy—uh—is that if I had a—a note, I would say, "This is—this is So-and-so's uncle," or whatever, I would put JPM, a slash, and a date. Uh—because I—I found that—uh—in lookin' at these pictures—uh—sometimes there would be a question about who was writing this. If—in other words, if—if they—it said—uh—"This is Aunt So-and-so," well, you're thinkin', "Well, now who's talkin'? Whose aunt" . . .

[00:03:19] SL: Yeah, whose aunt is it?

JM: . . . "is that?" you know, and . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . put together—put that together. And—uh—uh—I know in—in goin' back and lookin' at my scrapbooks there and lookin' at notes that I've written there and . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JM: . . . look—find a date of [19]94 or something, I think. I been at this a long time and [*SL laughs*]*—and one reason I retired early at the age of—uh—sixty-two was to—uh—uh—not waste so much time working and [*laughs*] be able to spend more time—*

uh—with the family archives and—uh—tryin' to preserve the memories of different important people in my life. And I've taken a particular interest in my grandfather, the professor at the university, Antonio. Um—and—um—uh—unfortunately he died when I was—uh—I think we figured two and a half years old.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JM: So I—uh—really don't have any—uh—memory of him. And—uh—that's a real shame. Uh—when I think about myself now, as a grandfather, thinkin', "Oh, gosh, you know, these little kids are—little grandchildren—will they even remember me if—if I was to die at this point?" And then out—as they get older, I'm thinkin', "Well, I'm glad they're old enough now that they can remember me," and then I'll think, "Uh—I need to do something with them so that they can remember—uh—a particular thing that—uh—that I did with them."

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:04:58] JM: Uh—like I remember things that my grandmother did—uh—for us—um. We were—uh—barefoot, runnin' around on the farm out there in the summertime, and—and—uh—she would plan a big trip—uh—a big, traveling trip to drive up to New York City and see the Rockettes and, you know, show us—uh—

another side of life, you might say. Go on up into Quebec, down through—uh—the—Niagara Falls and—all these things were long, long driving trips there that—uh—she would like to get on.

[00:05:42] Uh—one of the trips we went on—uh—we drove down to Florida. We were gonna go down to one side of Florida and . . .

SL: And . . .

JM: . . . down to Miami, and then—uh—then take a—um—boat over to Cuba. This was before . . .

SL: Ah.

JM: . . . uh—before Castro. And so it was—uh—a big tourist destination. Well, it's only ninety more miles down to—to Cuba. Uh—by the time we got across the Everglades there to Miami—uh—we had decided, "Boy, it's *basta cosi*." That means enough of this. [*Laughter*] *Basta cosi*.

SL: Yeah.

[00:06:22] JM: It's gonna be a long, long road to get back home. So we went on back up—uh—and—uh—one of—one cute little thing that they'd have me do—um—we would stop at—at a motel, and they'd send me in to check and see what the price was.

SL: Ah.

JM: Um—'cause, you know, we're spending a lot of money on all these different stops. And I went in this one there in—just north of Miami, and—uh—uh—the lobby was set up here with a desk. And behind this—behind the desk was a great, big—uh—picture window of the swimming pool—uh—the underwater part. You see all these legs and . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . so forth, people swimming in the pool, and here's the man at the desk. [*SL laughs*] And—uh—uh—I asked how much was a room. And—uh—he very matter-of-factly said, "Twenty-five dollars," and I thought, "Hoo!" I thought, "Okay, I'll go check and see what they wanna do." And it'd be like \$500 in today's money.

SL: Right.

JM: And so we loaded up, went on up the road a little bit further, get a little bit further away from the tourist district, I guess. But—um—uh—those were some—I member how hot, how just beastly hot it was down there in Florida. And course we got some souvenir alligators, stuffed alligators, various things.

SL: Right.

[00:07:48] JM: Um—another trip we went on—actually we went to Mexico twice with—uh—my grandmother. And—uh—um—we—

uh—went down to—uh—Monterey and then on over to—uh—
Saltillo. And—um—uh—Daddy took us in a bar that . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JM: You could drink at any age in Mexico, I guess. [*Laughs*] And—
and I remember—uh—these—um—*caballeros*—uh—very fancy
clothes and—uh—silver stirrups and so forth—uh—riding in the
streets around there, click, click, click, click, click, click, click,
you know, riding around with the big, fancy sombreros on.
And—uh—we went in the bar like this, and Daddy ordered—uh—
cervezas for—I don't know if it was one each, but maybe we split
one.

SL: Right.

[00:08:40] JM: And—uh—Mexican music goin' on and so forth.

And—um—uh—uh—on that occasion, I think the car broke a fan
belt.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JM: Uh—south of Monterey out in the—out in the desert country
there. [*Laughs*] And—uh—Daddy flagged down somebody and
took him back to town and—and so we're stuck out there at the
side of the road . . .

SL: Blazing hot.

JM: . . . wondering if we'd ever see Daddy again. [*Laughs*]

SL: Right.

JM: But—uh—um—we stopped at one place there—um—after we got through the—um—uh—through the border there at the Laredo—uh—just on the outskirts of Laredo. And we stopped. "Oh, time for lunch." So we stopped in there, and—and looked at the menu and decided to order *pollo*, some chicken.

SL: Right.

JM: Fried chicken. And so we're sitting there and sitting there and drinking a Coke or whatever. Maybe we'd had a beer, I don't know. Uh—I mean, we were like twelve years old or so. Or I was, and my brother'd be fourteen. And—uh—so we hear all this ruckus out in—this was out in the country in a nice-looking restaurant with a thatched roof and real scenic, open air . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JM: And we decided they were chasin' down the chicken out there [laughs] in the back to butcher the chicken that—we thought, "Well, at least it'll . . .

SL: Fresh.

JM: . . . "be fresh. We" . . .

SL: Yeah, no kiddin'.

JM: . . . "won't have to worry about it bein' spoiled." But . . .

[00:10:13] SL: Le—le—let me—um—let's pause for a second, and

le—let's talk about—when you say "we" on these trips, exactly who was on these trips? It was your grandmother, your mom and dad, you, and Paul Jr.?

JM: Yeah.

SL: And that was it or . . .

JM: Uh—well—um—uh—sometimes—uh—Margaret Coffee would go with us as a—to help drive.

SL: Uh-huh.

JM: Um—uh—my grandmother always had a fairly large car, either a Lincoln or a Cadillac.

SL: Uh-huh.

JM: Uh—and—um—in her later years, she had a series of Cadillacs. And—uh—we would pack as many people in the car as would fit, which was three in the back and three in the front. You could . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:11:05] JM: It—before you had consoles, you know, you could put a third person there . . .

SL: Sure.

JM: . . . in the front.

SL: Right.

JM: And so—um—on—uh—um—a couple of these trips, it would be

Mom and Daddy and—um—I think was Paul was old enough to drive—me and Paul and Mary Sue and my grandmother. That kinda stay—constitute the—uh—six of us.

SL: Mary Sue . . .

JM: Mary Sue, my sister.

SL: Okay.

JM: Uh—on—um—on others, sometimes, Margaret would be—uh—helping with the driving.

SL: Mh-hmm. So . . .

JM: And . . .

SL: . . . someone would have to drop off the list . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . in order to seat six.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Right.

[00:11:51] JM: These trips—uh—usually—uh—my grandmother liked to go out for drives in the evening at about thirty, thirty-five miles an hour, maybe, at the most. [*Laughter*]

SL: Cruise.

JM: And there'd always be a big . . .

SL: She's cruising.

JM: . . . big stream of traffic behind.

SL: Uh—huh.

JM: And if we were—like if we went up to Eureka Springs or somewhere or—uh—or out in the countryside there on—uh—uh—scarcely traveled roads that she'd be exploring for an—an afternoon drive, uh—we'd be sitting in the backseat scrunched down so that in case—you didn't have headrests that—in case we got rear ended, which was a li—we thought was a likelihood because we were goin' so slow. [*Laughs*]

SL: Right. Right.

[00:12:41] JM: And Margaret would be driving. Uh—Margaret—um—my grandmother became acquainted with her from church, and—uh—my grandmother—um—managed a number of apartments, and she owned some herself. And—uh—Margaret became the—uh—uh—the—the go-to person there for takin' someone over to look at this apartment. She'd go with the keys and let 'em in.

SL: Right.

JM: And—uh—um—uh—she'd go and collect the rent and—and that sort of thing. And so—um—it developed then that—um—she just lived in the house there and would do the grocery shopping and—uh—she was—they were just—uh—like peas in a pod, Margaret and my grandmother. And—uh—uh—so—um—anyway,

so Margaret—uh—kinda held down the fort, you might say . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JM: . . . while were gone on some of these vacations that I'm talkin' about. Uh—if she wasn't—eh—if she didn't . . .

SL: If she wasn't on the trip.

JM: . . . make the group, anyway.

SL: She was takin' care of . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . folk . . .

JM: Taking . . .

SL: Things back home.

JM: . . . care of the—uh . . .

SL: So . . .

JM: . . . rental properties.

[00:13:55] SL: I—it sounds like to me—and I—I'm just guessing on this, that your grandfather—um—as a professor at the university—um—was—uh—apparently had some—uh—management skills as far as his finances go, or maybe it was your grandmother's influence on him, but so these properties were probably things that maybe he had invested in—um—while he was a professor? Or—how—you know, she's—it takes a fair amount of money to take that many folks out on a trip—uh . . .

JM: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . especially extended trips, and . . .

JM: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . there were several of these and so . . .

JM: Mh-hmm.

SL: And she loved doing it.

JM: Mh-hmm.

SL: Uh—if—I—and I can see why. Put the family in one car, and you got to hang out together on a . . .

JM: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . uninterrupted for a long time.

JM: Mh-hmm.

[00:14:50] SL: So i—she enjoyed some financial security . . .

JM: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . by some means, and I'm just assuming that it had something to do with her—your grandfather's tenure and income from just having a—a steady job and being frugal with the money. Is that . . .

JM: Yeah—uh—Daddy said that—uh—during the Depression, he said—uh—you know, you could see that—uh—people suffering and—uh—uh—the economic difficulties that people were going through, but he said, "We never really felt it because—uh—Dad

always had a—his secure job at the university."

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:15:35] JM: Um—uh—it's kinda—it—your question kinda leads me off on a tangent, here of . . .

SL: That's all right. [*Laughs*]

JM: . . . uh—the—uh—uh—so the First World War broke out in I think it was 1918.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JM: Uh—the Armistice was signed at Versailles. And—um—I'm not sure how it developed but—uh—uh—my grandfather took a leave of absence from the university to go—go back to Italy and work to reestabl—help reestablish the—uh—education system there and—uh—in—uh—Northern Italy and parts of France—anyway, the region.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JM: Um—and—uh—ah—according to newspaper articles that have survived that I have in our scrapbook—uh—he made several trips over there at different times. And—uh—there was one family picture there of my grandmother and—and the two children, my dad and my aunt.

SL: Mh-hmm.

JM: Uh—says—uh—"Taken at the winter that—uh—while—um—

Pappy was in Europe." Uh—Pappy was what—what they called my grandfather there in . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . within the family. And—uh—so that could kinda give me a date. Uh—uh—uh—during one of these sojourns in—in Italy—uh—they decided that they might of—that he might as well take the whole family over there and—uh—stay in Bologna where my grandmother was from originally.

SL: Mh-hmm.

[00:17:18] JM: And—uh—she had a lot of cousins over there, a lot of family over there. And—uh—so—uh—I'd have to look at the timeline there. That's 1920, I believe it was. And—uh—so they stayed over there. We have their passports, passport pictures, that whole thing, a picture of the ship and—uh—so forth of that trip. And—uh—so—uh—they were over there for eight months.

SL: Wow.

JM: And—uh—at the time I—uh—my dad was—well, let's see, he was born in [19]16, so he'd be four years old, and so he was just about the right age to start pickin' up the language.

SL: Right.

JM: And—uh—he said he—the adults would get the greatest, biggest kick outta him sayin' some off-color word, callin' somebody a

spider or something . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . you know, whatever. Uh—a *ragno*, he said, which I guess was dialect, or maybe the real word, the spa—the—uh—Italian word for spider. Uh—so anyway, they're—they were over there, and—uh—uh—later that summer the same year—uh—my grandfather was—uh—received a real big award from—a recognition from the king of—uh—Italy—uh—and it was the equivalent of a knighthood—uh—the Order of the Cavaliere—cava—*cavallo* is horse. Anyway, it's like—uh—the equivalent of a knighthood.

SL: Being knighted. Mh-hmm.

[00:18:54] JM: And they've got a big certificate in the—uh—that has survived. And—uh—so . . .

SL: And that was for his work and . . .

JM: Was . . .

SL: . . . concern for reestablishing the educational—uh . . .

JM: Yeah. Uh-huh.

SL: . . . system over there . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . after the war.

JM: Yeah. Uh—so—um—the following summer—uh—a—another

professor—uh—he—uh—he—uh—teamed up with another professor on—uh—conducting a—a big tour of Europe—uh—sightseeing tour. And this was kind of at the start of—or maybe the Grand Tours had been going on before the war, and—uh—so it's getting into the—uh—the period of the Grand Tours and the Roaring Twenties and affluence and so forth. And so—uh—uh—he conducted that first tour of Europe—uh—uh—along with this professor—uh—I forget his name. Anyway—um—uh—and then after that he decided he might as well—uh . . .

SL: Host his own.

JM: Host his own and—uh—conduct his own, organize it. So starting that year, they—um—they—they were organizing and conducting these tours. Now the tours would go for—uh—seventy-five or eighty days.

SL: Wow.

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:20:18] JM: And so it was a . . .

SL: That's a big, big deal.

JM: . . . major part of a person's education that they—that people would consider. And I—and that's still a valid idea to take tours like that or take—not tours like that all summer long but take vacations as a part of your education. People would send their

kids to Europe for the summer to travel around and experience cultures other than their own.

SL: Right.

JM: Of various countries and so forth. And so on one of these tours, I think it was the 1925 tour, he took his—their house had burned down here in Fayetteville.

SL: Right.

JM: Luckily a lot of these pictures and a lot of these documents and so forth survived the fire because back then they didn't have big closets, and people kept their junk [*laughs*] in trunks, and so people could rush into the house and drag . . .

SL: Grab the trunk.

JM: . . . take the trunk out and—into the yard and . . .

SL: Grab some stuff and . . .

JM: . . . into the street and save the family . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . documents and . . .

SL: Heirlooms.

JM: . . . fair—old pictures and whatever. And so while the house was being built, the family that stayed—remained back, which would be my grandmother, her mother, and my dad—they lived with the nuns over on—I think it was Hill Street. There was an order

of Catholic nuns livin' over there. And so the nuns—she said they very graciously put us up for the eight months or so while the house was being built. And the house burned down in April, and here he's leaving next month. [SL laughs] You gotta, boom, boom, boom, [snaps] get financing lined up with the bank, and they bought the lot next door so they'd have more room for the house and . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . get a design figured out and get a contractor lined up and then leaving my grandmother there to oversee the construction and answer questions. Well, this won't fit, what do you wanna do about—instead and . . .

SL: Right.

[00:22:38] JM: And so there're a lot of pictures, progress shots, you might say, of the house going up. Here goes a wall, there goes the floor. And so . . .

SL: So this was—the house was built on the same lot, same place where the house had . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: The previous house had burned.

JM: Yes.

SL: Okay.

JM: So he took my aunt over to live with his mother, who by then—his father had, like I said, had been in construction over there in this country, Brazil, France, and Turkey, a lot of different places, but anyway, he had been in construction towards the end of his working life over here in America. And Connecticut and back east.

SL: Right.

JM: His health got bad, and they moved back to Italy and . . .

SL: This—it . . .

JM: . . . then he passed away. So now it's just the grandmother over there. Or his mother. So she lived over there with her for the whole year. He dropped her off one summer. She was gonna have to stay there till the next summer when he came back with another group of tourists. And she often said in later years that was the best year of her life. [*SL laughs*] [00:24:02] So my grandmother said, "Golly, you know, we would promote these tours and—all over Europe. Many different countries." The latter ones were—would include England and gave people the option of crossing over from England into Europe in a dirig— in a blimp.

SL: [*Laughs*] Oh. Wow.

[00:24:30] JM: And—[*laughs*] Or they could just take a—take the

boat.

SL: Right.

JM: You know, you have the option for a little extra money . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . you could take the blimp across over to Amsterdam or something from London. And so my grandmother would say, "Oh my gosh, you know, he'd get back with"—after one of these tours, and they'd count their money and figure out how they came out. She said, "We could—we'd make more money, or as much money, or maybe more money on that than we were—than the teaching, the professor" . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . "work was bringing in." And so I'm sure that's where the base came in to be able to start investing in apartments and building buildings. [00:25:23] One of the buildings they built back in the middle [19]30s was on College Avenue that's—almost at the corner of Lafayette and . . .

SL: College.

JM: . . . College Avenue there's a Fast Track, I think it is or—there's a filling station on . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . the corner. The next building over where the Star Shopper

is and so forth . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . that was built back in the middle [19]30s by my grandparents and . . .

SL: Is that right. That's a magnificent house.

JM: Yeah. She was real proud of that, and she designed it, my grandmother. And it's got five—it had five different apartments in there. And she intended it to be for the young professionals that might live there and be able to walk up to the business district there . . .

SL: Right. Square.

JM: . . . around the Square.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And it was an idea before its time, basically, because there weren't that many young professionals that wanted to rent basically a two- or three-room condominium—it's almost like a condominium.

SL: Right.

[00:26:32] JM: Although she wasn't selling. That was before the—
anyone . . .

SL: That concept . . .

JM: . . . thought about . . .

SL: . . . was around.

JM: Yeah, before that concept. And so she was renting—ended up having to rent to students who would—she had a little bit of trouble getting people—gettin' students who were willing to walk all the way up to campus. And but then she was involved in other apartments or building other apartments closer to the university.

SL: So you . . .

JM: So anyway, that's kinda where that base came from.

SL: Smart stuff.

[00:27:16] JM: Yeah. And it's—in research—I've got a whole notebook on the tours of Europe. Luckily, the brochures all survived. I've got one brochure of each of those tours, and you can see what they were talkin' about, which countries they were going to, exactly what their route was gonna be. They'd go and stay three or four days in one town and three or four . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . four or five days in another town and another city. And the ship that they were goin' over on. And I've researched and got pictures of those ships. They—so they had to quit during the Depression. They had one scheduled, I think, for 1931 that didn't go, apparently.

SL: 'Cause everyone lost their money.

JM: Because when they reorganized one for [19]36, I believe it was—[19]37, [19]38—let's see, no, [19]37—they said the twelfth annual or whatever. They had a particular number. The tenth annual trip, Marinoni Tour of Europe. And so I thought, "Well, this other one, the 1931 was the twelfth or supposed to be the twelfth." Apparently it didn't make, didn't fill. And so while he was not doing that, they took other little vacations in the summer to go to California or to Mexico or something.

[00:29:05] And incidentally on one of these little trips there, there's a brochure of a bullfight and it—and they're advertising this matadora.

SL: Oh, a female matador.

JM: I said, "Matadora?" A female bullfighter? I've never heard of any—such a thing. Anyway, different trips of—that they would—to Chicago. And they would go up to Brooklyn and—for the family vacation. The family vacation would be to take the train out there to somewhere like that and stay for a month. It was a—the European kind of a vacation where you go somewhere, and then you get a weekly rent—rate at the hotel or [*laughs*]—I suppose. And you just stay there, and you do what there is to do at that . . .

SL: Right.

JM: In Chicago or in Catalina Island or wherever they went. And relax and enjoy the—take in the air. [*Laughs*]

SL: Right.

JM: Enjoy the sun.

SL: Breathe. Yeah.

JM: That sort of thing. Read . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . a book.

SL: Right.

[00:30:27] JM: And so anyway, then in—while he was—while the Depression was going on and they weren't organizing these tours, he—apparently along in that period of time, he came up with the idea of writing a book of coming to America and his experiences in coming to America.

SL: This is early [19]30s, you think?

JM: The early [19]30s. And apparently he had—he decided to write this for other Italians over in Italy and wrote it in high Italian. It'd be about like using thee and thous or, you know, Old English, for us.

SL: Proper.

JM: We've had other Italians to take a look at it, and they say, "Oh

yeah, this is high Italian, you know, fancy words, big words being used." And we did a lot of struggling tryin' to research, get some of these chapters or get the whole thing translated and just tryin' to decide, "Well, how are we gonna—who's gonna chip in the money to pay somebody to translate this?" And kept that in the back of our mind. You know, "If our ship ever comes in, we're gonna spend the money to get this translated."

SL: Right.

[00:32:05] JM: So I don't know, four or five years ago—five or six, probably, my sister's son, Mary Sue's son, was working for Hershey candy company up in . . .

SL: Pennsylvania.

JM: . . . Pennsylvania.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And an associate of his or a friend, somebody he knew, anyway, was from Italy and was interested in reading the book and became interested in translating it for us, at least word for word.

SL: Right.

JM: And from there one year, I think 2015, Mary Sue, my sister Mary Sue and I decided for a New Year's resolution, we were gonna sit down and tran—and interpret the book. It was just almost impossible to read it unless you were standing up, and [SL

laughs] nobody would wanna read the word-for-word translation. You'd have to try to decide, "Well, what idea is he tryin' to convey? What is he sayin', and how would he say it if he was speaking English here" . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . "in front of us?" And also checking the translation. There were some words where I would be struggling lookin' it up in my big, thick dictionary.

SL: Right.

[00:33:26] JM: Think, "Oh, oh no, we're missin' the point altogether." And so we worked on that the whole year. Our goal was every two weeks we would—we'd have another chapter. Twenty-four chapters, twelve months.

SL: [*Laughs*] Yeah, right.

JM: So we were gonna get two a month. And you know, we're grinding away at it and grinding away at it and finally got the whole thing translated. Or, well, interpreted. It was already translated.

SL: Right.

JM: And but still there was a lot more translation to be done. So and also putting in footnotes there about what else was going on and, you know, that sort of thing. Or what some of the words

meant or what he was talkin' about and so forth. So in [19]36—let's see, thirty—[19]37, I guess it was, they finally were able to reorganize another tour, and they had more of a discounted price, I guess you might say.

SL: Right.

JM: And because things still weren't really . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . back on . . .

SL: Still recovering.

JM: . . . stream . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . economically in the country. They had their first tour, and then the next tour, my dad and my grandmother went along on that tour. And I'm—I've always been kind of amazed. I never thought to ask my father about this but—as to why he didn't get the travel-agency bug [*laughter*] on that tour. I guess he thought, "Oh, this is too much money—or I mean, too much trouble or" . . .

SL: I'm sure.

[00:35:23] JM: Or something. But . . .

SL: You probably wouldn't . . .

JM: . . . he could've gotten into that, and we could've been another

Collette Tour Agency or something.

SL: Right.

JM: You know, organizing . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . tours all over the world. But so the—he went over on the 1938 tour. And then they had another one in [19]39 scheduled, but they had to cancel it out because things—the war was nearly about to break out. Daddy says he remembers in Germany going to the beer halls and these brown shirt guys . . .

SL: Oh.

JM: . . . holdin' hands and [*hums*] singin' these patriotic German war songs, basically.

SL: Right.

[00:36:10] JM: And you know, thinkin', "Oh my gosh, you know, what's about to happen?" Another thing, too, that never was commented in any of the documents or anything that I was reviewing was that these tourists that he was getting to go on these tours, some of them surely must have been Jewish or possibly would've been Jewish.

SL: Right.

JM: And here you're goin' on a tour that's startin' in Amsterdam and goin' around through the big, scenic places in Germany, through

the Alps and so forth, and [*SL laughs*] Mussolini's Italy. And as it turned out, that tour would've been coming back about the time that the U-boats were patrolling the North Atlantic. That'd be the—September of [19]39.

SL: Right.

JM: And the—and it turned out that the ship that they would've gone over on was sunk later that fall by a German U-boat. And you know, so it was surel—it was definitely a scary time to be tryin' to take a tour of Europe [*laughs*] with people that might've been—might possibly have been Jewish or might've been questioned or no tellin' what.

[00:37:38] SL: I—course, I got to read that book, and I loved it. And it's a pretty fast read. I think you guys have done pretty good on the translation.

JM: Yeah.

SL: And the things that you didn't feel comfortable delineating in an English translation, you left in Italian with an explanation of why you did that. And I think that's—I think you guys have really done a remarkable job with that. And for—in case we haven't said this, 'cause it's easy for us to talk about this because we're both—I'm somewhat familiar with it, and of course you have lived and breathed it, but it's really an accounting of—starting,

really, at the turn of the century, of your father's life, or your grandfather's life starting in Italy and going through high school in Italy, and then his parents were already over in the United States, and they sent money for him to come over. And so the book really is kind of a immigration—it's really kind of a very personal history of that migration, of Italians to the United States and what the Italian community faced when they got there and how they were together, but then all of the, you know, discrimination based on different ethnic groups and for different reason. By different groups. And yet there's this pervasive willingness to do better, to achieve more that apparently was not as readily available in Italy. And so there was this promise of America, that you could come there and succeed. And that was kind of—however serendipitous each step was, that's kind of how your father, or your grandfather continued his education and did jobs as well and made friends with those around him, including his boss. It's just a wonderful account of an Italian life that ends up settling here in Fayetteville, Arkansas, and being conducted with the university. And the love story between—it's just a wonderfully rich book.

JM: Yeah, he . . .

[00:40:30] SL: And I—it's really a treat that you and your sister

spent the time and the effort and the money to preserve that and to make it viable for an English language. I . . .

JM: Yeah, he . . .

SL: It's another remarkable thing that you've shouldered.

[00:40:47] JM: He was talking about coming over in the—he got on the ship there. He was startin' out in Northern Italy there and got on the ship there at Genoa. They went back—went on down to Naples to pick up the—all the rest of the immigrants. And at the time, Southern Italy was having quite a recession or depression, and many people were leaving Italy, leaving Southern Italy for other parts of the world or New York and coming to America. And that—he had one funny story. Apparently he didn't know any English at all. He'd studied Latin and Greek and other languages and had lived in France and Brazil, and so he was familiar with several languages, but not English because he's talkin about this big shot walking around acting like—he was a know-it-all. He was a braggadocio.

SL: This is on the deck of the ship.

JM: On the ship, yeah.

SL: That he crossed the Atlantic on.

JM: Comin' across the Atlantic. And so the guy was [*makes blustering noises*] and he would—he was using this phrase,

"Dazzorai," with an Italian accent, of course. So he asked, "Well, what is this phrase you use so often, dazzorai?" Says, "Oh, it's a very common phrase in English. If you knew English, you would be familiar with it." You know, he's puttin' him down. And, "It's what people say often. Oh, we say, that's"—anyway, he gave an Italian translation, *va bene* or something, anyway. And so he said, "Dazzorai. Very common. Very common." And so anyway, then my grandfather had the opportunity to ask a steward, a waiter. And the waiter says, "Oh, that braggart. [Laughter] Here"—he wrote it down. "That's—that is all right." Or a contraction, that's all right.

[00:43:12] SL: Right.

JM: And he said, "So there it was, my first lesson in" . . .

SL: English.

JM: . . . "the English language." [Laughs] And so he gets to New York and catches the train up to, I think it was Waterbury, Connecticut, where they were first—where his parents were located at the time, or anyway, Connecticut. And so he decides that instead of studying English like he was used to studyin' languages back in the University of Padua in Italy, where you're studying grammar and how the . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . syntax works and the female endings or male endings, that sort of thing, he needed a faster way, and he decided to read magazines and newspapers out loud, in a loud voice. [*SL laughs*] And so he would practice reading for hours and hours and—to learn English. And it's kind of a unique way of—I've never heard of anyone learning to—learning a language, studying a language like that. And so anyway, that was kind of a yu—one unique experience there.

SL: Well, and that's a . . .

[00:44:36] JM: But from there he—good luck didn't—things didn't really start happening for him. He would hear about a waiter's job in New York. Well, he'd take off and go down there to check on that, and it turned out that, no, it wasn't even a waiter's job, it was just to sweep up the floor and clean the windows kind of a job, a busboy kind of a job. Then he'd hear about something else. And the—there'd be a group of people out there look—hoping to get a job, and the foreman would come out, and he'd pick the big—what did he call it? Polanski. A big Polish guy got picked instead of him because he wasn't big and, you know, obviously gonna be able to carry on heavy, heavy work like that. And . . .

SL: Now this is—he's heard about a manufacturing job . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . that the foreman would come out and choose . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . who he would want to work that day or . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . or whatever and . . .

[00:45:54] JM: Yeah. And then there was another episode of—well, his first experience with racial slang or racial insults—they had loaded 'em up in a—on a wagon, an open wagon pulled by horses and so forth, and they're goin' over to the train station. And the newspaper boys along the way were makin' fun of 'em, sayin', "Hello, Dago," you know, so forth. And he's thinkin', "Man, is this the kind of welcome you get here in the land where they pride themselves on bein' the melting pot of" . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . "of immigrants from around the world?" And oh, several other examples of not racial bias, so much, but racial insults that were common, I guess, at the time.

[00:47:10] SL: Yeah, I'm not—I can't remember if this was some of your comments in the book or if it was your grandfather's, but he did talk about some of the criminal reputation that some of the Italians had established, and that that maybe was not

necessarily rude of this particular incidence of discrimination, but there was that kind of cloud over an Italian community as well.

But . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . that was so much—it seems from the book that was so much the exception because most of the characters that he dealt with were basically great, good people.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Just waiting to be good with somebody or to make something good happen or to help in some way.

[00:48:05] JM: Yeah, there was one friend that he was tellin' about, a friend of his, that—he—this friend had a little briefcase there, had a collection of newspaper articles about this one particularly notorious Italian crime family in New York, and so I looked them up on the internet, and found that they were very notorious about the turn of the century, and they were from the Italian town of Corleone. And [*laughs*] in Italy, and I thought, "Oh my gosh, that's where—that's kind of ties in with the" . . .

SL: The film.

JM: . . . "the Don Corleone."

SL: Right, sure.

JM: Corleone. *The Godfather* movie years later. And that *Godfather*

movie takes place along about that period of time. And I thought, "Oh my gosh, you know, here's my grandfather writing about this in 1931."

SL: Right.

JM: And then *The Godfather* movie comes out many, many years later, and it kinda connects up. [00:49:27] Yeah, my—his favorite job seemed to be at this factory where he was making these little parts of—copper parts, brass, I think it was . . .

SL: Yeah, I never quite understood what they were.

JM: No.

SL: I thought maybe they were some kind of rivet or . . .

[00:50:11] JM: Yeah. He said it—so he was finally able to make—he was talking about people making their living by the sweat of their brow, but he said sweat was kind of a—there wasn't much sweat. He said, "My job didn't take much more effort than what you would take—the effort that it would take to make a living with a pencil."

SL: Right.

JM: A clerical kind of a job. But he . . .

SL: They were paid by the weight.

JM: Yeah, by . . .

SL: How much they . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: How much the metal they processed.

JM: Yeah. And he was tryin' to set the world on fire and make lots of these little parts, and someone came up and said, "Well, you know, you don't wanna make that many parts because if you do, then the boss is gonna decide that we're makin' too much money. They're gonna reduce the piece rate." They were gettin' paid on a piece rate or by the pound or by the piece. "And you know, you're gonna make it hard on all of us." And so he realized, "Oh yeah, well, I can see that." So he started to try to . . .

SL: Slowing down.

JM: He would work real hard when the boss was makin' his rounds, and when the boss wasn't makin' his rounds, he would slow down and . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . talk to the person in the—next to him or whatever.

SL: Right.

[00:51:14] JM: And so he admitted to a little bit of subterfuge there in spite of the fact that his boss was a saint of a person to allow him to—encourage him to further his education. And he was the one that allowed him to take off and go up to Yale University to

explore the possibilities of going to the university there. They were livin' fairly close to Yale. Half hour on the train, something like that. And incidentally, the boss at that factory was, he said, was a well-bred German, and I put two and two together, and I thought, well, the German didn't—might've spoke—been able to speak fluent English, so my grandfather was either impressing him with his conversations in English or his conversations in German.

SL: German. Right.

[00:52:26] JM: But at any rate, he was able to impress his boss with stories about the big cultural places in Europe or Greek mythology or, you know, the Classical kind of subjects that you . . .

SL: They bonded.

JM: They were bonding. So then he gets up to Yale and impresses a—the dean of the lan—of the college of Latin, or at least the Latin professor, anyway . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . with his—with a conversation probably pretty much in Latin. Then he gets to—get on [*laughs*] the next step there, and he's impressing somebody else at—in the French by using his knowledge of the French language.

SL: Right.

[00:53:26] JM: And I spo—before I leave the subject of learning language, my grandmother was ten years old when she came over and—in [18]98, 1898. Her father was a correspondent for some of the major newspapers back in Italy. And the family story is that he came over to cover the Spanish-American war. I had done some research then off the internet there about the Spanish-American war . . .

SL: Right.

JM: Well, when exactly was that? And it was only a three-month war so—and so we have—there's some correspondence records there of letters being sent to her father with a New York address during the time when that—when the Spanish-American War was taking place. So apparently he actually was over here covering that. He wasn't just doing it long distance from Italy.

SL: Right.

JM: And or going to Spain to see what their side of the story was or whatever. So anyway, she gets over to—over here and was able to learn English well enough to become a writer. Now I don't know how long I would have to study Italian [*SL laughs*] to become a . . .

SL: Fluent.

: . . . proficient enough . . .

SL: Right. Right.

JM: . . . in it to know enough words to become a poet in Italian. It never would happen. [*Laughs*] Never. I don't care how young I would—how young you would be to learn a language well enough like that to—and . . .

SL: Yeah, I . . .

[00:55:28] JM: Now she always had kind of like a—Mimi, my grandmother, always had a little bit of a British accent because her neighbor—the neighbor kids there in Brooklyn . . .

SL: Were British.

JM: . . . were British. And she has—she—apparently about 1903 or so, because she's got some of her pictures dated, she bought a little Brownie camera—I guess I call it a Brownie camera, a little box camera.

SL: Sure.

JM: Where you take a picture and you . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . crank it . . .

SL: Yep, yep.

JM: . . . up and we still got all these big negatives of—odd-size negatives . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . great big.

SL: Yeah.

JM: Black-and-white, of course. And started takin' lots and lots of pictures around there of her and her friends and so forth. And so anyway, she learned English well enough to—later starting, oh, in the [19]20s and more so in the [19]30s and [19]40s and so forth, learned the English language as her second language, and learned it well enough to become a writer and ultimate—eventually became the poet laureate of Arkansas. It's just an unbelievable accomplishment when English is your—is not your—the language of your birth. And so that's quite an ord—extraordinary thing about my grandmother.

[00:57:13] SL: So was Italian spoken in your home growing up?

JM: The only time would be when they didn't want us to know what they were talkin' about. [*Laughs*]

SL: Oh yeah, that's right, you said something about that the other day.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Yeah. But did you ever catch on to what they . . .

JM: Yeah, you could pick up a word or so that—a lot of Italian words are very similar. Nouns, anyway. Verbs are not so much, but or

you could tell by the way they would talk and look that they're talkin' about you [*laughs*] or something.

[00:57:55] SL: Now so we did talk about some of the chores and incidents that happened out at the farm. But it seemed to me that the ground that we've covered so far out there really involves you and your older brother and your dad as far as the heavy lifting activities that it takes to run a farm. And it also seemed to me that your father and you guys were always thinking of what kind of work you could do and make your spending money as well, and so there was this—I got the impression that there was a commitment, whether it was spoken or not spoken, to help your father with the farm, and he kind of expected that, and you had kind of accepted that kind of responsibility. And so I'm wondering, you know, we've gotten you into high school from our previous interview. But there's gonna come a time when you're not at the farm. And now did Paul stay at the farm even after you left? I mean, did Paul—Paul was in the service, too, wasn't he?

[00:59:22] JM: We were a year apart in school all the way through. And so he went in the army starting—he—we both—well, one year apart, but we both signed up for the six-month program in the reserves. And we both had joined the 444th Ordinance

Company here in Fayetteville, reserve army unit. And so he went in the army the first summer, and then the next summer, I started and went to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. I was tellin' about that yest . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . day before yesterday. And then from there after basic, they loaded us up in busses. And nobody knew where they were going. I didn't know if—I didn't know what my . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . what was gonna happen next, but we're takin' off and tryin' to look out and see are we goin' north? Are we goin' south, or where could we possibly be going?

SL: So what . . .

JM: And they took us . . .

SL: About what year is this now? This is . . .

JM: The summer of [19]60.

SL: [Nineteen] sixty. Okay.

JM: Graduated from high school in . . .

SL: That's right.

JM: . . . 1960.

SL: Okay, that's right. Okay.

[01:00:42] JM: And so—well, it was in the—by then it was the fall

because—about September or oct—September. So anyway, I was assigned to a recruit processing facility there at Fort Riley, Kansas.

SL: Okay.

JM: When I got there, the weather had turned, and course we're further north than Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and it just seemed like paradise. There were no sergeants screamin' at you or anything. [*Laughter*]

SL: Yeah. Boot camp is something to survive.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

JM: Although these recruits would have their sergeants out there screamin at them, and we're takin' pictures and makin' dog tags and . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . processing their information, giving them tests of—eye tests and various things.

SL: Right.

[01:01:36] JM: So towards the end of that—this whole thing was six months—towards the end of that find out that—I found out that I was gettin' out a little bit early. I will have been about—it was like a week short of the six months, which was gonna get me

home in time for Christmas.

SL: Right.

JM: "Oh, hallelujah."

SL: Right.

JM: I though, "Boy, this is great."

SL: Right.

JM: Well, I later—I don't know, years later I realized, "Oh, wait a minute, you know, they were—the deal was if you're in six months or longer, you're entitled to VA benefits."

SL: Ah.

JM: And so all these six monthers—they were keepin' 'em for . . .

SL: A little less.

JM: . . . 5.75 months, basically. And so anyway, I got back just before Christmas, and it's the Christmas break there. My brother'd already had . . .

SL: Had been back.

JM: Had been back for—he had some college experience there and livin' upstairs over at my grandmother's house. And that's the way that was gonna work out so we—that way we wouldn't have to drive in from the farm and park and go to class and so forth, we'd just live right there off campus, half a block off of the campus, basically, and be able to walk to school. And it was a

nice arrangement my grandmother was real happy with 'cause she got to be . . .

SL: Be with the grandkids, for one thing.

JM: . . . be with the grandkids again for a . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . while and fix . . .

SL: And they're growing up to be . . .

JM: . . . us a little breakfast or lunch, and we had joined ATO fraternity at the time. It was big nationally, but it was just starting there in Fayetteville.

SL: Right.

[01:03:21] JM: And they were in hopes of building a big fraternity house and . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . so forth. And so we'd go and eat supper over there at the fraternity and get to meet the boys and meet the other guys and stuff. And so anyway, we were gone from the farm except on the weekends. We'd go home, bring our laundry, [*SL laughs*] and help Daddy with whatever's goin' on on the farm during that school year. And so I made that one semester. And the following semester starting the—I might mention. So that summer, then, I decided to—instead of—since Daddy was kind of

used to us being gone in the army or whatever, I would—I looked for a little job there to make some money, have some date money.

SL: Right.

JM: And got a job building chicken houses out on Mount Comfort.

SL: Okay.

JM: And the guy—I found out that he had got most of his crew by goin' to the bars down on Dickson Street and recruiting people to work on building these chicken houses.

SL: Right.

JM: And so he had three pay grades. The winos got a dollar. [*SL laughs*] The hard-working boys that were willing but really didn't have any experience, we got a dollar and a quarter an hour, and the carpenters that had some tools and experience, they got a dollar and a half an hour. And we'd work eight-hour day plus half a day Saturday and get paid cash money. No withholding. [*Laughs*]

SL: Kay. Yeah.

JM: The statute of limitations has expired I suppose. [*Laughs*]

SL: Right.

JM: I mean—so we'd work all day out there building those chicken houses, gettin' sunburned, and . . .

SL: Ah

JM: . . . drinkin' tons of water.

SL: Right.

[01:05:27] JM: And Mama had decided that maybe what we oughta do, we really oughta learn more about the life saving, swimming, and so forth, and so she signed us up for—signed me up anyway. I don't remember if Paul did. But signed me up for a life-saving course at Wilson Park over here.

SL: Yep.

JM: So I'd work hard all day [*SL laughs*], I mean, re—you know, really hard work and then go over there and learnin' how to do various things there.

SL: Right.

JM: And if the guy ran out of subject matter, he'd have us swim laps. [*SL laughs*] Said, "Oh, gosh, I'm 'bout to die." [*Laughter*] And I member one thing that they had us do was to learn how to—in case you're out in a boat or on a ship and it sank, and now you're in the water with your clothes on, shoes and all, what to do. You're gonna drown. You can't swim.

SL: Right.

[01:06:28] JM: We found that, you know, jump in the water with your clothes, you'll find out you cannot swim . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . at all. And so they had us—they gave us a little warning to come tomorrow night, now, with clothes that you don't mind getting wet 'cause you're gonna be jumping in the water and going through the process of take a breath, going down, take one shoe off, get another breath, come down, undo the other shoe and—anyway, so you go through that process, back and forth, back and forth.

SL: Right.

JM: Gettin' undressed so that your shirts are off, everything's off. And then you get down to your pants, and you tie—long pants. You tie a knot in each leg and take a—your pants and whoof, over your head like this, pop, down on the water and grab around the waist like this, put one . . .

SL: You got an air pocket.

JM: . . . arm under here, one arm under there, and you've got a float. And you can float like that for fifteen or twenty minutes before all the air, enough air . . .

SL: Before you have to do it again.

JM: . . . goes through the wet material and you have to—then you just have to do it again, and you can survive for an in—as long as you wanna keep—as long as you wanna survive, you can just

keep doin' that. [*Laughs*]

SL: Until the sharks come. Yeah.

[01:07:49] JM: And so that was one interesting little thing about that. So anyway, fall semester starts then. And I had made all my classes—signed up for all the classes. I'd made each class once, and met another college girl there who was a freshman and had invited her out for a Coke date and had—we were sittin' in the Jug Wheeler's Drive-in there drinkin' our Coke listening to the radio. And the radio had been comin' on lately—the Berlin Crisis had just happened that septem—that August or so.

SL: They put up the wall.

JM: Put up ber—Khrushchev built the Berlin Wall around in Berlin there. And Kennedy was callin' up the reserves as a reaction. And so the news would come on, and they'd say—they'd announce these different reserve companies around the state. And they'd say, "The so-and-so reserve company from Pine Bluff has" . . .

SL: Oh my gosh.

JM: . . . "been activated." And . . .

[01:09:09] SL: So this is on the radio while you're on your date.

JM: Yeah. And, "The so-and-so company from Fort Smith, the so-and-so company from Little Rock, and the 444th from

Fayetteville, and the something else from"—"So—ah—what?"

[*Laughter*] "What was that?" I wasn't particularly listenin' to it, just kinda halfway and carryin' on a conversation here. And, "Oh my God!" and I said, "Oh gosh." I was tryin'—I was thinkin', "Oh, Lord, I wish I could backtrack" . . .

SL: Rewind.

JM: . . . "you know, reverse that and play it again."

SL: Yeah. Yeah.

JM: "Oh, Lord!" So we get outta there and head over to the reserve center. I get in and ask, and they said, "We just heard about it ourselves. We haven't gotten any orders."

SL: Right.

JM: "Well, when do you think—when are they wantin' us to leave? What about a student deferment or something? Oh, man." So [*SL laughs*] the funny thing about—it wasn't all that funny, but the funny—one funny part of that was that this girl—we were just real chummy chummy at first until she found out I was a short timer, and boy, she turned like an ice cube. I realized, well, I just as well take her back to the dorm and say, "See you later," or something [*laughs*] before—I'm not gonna make her have to ask to be taken home.

SL: Right.

JM: I better just as well . . .

[01:10:30] SL: By short timer you mean that you may be leaving
and . . .

JM: Yeah. But . . .

SL: . . . doing the service thing.

JM: . . . we were tryin' to check into a student deferment or
corresponding with John Paul Hammerschmidt, just anything we
could think of. Well, there's no deferment. You're—they—
university kinda bent the rules and allowed us to get a complete,
full refund . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . on our \$125 tuition that we had . . .

SL: I remember.

JM: . . . paid at the time. [*Laughs*] And a full refund on our books.
We didn't have to sell 'em back in as used books and . . .

SL: Right. Right.

JM: . . . so forth. And so within about a week, we were goin' every
day to the reserve center getting the trucks ready for the . . .

SL: Deployment.

JM: . . . for deployment and so forth, and we didn't know where we
were going or for how long. All we knew was we were called up
for the duration, which was very unsettling because, you know,

you thought, "Man, we could be going to Amsterdam to run an ammunition dump or something." That's what our company—the specialty was ammunition—was running an ammunition dump. And not that I cared anything about that, but it was just what was here locally available. And so after about a month, then, we got notice that we were goin' to Fort Hood, Texas. And we thought, "Well, we're going there at first, and I sure hope things" . . .

SL: Go good.

JM: . . . "don't escalate over" . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . "in Europe and we end up being deployed over to Europe somewhere and that there becomes some big atomic-bomb war" . . .

SL: Right.

[01:12:26] JM: . . . "going on." And so we went to Fort Hood and basically had nothing to do except march around and go on a little bivouac or something, and most of the time we'd—after breakfast we'd fall out for formation, and they'd have roll call or mail call or something.

SL: Right.

JM: And then they'd send us back to the barracks for care and

cleaning of equipment. Well, you know, our shoes were already polished. Everything was like it needed to be, and that was basically to go back in and resume the card game on the . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . footlocker that you'd been involved with just before.

[Laughs] [01:13:11] And so morale started gettin' bad. And oh, I'm skipping a part there. So our reserve unit had too many chiefs and not enough Indians. And a lot of sergeants, officers, and so forth. And so they supplemented the ranks by callin' up a lot of these other people that were floating around in other reserve units that had not been activated, but for one reason or another they were gettin' activated—assigned to us. And so anyway, morale was really gettin' in the slumps, and so what happened, in our opinion, was that they ordered several thousand tons, like two thousand tons or so of ammunition, mostly .105 Howitzer . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . shells in these big ammunition boxes.

SL: Right.

JM: You know, with the rope handle on both sides, takes two men to handle, usually, and train loads of ammunition that we would go and get, load it up in the deuce-and-a-halves, take it out to the—

out in the fields there in the boondocks, and operate an ammunition storage dump out there.

SL: Right.

JM: And so we would have ammunition comin' in and then issuin' it out through other units, and they'd take it out to the firing range and practice shootin' it and whatever. So anyway, that rocked along like that. Very good exercise. [*Laughter*]

SL: Right. Right.

[01:15:02] JM: And wasn't all that hard. It was easy for young boys like us, you know, to handle that ammunition. So eventually, they established a date that we were gonna be released. I'm missing a point there. Since Paul and I were both in the same unit, we were both goin' down there together, we could— between the two of us we could afford to have a car.

SL: Kay.

JM: And so having a car on fort like that, we were able to take little side trips. So we'd kind of worked it out that every other month we would come back to Fayetteville and then the other month, then, we'd take a little trip. And we'd load up our friends and go up to Dallas to the university there. And if one guy was an SAE, we'd go to the SAE house and . . .

SL: Pick 'em up.

JM: . . . say, "We're So-and-so, we're your fraternity brother from—you know, I'm your fraternity brother from Fayetteville." And, "Oh yeah, here," and he gives us a place to stay and fix us up with dates.

SL: There.

JM: Tell us where the [*SL laughs*] hot spots were, you know, go out and . . .

SL: Sure.

JM: . . . take these dates out dancing and that sort of thing. And so we'd have these little adventures on the every-other-month basis.

SL: Yeah.

JM: The months we'd come home, we'd leave immediately a—we'd skip lunch.

SL: Kay.

[01:16:37] JM: After the last formation, they'd say, "All right, fall out for lunch." We'd already have the car loaded and everything. We'd head back to the barracks, change clothes right quick, get into our civvies, get into the car, and off we'd go for an eight-hour drive back to Fayetteville.

SL: Eight hours.

JM: Startin' at noon Saturday.

SL: Right.

JM: And by revelry on Monday, you had to be back. So we'd be—we might not start back until eight o'clock at night or something Sunday night.

SL: Right.

JM: And there were times where I—we'd arrive back, and I'd lay down in bed, "Oh my God, I'm tired." And they'd be, "Bang, bang, bang. Time to wake up." "Oh no." [*Laughter*] All morning long, you're goin' along, you haven't had any sleep. And but so . . .

SL: I guess . . .

[01:17:32] JM: You were talkin' about any lifelong friends there. I didn't have any lifelong friends back in my six-month stretch there, but I became friends with Joe Smith, who later became my brother-in-law. And so [*laughs*] . . .

SL: So you're responsible . . .

JM: I often . . .

SL: . . . for that? [*Laughs*]

JM: . . . told his kids that, "You know, the Berlin Crisis is the reason you're here today walkin' this earth, you know, because we got called up, this and that, I met your dad, and I fixed your dad up with your mother. I was datin'—one of the girls—I fixed Joe up

with their mother, you were born."

SL: There you go.

JM: "You know, Berlin Crisis." And so anyway, as soon as the date was established for us to be deactivated, we found out that it was possible to get an early out, we called it, to—if the reason was so as to start a semester at school.

SL: Okay.

[01:18:46] JM: Well, our early out—I mean, our discharge date was gonna be like the end of July. And so you could get out a certain number of days ahead of that if . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . if the reason was to not miss the first few days of class.

SL: Classes. Yeah.

JM: And so we got to checkin'. Well, does that work if the semester is like a summer-school semester, you know?

SL: Right.

JM: Second semse—the second part of summer school. And so anyway, there was a ton of paperwork to be done, but Paul and I got ourselves qualified for an early out. [01:19:29] And before all this happened, we had gone home for—we had come home for Easter. And so during the Easter week, we had a one-week—what do . . .

SL: Furlough.

JM: . . . they call it, a furlough? Well, yeah, they didn't call it a furlough. A pass.

SL: Okay.

JM: I forget what we . . .

SL: For the holiday.

JM: Yeah. For the . . .

SL: Easter holiday.

JM: . . . Easter holidays there. And I was determined to find somebody to date while I was back on that one week. And went [SL laughs] to church on Sunday. You know, we got off on Saturday.

SL: Right.

[01:20:16] JM: We're just back home by Saturday night bedtime. Saturday morning we go to church and Satur—I mean, that Sunday morning we go to church. So that afternoon, then, I'm tryin' to figure out some way—"How can I find somebody to date this week while I'm back?" And Mama said, "Well, there's a new family at church, and they've got three daughters. I don't—their name is Boyd, last name's Boyd, and they live up on Mount Sequoyah somewhere. And the oldest one is in the university." Huh, okay. So we had a student directory, and I'm lookin'

through there, and I get out a city map. I find a—I'm lookin' for Boyds. We got several Boyds here in the student directory.

SL: Right.

[01:21:17] JM: And there's a B. J. Boyd, which that would be a girl with initials like that. I've seen it—I don't know if they still do that or not, but anyway, girls would tend to not put their name in there, they'd just put their initials.

SL: Okay.

JM: And so—on Crest Drive. And I'm lookin' at—lookin' at the city map, I see that Crest Drive is on Mount Sequoyah, so that must be it. So I get my nerve up, and I call and ask to speak to B. J. Boyd. And, oh, so I was tryin' to think of some date. I thought, "Well, this bein' a blind date, it better be somethin' safe." You're not gonna start off takin' 'em to a movie or something.

SL: Right.

JM: Let's have a daytime date. And there was a home-and-garden show [*SL laughs*] or camper—boat and camper show at the UARK Bowl, upstairs . . .

SL: That's amazing.

JM: . . . at the UARK Bowl.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And so anyway, I asked to speak to B. J. Boyd, and she—her

father, I think, answered the phone, so anyway, she—he puts Barbara on the phone, and I say who I am and in the army . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . and so forth. Been to school. I'm base—I'm not just a soldier, I'm a university student.

SL: Right.

[01:22:44] JM: But right at the moment I'm in the army. [*Laughs*] Soon to be out, and anyway, I get a date for later that afternoon. And so I go up there thinkin', "Oh, man, I don't know."

SL: "What have I done?"

JM: "There's—I've heard there three daughters, but I hope I—I don't know which one I've got a date with. [*Laughter*] Except it's B. J." And so they were all laughing about it for those couple of hours between now, thinking, "What's he gonna do? He's gonna come in here, and he doesn't know who he's got a date with." And so I come in and tryin' to make a good impression with the parents and the uncle and the aunt . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . and so forth. And the three girls were sitting on the couch there, the youngest, the middle one, and the older—B. J. Boyd. [*Laughs*] And "Well, I guess we better go on"—you know, I'm

glancin' back and forth [*SL laughs*] which one—will the real B. J. please stand up. And so they—Barbara felt sorry for me at that point. And she stood up, "Yeah, yeah, we're ready." And I've often kidded my wife, who was the one in the middle, that after lookin' 'em over there, I could realize, [*SL laughs*] well, let's see, I soon found out that Barbara was a couple of years older than me, and I almost never had dated a girl that was even my age.

SL: Right.

[01:24:18] JM: Always date one a year younger or . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . two years younger. And so I had ruled Barbara out because she was too old. [*SL laughs*] And the younger I'd ruled out because she had braces on.

SL: There you go.

JM: I've often told her this. [*Laughter*] I didn't wanna be smoochin' on someone with braces.

SL: Oh, that's terrible.

JM: So I decides the one in the middle was . . .

SL: Was the right pick.

JM: . . . was the right one, it turned out. She's my wife of fifty-three years now.

SL: That's great.

JM: So anyway, I took her on a date, and the . . .

Randy Dixon: Sorry to interrupt. We need to think about food.

SL: Okay.

RD: Y'all been goin' about an hour and half.

SL: Okay. Let's take a break.

RD: So . . .

[Recording stopped]

[01:25:03] SL: So we just took a little break to order some food.

JM: Yeah.

SL: But we're gonna get back to this love story here.

JM: Yeah.

SL: So you're home on a pass for a week.

JM: Yeah.

SL: And 'cause you got out early? Is that . . .

JM: No, we were going to be getting out early. We already had an idea of when the unit was gonna be deactivated.

SL: Okay.

JM: And so—but I hadn't—I don't think that I knew for sure that my paperwork was gonna go through and let me come home in time to start the second semester of summer school.

SL: Right.

JM: Which would get me out an extra month, basically, earlier than

the rest of the guys. And so anyway . . .

SL: You were looking for someone to date for a week.

[01:26:02] JM: Yeah, and got up enough nerve—and it just took a tremendous amount of nerve to just call up someone you didn't know a thing about. Didn't know what they look like [*SL laughs*] or anything except that one of 'em was in the university. Well, I had been in the university, and I thought, well, you know, so we had this connection. And so I say, "Well, I guess it's about time to head that way, and are you ready?" I'm kinda glancin' at all three of 'em to see which one of 'em stands up. [*Laughs*] And Barbara said she felt sorry for me, so she stood up, and off we go. Lookin' back on it, I should've said, "Well, you know, obviously I don't know which one of you is B. J. Boyd, you know, so why don't we all go?" And but that didn't occur to me, so Barbara and I went to the boat show. And boats and camping were not something she was the least bit interested in. [*SL laughs*] And as it turns out, she was dating an exchange student from Italy, and he was going to be leaving soon, and so she felt like it was, you know, gonna be all right to go out for this little afternoon date with somebody. As it turned out, we parked our car there in front of Palace Drug and walk up to where this show was there in UARK Bowl . . .

SL: Bowl.

JM: . . . up there in up above. And Sergio was in there reading a magazine. I didn't know what the deal was, so we all walked past, and she's thinking, "Oh my gosh, there's Sergio. If he sees me out here walkin' with another boy, that's not gonna be good." Betty, on the other hand, was—had been dating—more like going steady, you might say. Anyway, dating a boy who was gone for the summer from—lived in Altus. He's related to the people there . . .

SL: Winery.

JM: . . . involved with the wine business there in Altus.

SL: Post family?

[01:28:22] JM: Yeah, I think so. And so—I'm gettin' ahead of myself. So we do the boat show thing there, and I take her home. We stop at Jug Wheeler's and get a Coke or ice cream or something and get on home. And so I'm thinking, "Boy, let's see, I've gotta find a way to meet—have another encounter here." And so I proposed that—or I got home and talked to Mom and Daddy about havin' a picnic, inviting the whole family out to the farm. And so we did that on about the next night or two days later or something. Very quick. And so we have 'em all out for a little barbecue out in the yard, you know, and so

forth. And my brother's tryin' to be Mr. Cool, you know, with the girls and everything, and my sisters are tryin' to play pranks on these city girls, and [*laughs*] got hound dogs runnin' around wantin' to get under their feet and that sort of thing. And so we—I propose that we might as well take—Paul and I might as well take the three girls back, and we'll stop off somewhere and get a Coke. And so the three girls start pilin' in the back seat. And it's, "Oh, no, no, no. One of you get up here in the front seat," you know. So Paul's in the back with two girls, I'm drivin', and [*SL laughs*] I thought, "Man, this can't be right, you know the—that the three girls we're tryin' to introduce ourselves to, they're sitting in the back seat" . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . "of the car, and I'm drivin', and it's gonna be crazy." So anyway, I'm very quickly realizing that the middle daughter, Betty, is really the one that I'm attracted to, my type. And so I make a date with her to go out the next night. And—or two nights later or something, fairly quick, and had no time to lose. You know, so only got a week pass, here.

SL: Right.

[01:30:47] JM: And so the afternoon of when the date was gonna— was set, she calls up and, "Oh, I'm sorry, I just—I really

shouldn't be goin' out on a date, I'm dating another boy seriously," and so forth. And, "Oh, no." She breakin' the—breaks the date with me. Turns out that Patty, the younger sister, was puttin' the guilt trip on her about, "You shouldn't—you don't even—you all"—you know, so forth, anyway, put a guilt trip on her and talked her into breakin' the date. And so ended up havin' no dates outside of Barbara with the boat show, no date that whole week that I was back, and get back to—in the army again, and about two weeks later, ten days later or so, mail call. You know, you're hopin' that you'll get another letter from your parents or grandparents.

SL: Right.

[01:31:52] JM: Grandmother. And called me out, "Here you go." And I look at it and, "Oh my God, it's got a Crest Drive address—return address. Oh my God." I thought, "Oh, no, I've got a letter from Betty," and go back in the barracks, open it up real quick, and it's Betty writing saying that—she's apologizing for having broken the date with me and hoped that maybe when I get out that we'll be able to see each other.

SL: Hmm.

JM: And I've saved the letter, by the way. And so my other—my friend, J. Walter Buchanan, who was—presented himself as

absolute Mr. Cool. He was an SAE from Fayetteville here and went with us on some of these trips to other fraternities.

SL: Yeah.

JM: Other colleges. And Austin and various places. And so he supposedly was Mr. Cool, and I got him to proofread my reply letter back. His suggestion was to play it cool and say something like, "Well, maybe we'll get together, maybe I'll see you or something. I was sure disappointed, but maybe I'll see you when I get back." And meanwhile in my heart, I was thinking, "Eeeee." I was just on cloud nine. [01:33:28] And I've told Betty this many times, and she's annoyed to hear it, but [*laughs*] but years later when *Dirty Dancing* movie came out and Jennifer Grey was in it . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . said, "Oh my God, Betty, you look—back in the day you looked just like Jennifer Grey." "Oh, no! She's got a big nose," you know. [*Laughter*] Whatever. And I can look of pictures of Betty back in the day there . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . and I can send those off to the kids now. And say, "You know, what do you think? Do you think she looks like Betty—like Jennifer Grey?" And one of my daughters would write back,

"No one puts Baby in the corner." [*Laughter*] And so anyway— and so it worked out that we got out a month ahead of the rest of the company. And so the very next day I called Betty for a date that afternoon, and then we had our second date that night, and the next day. We'd have at least one or two dates every day from there—[*laughs*] I mean, there's no "Maybe we'll get together."

[01:34:46] SL: So obviously, her relationship fell apart, I guess.

JM: With Barbara?

SL: No, no, no. Wasn't Betty—was Betty . . .

JM: Oh, oh yeah. Yeah. So she had to find a way to get rid of the other boyfriend. [*Laughs*] And so anyway, he was very upset that—you know, if hadn't left for the summer—and actually, if I hadn't've gotten that early out, he would've been back about the same time that I was getting back out of the army, and I don't know how things might've turned out. You know, it's just little things along the way that you look back at in your life, and you think, "Man, if that hadn't happened—you know, if our unit hadn't been called up and so forth, you know, well, maybe that whole series of things—I might've been dating someone else. I wouldn't been—wouldn't have gotten up the nerve to call up for a blind date. Might've seen 'em at church."

SL: Right.

JM: But . . .

SL: So were they Catholic, too?

JM: Yeah.

[01:36:01] SL: So how long was it once you started seeing Betty before you proposed to her?

JM: Oh, couple of months. [*Laughter*] Yeah, well.

SL: Ah, boy.

JM: In the—yeah, we got out in . . .

SL: So how old were y'all?

JJM: . . . the first part of . . .

SL: Then.

JM: I was twenty, and she was twenty-one. Or I mean, she was—she's only a day younger than me.

SL: Ah.

JM: We—I was—we were both almost twenty-one.

SL: Okay.

JM: She was old enough, according to state law, that she didn't have to ask her parent's permission . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . but I had to ask mine.

SL: Is that right?

JM: 'Cause for some reason, it's a little bit different from male to female. That's what it was . . .

SL: Did you . . .

JM: . . . at the time.

SL: Did you . . .

[01:36:46] JM: So we were married before the end of the year, December 29.

SL: Did you approach her parents for her hand?

JM: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: How did that go?

JM: Yeah. So [*laughs*] you know, we were at her house there, and it's funny, I thought I would broach the subject a little bit, saying, "You'll sure make someone a good wife someday." And then I, you know, left. That was the end of the conversation for the night, you know. And I thought I was dropping a hint that I might be asking her. She took it to mean that I wasn't gonna be askin' her, that I would be makin' someone a good wife someday. And she went back in to her sister's room there crying. And, "He says he thinks I'll make 'someone' a good wife someday." [*Laughs*] And she was—anyway, very upset by that, but that wasn't what I meant at all.

SL: Right.

[01:37:55] JM: And so I proposed to Betty, even though I was the—
at that point I only had one year of college, and I was plannin' to
get a college degree. And Betty was workin' for her father. And
our plan would be that she would keep on workin', and my
grandmother would fix us up with a free apartment and so forth.
We'd kinda talked about some of these arrangements. I would
keep on goin' to school. And family would cover the tuition and
books and so forth, and we would just live real cheap, you know,
as students. And so anyway, we—I go back and knock on the
door. The parents had already kinda quit for the night.
Watching television. They'd gone back to the bedroom.
Basically in bed, not asleep yet.

SL: Oh.

JM: And propo—made my pitch to her dad. And he said, "Well, I
guess first thing would be can you support her?" [*Laughs*] Well,
told him what our plan was and that I was intending to stay in
school and had three more years to go. And so as it turned out,
Betty worked on for about another six months, and then I
started workin' for Brennan-Boyd Construction Company part
time and going to school, carryin' like twelve hours, maybe one
course in the summer, next semester another course. And so . . .

[01:39:52] SL: So your boss was your father-in-law.

JM: Yeah, uh-huh. So that, as it turned out, Missy was born about ten months after we got married. [*Laughs*]

SL: Ah.

JM: And so . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: We were anxious to experience that and have a child.

SL: Sure.

JM: I was really ready to settle down, and Betty was absolutely my type. I dated—played the field, you might say.

SL: Right.

JM: Not in a way that people might think of today where . . .

SL: Nobody was hiding anything.

JM: Morals are . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . a lot looser now . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . you might—I guess you might say.

SL: Right.

JM: But they've been a lot of frogs to kiss before one of 'em turns into a princess [*laughs*] you might say.

[01:40:59] SL: So I bet this made your Mimi and your parents really

thrilled that . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: Now what about Paul? Was—he hadn't married yet.

JM: No, Paul wasn't married yet and . . .

SL: So you were the first.

JM: Mh-hmm. Yeah. And then our daughter was the first grandchild in the family. So she had special status, you might say, until the others started coming on.

SL: Right. Right.

[01:41:29] JM: And so it was—we were living about a block away from my grandmother, and so there were lots of times where we'd have lunch over there. And Betty and my grandmother would compare notes on soap operas that my wife—they both got into.

SL: *As the World Turns.*

JM: But—yeah. [*SL laughs*] Betty says, "As the World Churns."

[*Laughter*] But they—Mimi liked to get lunch on, then sit down and watch television, watch these soap operas from eleven o'clock to twelve. And then we . . .

SL: Serve.

JM: . . . then we eat lunch. Those are the only soap operas she cared about. I forget the names of them. Some of them were

only like fifteen-minute shows. And . . .

SL: *Days of Our Lives*.

JM: Yeah.

SL: I'm tryin' to remember all those, too. There were several.

JM: Yeah, *As the World* . . .

SL: To choose from.

JM: . . . *Turns*, I'm sure.

SL: Yeah, that was a big one.

JM: Yeah. That seems like that was a thirty-minute one.

SL: I think it was, yeah.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

[01:42:40] JM: So I start—I was in—studying business and also takin' some electives in architecture kind of courses to learn more things about construction. Although really, in the back of my mind, I was thinkin' that the grass was greener elsewhere. And I look at these different companies that are coming to interview students at the university.

SL: Right.

JM: And thinking that, "Boy, you know, I just wanna see what else is out there." And ended up pushing in that direction and went to work for Continental Oil Company as soon as I got out of the

university.

[01:43:30] SL: Where'd that land you? In Houston?

JM: No. Well, not—it eventually did. But we went to Oklahoma City . . .

SL: Okay.

JM: . . . at first. And they—what I liked about Conoco on that program was that you had six month of on-the-job training out in the field to learn all sorts of things, maybe a month with doin' this and a month doin' that and . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . goin' out for a month with—on these drilling operations out in west Oklahoma panhandle where they're drilling for gas wells and fracking and the oil production out there around those pump jacks, you know, and working in the—they call it a gasoline plant where the gas comes into the—out of this field there into a central place there. And they've got basically a refinery to make butane, propane, and separate it off into methane and that sort of thing with the natural gas that's coming in.

[01:44:41] SL: So what degree did you end up with in school?

JM: Business degree.

SL: Business.

JM: Yeah. B.S . . .

SL: And so they . . .

JM: . . . B.A.

SL: . . . they accepted you on that.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

SL: On the strength of that resume?

JM: You didn't need a petroleum engineering degree.

SL: Okay.

JM: Because you were gonna be into the business end of the production department.

SL: Okay.

[01:45:01] JM: And so then they had the second six months was on-the-job training in the office kinda shadowing people there doing various things in the office. For that six months, we moved to Enid. And then stayed there until they consolidated the offices and moved us down to Oklahoma City. Was only in Oklahoma City about three months when an opening came up down in the national headquarters there in Houston in the Conoco Building. It's got a big triangle. . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . up on the top. And so went down there, and I was living out west of town there about a thirty-minute commute into town or carpooling with other people in . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . the area that also worked downtown. But had that experience of workin' in a downtown metropolitan area like that and . . .

SL: So it's . . .

JM: . . . wearin' a suit and tie every day and . . .

[01:46:11] SL: This is in [19]65, [19]66?

JM: Yeah, [19]66, [19]67, [19]68, I guess it was because we came back in the spring of [19]69. But the whole lifestyle of bein' away from Arkansas as much—and Fayetteville, as many roots as we had here, and Betty missing her family, and you know, bein' away from home like that for both of us was workin' on us. And so—and Mr. Boyd, too, had occasionally thrown out the idea about comin' back and . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . needing some help and so forth. So finally we decided to—that maybe we oughta look into that and called, and he rolled it around a little bit in his mind there, and we got the word that "Yeah, let's—come on back, and we'll have a job for you." So we moved back in the spring of [19]69. And turns out that that was a very good for us from—both of us, basically, because we had the last year of my grandmother's life. If we had stayed in—with

Conoco, I wouldn've missed a whole lot of my grandmother's life.

SL: Right.

[01:47:54] JM: But the funny thing about bein' away like that. When we would come back, it would all be quality time.

SL: Sure.

JM: We'd be takin' a little—three-days at the lake in a motel or something where my grandmother could watch us all swimming, and we'd be a big family reunion.

SL: Right.

JM: It'd be special picnics out on the farm or one of the parks around here in Fayetteville. Whenever we came back, it was always real good quality time. And we probably saw as much family when we were livin' away from Fayetteville . . .

SL: 'Cause everyone made . . .

JM: . . . and coming back for visits . . .

SL: . . . an effort to get together. Yeah.

JM: . . . than otherwise.

[01:48:42] SL: Let me ask you this: So what's—what is going on with your mom and dad and are—there are more children . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . that happen while you were gone, is that right?

JM: Mh-hmm.

SL: And did Paul stay? Or did he . . .

JM: Yeah, yeah. So Paul went on through the university there taking architecture.

SL: Okay.

JM: And but towards his—it's a five-year program.

SL: Yep. It's grueling.

JM: And it got into about the last year of it, and it seemed like you had to make Bs. You had to maintain a B average, or else you're out. Well, finally he made a C in something, and it just wasn't gonna happen. So he finished up in getting the degree in arts and science and decided he didn't wanna be an architect anyway, which would've been the wrong field for him anyway, lookin' back at it. And decided he wanted to be a farmer and raise cattle and continue the tradition there that my father had started.

SL: Right.

JM: And so he started that and he—and also in the apartments. He became interested in being a farmer with apartments in town that he was managing and owning and so forth. So that's the path of life that Paul took. And . . .

[01:50:29] SL: And so how many kids were born to your mom and

dad while you were gone.

JM: The last child was born in [19]57, so I was still livin' at home.

SL: Oh.

JM: Back then.

SL: Okay, so you got to . . .

JM: I was in high school.

SL: . . . be a part of it.

JM: Yeah, that was be—that'd be my freshman year of . . .

SL: Okay. For some reason I thought that there was more . . .

JM: Or sophomore in high school year.

SL: Okay. So let's see. There were four girls in a row after you and Paul? Is that right?

JM: Yeah. And then James, and then one more girl.

SL: I see. Okay.

JM: Amy.

SL: Amy. Okay.

JM: Yeah.

SL: I'm tryin' to keep this straight.

JM: Yeah. [*Laughter*]

SL: It's complicated.

[01:51:13] JM: It's funny. We'd be sittin' around tryin' to watch our television, you know, with only one channel to look at. And

you'd see Mama over there knitting booties. We'd say, "Uh, Mama? Do you have some news for us?" She'd say, "Well, it might be. Could be." [*Laughter*] She'd—'cause whenever she was pregnant, she'd start knitting booties or little caps . . .

SL: Sure.

JM: . . . or something for the new baby.

SL: Sure. Yeah.

JM: And I don't know what would happen to the old booties that she had knitted, but we could always tell when Mama was pregnant because here she's . . .

SL: Knitting.

JM: . . . knitting these booties again. Kinda became a tradition.

[01:52:07] I might mention something, too, while we're on Mama and the days when—the time period when she was still getting pregnant.

SL: Yeah.

JM: She liked to read a lot. She always read a lot in her whole life, especially later in life when the kids were gone.

SL: Right.

JM: But she started a tradition of reading to us. Turn the television off. Wasn't anything on anyway worth watching. *What's My Line?* [*laughs*] or something, you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . some program was on.

SL: That was a fun program.

JM: Yeah.

SL: I liked that program.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

JM: Yeah, that's one of our staples.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And she would read a book. Read this one about Lewis and Clark expedition and Sacajawea and . . .

SL: Sure.

JM: . . . so forth and was one of the ones that I particularly remembered. But so Betty, incidentally, said that her grandmother used to read books to her and her sisters. That was kind of a tradition in the afternoons to get the kids together and read. So that was kind of a early recollection there, remembrance of Mama.

[Recording stopped]

[01:53:28] SL: So you and Betty take her father's offer up on gainful employment. You guys decided to move back to Fayetteville. And you both were homesick. Oh, and by the way,

is this our—this is our third segment for today. We just had pizza. [*JM laughs*] Too much pizza, and I had too much coffee. So now I was lookin' at your timeline, and Paul gets married within a year or two after you get married, is that right?

JM: Yeah, that's right.

SL: And he married . . .

JM: Suellen Rolniak.

SL: Romiak.

JM: Yeah. Rolniak. Rolniak . . .

SL: And what was that . . .

JM: . . . is her—was her maiden name.

[01:54:15] SL: So Paul continues to be the farmer, is that right?

JM: Yeah. Right.

SL: And by saying that he's a farmer, he's working the Marinoni farm, is that . . .

JM: Yes, but they bought a forty-acre tract further out on 16. And with a house. They moved out there.

SL: Okay.

JM: And so he was doing a lot of work on the original farm as well as out on his own, and then he had other pastures rented where he could run his cattle or put up hay, so he was spreading out in some other directions there, too, in that area west of town.

[01:55:01] SL: And so what are the rest of the kids doing? This is nine or so years after you got married that you're back.

JM: Yeah, the next one I guess was Mary Sue. She married a grad student at the university, and makin' a long story short, his family had been in the fruit orchard business up in Pennsylvania.

SL: Okay.

JM: And she moved back up there and has spent her—they're—both of their working careers. She's been working right in—her job was selling the fruit, making sure it got sold, got paid for, take care of the people, hiring people for the fruit stand, their market that they had there on the farm. His job was raising it. Deciding what to plant, how to raise it, how to produce—production was his end of it, sales and marketing, development, that sort of thing, was Mary Sue's. That fruit farm has now been passed on down to their son and his daughter, and they're operating.

[01:56:18] They still live up in a very historic house. The house is right on the Mason-Dixon Line. It was—they—the family story, their family story was that it was within earshot of Gettysburg, the Battle of Gettysburg. And that his great-great-grandparents, I suppose, were able to sit on the front porch and listen to all the thunderous . . .

SL: Wow.

JM: . . . cannon fire and everything from the Battle of Gettysburg. We've been up there several times. It's a real neat vacation kind of thing to go up there. During fruit season this last time we tried to hit the cherry season. The big—I wanna say Bing cherries, but she says, "No, they're Queen Anne"—they're some other variety that's very, very good. [*Laughs*]

[01:57:13] SL: So they've had a good life, then.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Out of the fruit farm.

JM: Yeah.

SL: That business.

JM: Yeah. His . . .

SL: And it's passed onto the kids.

JM: Glenn, her husband, his parents are still alive, and I think they're either 100 or close to 100.

SL: Wow.

JM: They're a couple of years apart from each other, but they're still alive and doing well. I say, "Well, it's an apple a day," you know. [*Laughs*]

SL: That's right. That's right.

JM: Keepin' 'em alive.

SL: Good life.

JM: So longevity's sure enough in his side of the family.

SL: Okay.

JM: But that's Mary Sue. And they had a boy and a—a son and a daughter. The daughter's a very fine violin player and—well, music has kinda run in their family. They're all musical and—let's see. Then there—then it goes to Rosa Linda. And she and Eric Robinson was her husband. They had two children, and they're no longer married. They stayed here in Fayetteville. Eric worked at the university in the business office there. Gosh, let's see. Then there's—who's next? Paula.

SL: Paula.

[01:58:44] JM: Paula's next.

SL: Who I know and . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . went to high school with. Yeah.

JM: Paula decided that marketing was the field she wanted to go into and moved to Kansas City and worked for a big department store up there and met her husband-to-be, who was a lawyer. And they're back in Fayetteville now, and he's continued to work in the field of . . .

SL: Practice . . .

JM: . . . development, property, business law, that sort of thing

related to properties, real estate. She is involved in selling real estate, has a broker's—brokerage.

SL: She's best known . . .

JM: Who'm I missing now? Then there's . . .

SL: . . . for preservation activate.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Activity.

JM: She's really interested in that. She's living in my grandmother's house, she and Eric. They had two boys. Or four boys.

[Laughs] My wife is gonna see this and, "Hey, you forgot somebody.

SL: Well, you can tell her . . .

[01:59:57] JM: And they're grown now, pretty much, and out on their own or out going to school somewhere, various adventures. And then the next child down was Annie.

SL: Kay.

JM: Marla Ann. And she lived in—she married a university student here that was here for a baseball scholarship. And he was from Amarillo, Texas, so after the university, they moved back to the—to Amarillo. And he was in the construction business, or the remediation for disasters, you might say.

SL: Okay.

JM: And he said Amarillo was just ideal for that because you either had your tornado-and-flood season, or your Christmas-tree-fire season. [*Laughter*] He said it was always one kind of disaster or the other. And I think that evolved into mostly roofing jobs. But they did a lot of flood damage, smoke damage, all kinds of work like that. And they're back here in Fayetteville now.

SL: Oh, good.

[02:01:25] JM: And so we're real close to them and their family.

They have—they had two boys, and then they decided to adopt a girl from Thailand.

SL: Okay.

JM: A ten-year-old child from Thailand. And so anyway, the—that's a real important family in our immediate circle of people that we see all the time, nearly every day. [02:01:58] Let's see, then there's James. And James had the misfortune of developing schizophrene—paranoid schizophrenia probably about when he turned twenty, along in that age. It's a typical time for males. If they're gonna get it, they typically get it like between eighteen and twenty-four, that period of time. Girls, if they're gonna get it, they tend to get it a little later. But he was able to, in spite of the fact he was startin' to come down with this, he was able to join the military and was in the army for four years. And served

on the military—demilitarized zone, the DMZ, in Korea, for a year and a half or so, and was real proud to serve us over there and had photo albums of he and his buddies over there. He came back, eventually died of prostate cancer that . . .

SL: Oh my gosh.

JM: . . . developed into bone cancer. It's one of those fast-moving types of prostate cancer. And so he's the first sibling that we've lost.

SL: And he's the youngest?

JM: He was next to the youngest.

SL: Next to the youngest.

[02:03:23] JM: Yeah. And the youngest is Amy. And Amy was real big into horses. She would ride from our farm out there on West 16 all the way to the rodeo grounds in Springdale all by herself as a twelve-, fourteen-year-old kid. And [*laughs*] she was very independent. She's got three kids. Her daughter was an Olympic weight lifter.

SL: Wow.

JM: And she wasn't all beefed up like you would think a weight lifter, a male weight lifter, would be. But she ranked fifteenth in the world and made the Olympic team when the Olympics were in China.

SL: What an honor.

JM: And she married her boyfriend, her love—the love of her life was another Olympic weight lifter, and—I'm off on a tangent, now.

[02:04:29] He joined the navy, was in the submarine service.

Anyway, they—so the two boys—Amy has—she and her husband have moved back to this area, live up in the Tontitown area.

Out in the—kind of where the typical thing is to have about five acres and an area for a horse . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . and barn and that sort of thing on the—to the south of Tontitown.

SL: Is that on 112?

JM: No, no.

SL: Okay.

JM: It's off of 412.

SL: Okay.

JM: On the west side of Tontitown and then south about a . . .

SL: Okay.

JM: . . . mile or two. And the two boys have also moved back in the area, and they're all living in close proximity there. So that's the eight of us. I think I haven't missed anyone. [*Laughs*]

SL: That's a lot of folks.

JM: That's funny to have that big of a family.

SL: That's a whole lot of folks. So is there ever a fam . . .

JM: Don't ever ask me when their birthdays are. [*Laughter*]

SL: I'm ba—I'm terrible on that, too.

JM: I've got the years, pretty much.

SL: I have trouble remembering my children's birthdays, and I've just got three, so. So does the family ever have like a reunion where everyone shows up or—I know it's hard when there's so many scattered everywhere, but gosh, what a prolific . . .

[02:06:05] JM: We were havin' . . .

SL: . . . set of immediate family.

JM: . . . a Fourth of July family get-together one time out on the farm there. And Mama and several were up in the yard there in their chairs like this watching the firecrackers. We were havin' a bottle rocket war, by the way. [*Laughter*]

SL: I used to have a few of those.

JM: And so we were shootin' bottle rockets at each other, and . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . we were about, I don't know, fifty yards apart or so.

SL: Yeah. Yeah.

JM: And the skyrockets had been goin' off and spri—the kids had been playin' with sparklers and all kinds of things. And blowin'

cans up in the air.

SL: Right.

[02:06:48] JM: One thing we talk about every Fourth of July is the year that Mama was sittin' there and this pop-bottle rocket—somebody shot one at me. It went past me comin', bzhew, right across there about five feet off the ground, hit Mama right in the forehead . . .

SL: Oh.

JM: . . . and blew up.

SL: Oh.

JM: Mama said, "Party's over!"

SL: Oh.

JM: And she gets up and [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Boy.

JM: And boy, we thought, "Oh, are you hurt? Are you hurt?" 'Cause man, that'd put your eye out. We were real lucky that nobody was hurt. But I've got scars here where bottle rockets would hit me and blow up, blow a hole in my t-shirt and [*laughs*] . . .

SL: We used to do the same thing. We had . . .

JM: Oh, it was terrible.

SL: We'd shoot it across Assembly Drive. So we were actually . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . firing across a street.

JM: Yeah.

SL: It was—we loved it.

JM: Yeah. [*Laughter*] You would . . .

SL: It was exciting.

JM: . . . think you'd be able to dodge and—but . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: You know, it's terribly dangerous.

SL: It is.

JM: Especially . . .

SL: It's a stupid thing to do.

JM: . . . havin' glasses on at least you'd have a little bit of protection.

SL: Yeah.

JM: But you know, you could have somethin' . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . come in from the side and not have time to blink.

SL: Yeah. It was so neat to watch.

[02:07:54] JM: Yeah. Other things about family reunion—my

mother set—my mother was from a large family. Seven kids.

One of which—the youngest of which, by the way, is a Carmelite

nun.

SL: Okay.

JM: And the Carmelite Order—they are removed as much as possible from daily activities and from society. They only have one in their group who goes out and gets the groceries or interacts with . . .

SL: The real world.

JM: . . . the grocery boy or the electrician that came to fix something. But otherwise they're removed, and they're—they spend most of their time praying or in contemplation or, you know, or workin' on their craft or doin' the work around—that's involved in their monastery. [02:08:49] But at any rate, for a long time there, starting I guess back in the [19]70s, we started having family reunions on the O'Connor side, my mother's maiden name. And it got to where fifty or sixty people were showin' up, and it was a pretty big deal. And it might be—one time it was at our farm out on 16 West. Several times it would be at, oh, maybe Norfork Lake or Beaver Lake at the campgrounds. And so then it got to where were havin' either the reunion or the family newsletter. Instead of having a reunion, we'd have a newsletter. Everyone write in and . . .

SL: That's much more affordable.

JM: . . . give their news. Well, it got to where it was newsletter every year. And I've got copies of all—every newsletter that—

since we started. And it's kind of a nice historical thing there. I have to admit that sometimes I only read the part on the people that are fairly close, closely related.

SL: Right.

JM: People that I know.

SL: Right.

JM: You're reading something here about one of my cousin's grandchildren, and man, I haven't any idea who they are, or what do I care if they're takin' piano lessons or [*laughter*] something, you know, whatever they're tellin' me.

SL: Right.

[02:10:22] JM: And so there—we had those kind of family reunions.

Now—well, like this last Fourth of July, Annie, my sister, had everybody over for a big firecracker thing and the swimming pool in the backyard and that sort of thing.

SL: Right.

JM: So we still do have things where we try to get everybody together. We used to get together always for Easter and Thanksgiving and Christmas.

SL: Sure.

JM: Fourth of July. Certain things, anyway, we would always get together. Some of the things, like Christmas, especially, would

be over at my grandmother's house where Paula lives now. Rosa had lived there a for a number of years, she and her husband. And so that was traditionally where we always came, but as the family expands, and you've also got the in-law's . . .

SL: Sure.

JM: . . . Christmas to go to and so forth, it becomes more and more of a complication.

SL: It's a nightmare, yeah . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . to get it all together.

JM: Too many people. And so it gradually became kind of a deal where each basic family unit started having their own Thanksgiving for that branch . . .

SL: Sure.

JM: . . . of the family. And also their own particular Christmas. So as the family gets bigger and bigger, it's harder and harder to get everybody together.

SL: Yeah. I understand that. We're the same way.

[02:11:57] JM: One Christmas when we were first married, we were gonna—and I think my brother had gotten—Paul and Suzie had gotten married at that point. We had a Thanksgiving, and we were gonna have everybody there. And there were so many

people, we had to rent the hall at St. Joseph's Church.

SL: Right.

JM: At the school.

SL: Right.

JM: Auditorium there, and had a big, vast, long table there, [*laughs*]
and had our Thanksgiving meal up there. But . . .

SL: How many showed up for that, you think?

JM: Oh, boy, forty or so?

SL: That's a good group.

JM: Yeah.

SL: That's a big group. [*Laughs*]

JM: So we decided after that it's just—that's just too much.

SL: Too much. Yeah.

[02:12:39] JM: But there—we've got pictures of really big

Thanksgiving meals over at Mimi's house, we always called it, no
matter who was living there.

SL: Right. Right.

JM: And of just a big, vast, long table there, about thirty or forty
people at the table. And . . .

SL: That's a lot of folks.

JM: . . . the ones on the back side couldn't move, you know . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . you'd just have to be somebody able to pass 'em something.

SL: Right.

JM: Or go in the kitchen and get it and bring out and—one thing that was a big tradition for us at the Christmas meals over at Mimi's house when Mimi was alive, especially—is where this started. It's continued on—was making tortellini.

SL: Okay.

[02:13:30] JM: And Bologna is kind of famous for tortellini, and Mimi was born and first ten years of her life in Bologna.

SL: Kay.

JM: So anyway, she would make the meat and get everything ready to go, and we'd all get together, and especially the kids because little fingers can make those tortellini . . .

SL: Sure.

JM: . . . tortellinis better. I don't know how you plural—make a plural word out of word . . .

SL: Tortellini? [*Laughter*] I don't . . .

JM: Well, it's already . . .

SL: Tortellinia?

JM: It's already got an *I* on the end, so it's sorta . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . plural, so . . .

SL: Yeah. Right.

JM: . . . we just . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . add the S.

SL: Yeah.

JM: Tortellinis.

SL: Yeah.

[02:14:13] JM: And because that was one of her favorites. Mimi always liked on things like that to have a big, seven-course meal. And it got to where just the tortellini course was not enough. We wanted a little more of that, little more of that, and then we wouldn't have room for the turkey or ham or . . .

SL: Right. Right.

JM: . . . whatever else was coming next. So it used to be that we would get together to make tortellini every Christmas.

SL: I love that.

JM: Be a big family operation there.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And then that has evolved to be more of a family thing. Like we'll have that over at our house, and we'll have our kids or grandkids involved, or maybe over—Annie will have that sort of thing at her house with her kids and their relatives and in-laws

and—so.

SL: That's so beautiful that it comes from the homeland.

JM: Yeah.

SL: From Mimi's homeland.

JM: And it's—we've tried tortellini elsewhere, and it's like—I don't know, it's like eating a hamburger or eating some meatloaf. You know, well, it's [*laughs*] just . . .

SL: Not the same.

JM: . . . not the same. Not anywhere near . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . the right taste or—you know, you have tortellini, and there's red spaghetti sauce on it or something. "Eh? This is not right."

[02:15:41] SL: So did Mimi make the dough?

JM: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. We'd roll it out in big long, flat sheets and everything.

SL: I love that. That's so great.

JM: And there's always a little bit of a mystery as to what went in it.

SL: [*Laughs*] Of course.

JM: And kind of the mystique of it and everything. And so we made a real special point of bein' there to help make it and writin' down exactly what all went into it. And so it's supposed to have marrow, bone marrow, in it.

SL: Okay.

JM: And also brains.

SL: Oh my God.

JM: And . . .

SL: I'd never know. [*Laughs*]

JM: We've—our later versions we haven't bothered with the marrow or the brains, and it hasn't seemed to affect anything. [*Laughs*]

SL: Okay.

JM: The secret ingredient, though, is nutmeg. You would never think to put nutmeg in the meat concoction, but it's just the . . .

SL: It just . . .

JM: . . . a key ingredient as far as flavor.

SL: I'm gonna remember that.

JM: Of course, a lot of grated cheese and the meat and eggs to hold everything together, the meat . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . part of it. But that was a big tradition.

[02:17:00] SL: I wanna get back to the farm 'cause—so as—you and Paul are—would no longer be at the farm. So did all that fall on your dad because there were, like, four girls and then—what was it, James? He was the last son, but . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . he's pretty far down.

JM: Yeah.

SL: He's a child . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . while you guys are gone.

JM: Yeah.

SL: So did all that fall on your father to—did he have to hire hands to help with it and . . .

JM: Ye . . .

SL: Or did he just kinda not do the farming anymore after you . . .

[02:17:43] JM: Well, no he still would—he wasn't into doing custom baling and hay operations off his farm like we used to do when we were involved with it.

SL: Right.

JM: But he still put up his own hay, and I think along about then, round bales came . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . came in. Well, I don't know, though. I remember him still usin' the square baler. And that old baling machine was a New Holland baling machine and . . .

SL: Yep.

JM: . . . had a big ol' thing that'd poke the hay down and . . .

SL: Right. Right.

JM: . . . and so forth, and it had a seat on the back and the knotter—
it had two knotters because there are two strings there . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . on the bale.

SL: Right.

[02:18:36] JM: And sometimes it would get a piece of hay or
something and clog it up, and it wouldn't . . .

SL: Wouldn't knot . . .

JM: The knot wouldn't happen just right.

SL: Right.

JM: And so while it was still under compression here as it moved
through that last chute, you could check the strings and make
sure it was gonna hold. Sometimes you'd pull, "Ope, they came
loose." You could—still had the time to tie it, you know, while it
was . . .

SL: As it was goin' by.

JM: Before it goes out the back. And so that became our job as
little—as younger kids, young boys, of sittin' back there and
watchin' those bales go by and checkin' each string.

SL: Right.

JM: And so about the time we were gone in the army or gone in the

university and not around except maybe on weekends, Daddy decided, apparently, that it's so rare that that knotter missed a bale that it wasn't worth worryin' about, that it didn't really matter if someone was back there checkin' the knots or not. Besides that, I think he sideswiped a tree and knocked that [laughs] seat off the baler and didn't have a seat anymore back there, so, oh, well, don't worry about it.

SL: Just let it go.

[02:19:54] JM: So he was still balin' hay. And the—they—the hay truck—they found a device that would go along beside the truck. You could drive the truck fairly close, have the bale right here goin' into that conveyer thing there . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . which would grab the bale and put it on up here and throw it out to just one man in the bed of the truck unloading and stackin' the hay up.

SL: Right.

JM: So you needed a couple of kids, basically, in front kinda pullin', makin' three rows into one, so that like Mama could be driving the truck and pickin' up those bales. And maybe my brother loadin' 'em and a couple of the girls up ahead there pullin' the bales and linin' them up. Instead of bein' this way, they'd be

like this so the conveyor could get 'em.

SL: Right.

[02:20:56] JM: And so then they had a conveyor belt—well, it's not a belt, but it's like a chain kinda drive conveyor to—that they could—Daddy could put the bales on that, and it'd shoot 'em up into the loft of the barn.

SL: That's a lot better than it was originally.

JM: And then all you'd need is some kids up there draggin' 'em back to some . . .

SL: Stackin' 'em.

JM: . . . stronger person, you know, that's gonna be stackin' the hay.

SL: Right.

JM: So they found some labor-saving devices, I guess you could say.

SL: Like all farms.

JM: They . . .

SL: It got more mechanized.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And then, like I said, at some point, these round bales came into the picture, and that really saved time and energy.

SL: Yeah. I see those wrapped now.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Leave 'em wrapped. For a while they just didn't wrap 'em, they just let the outer side of it kinda protect what was inside, and they'd bust 'em out.

JM: Yeah.

[02:22:00] SL: So the farm continued, then.

JM: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: Through all the kids, I guess.

JM: Yep. Yeah.

SL: So they all got to join in . . .

JM: And Paul . . .

SL: . . . and have that . . .

JM: Yeah, Paul's son is continuing on with the operation of cattle and hay production and so forth out there.

SL: With both places? With the . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . forty acres that he . . .

JM: Yeah, it was one of those . . .

SL: . . . got further down the . . .

JM: Yeah, as well as other acreage that he's involved with. This is Paul III. And so Paul III has kinda taken over my brother's various things. My brother owns a storage unit up in Springdale that's got, I don't know, hundreds of . . .

SL: Storage units.

JM: . . . stalls.

SL: Yeah.

JM: Storage units and so forth. And he's not up there every day on that, but he's—he is the one who hires the people who . . .

SL: Who run it.

JM: . . . are up there every day [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . collecting rents and . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . lettin' people in or whatever. And he's had some apartments. He's—he built some duplexes, which he recently sold in order to buy some land. This is my brother Paul I'm talkin' about. Buyin' some land further west and open land. So he has a lot . . .

SL: Lot of interests.

JM: He had a lot of things goin' on. And Paul III has been gradually takin' over all that sort of thing.

SL: So it's . . .

JM: [*Clears throat*] Getting thirsty.

[02:23:42] SL: There's a couple of items in the timeline. I saw something about Marinoni Construction? So there was a

construction—y'all started a construction company at some point?

JM: Yeah. Okay, my father-in-law, Byron Boyd, his brother-in-law, his wife's brother, was Brennan, Joe Brennan. And they started up Brennan-Boyd Construction Company. Their first big job was the hotel over here, the Mountain Inn.

SL: Yeah. I remember that.

JM: And one of my earlier recollections of Gary, your brother, was seein' him ride the hoist down with a wheelbarrow of something. It was either an empty wheelbarrow that he's gonna load and bring it up, or somethin', but he was hangin' on and laughin' [*laughter*] because you really weren't supposed to—that wasn't a personnel lift at all.

SL: Sounds like him.

JM: It was—that was before the days of OSHA.

SL: Right.

JM: But that wasn't—it would be a safety no-no to be . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . ridin' that thing.

SL: Right.

JM: But so they started with that and doing many other commercial construction jobs around. And our biggest construction job was

the Hilton Hotel with the continuing education center next to it and the parking deck next to that.

SL: Yep.

JM: All goin' on at the same time.

SL: Yep.

[02:25:16] JM: And but we built all kinds of churches and hospitals and sewer plants. Factories. Factories were kinda the favorite. Sewer plants and hospitals—I eventually decided if you could build a hospital and make a living, you could make a fortune doing anything else. *[Laughs]* It was—they . . .

SL: Really.

JM: Really . . .

SL: 'Cause it's so exacting.

JM: Really tough, yeah.

SL: Yeah.

JM: You've got so many different systems. The nurse-call systems, the gas systems, all . . .

SL: Sure.

JM: . . . kinds of . . .

SL: And it all has to be backed . . .

JM: . . . systems. Yeah, and it all has to be working, you know. And you've got fire and smoke considerations to worry about.

Anyway, so eventually Mr. Boyd got to the point where he wanted to retire, and I started Marinoni Construction up and bought out various parts of the equipment and so forth. We had about a year of overlap there where I was spending about half my time gettin' my company up and going, and about half my time gettin' his . . .

SL: Closed down.

JM: . . . shut down and closed out and loose ends taken care of and problems taken care of and so forth. It's not easy to close out a construction company or any company, I guess. It's a lot of—like a lot of things, it's easier to get into than it is to get out of.

SL: To get out of. You bet.

[02:26:49] JM: And so anyway, we got to the point there where he was able to completely get everything wrapped up and get Byron retired. And I started off on my own. And luckily we had done some work for McKee Baking Company up in Gentry. And my first job was—for me it was a real big job for McKee Baking Company adding onto their factory up in Gentry. And pretty much at the end of that, the local economy was really tanking. There was just almost nothing to bid on. And you could bid on things, and whoever got 'em seemed like they bid about 10 percent below your cost.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And however, McKee Baking Company was getting ready to start a job over in Virginia. And so I started toying with the idea of—just kind of musing about it, thinking, "Man, I wish I could follow them. They're so good to work for, and we know what they want and what they expect and how to do what they're callin' for." And so approached my superintendent about goin' to Virginia if we should—were able to finesse that job. And talk—then talkin' to my contact man with McKee. And anyway, makin' a long story short, after a lot of praying [*laughs*] and rosaries . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . and so forth, and their cooperation to work with me. Because they knew me and they knew my superintendent and they knew who the foreman, the carpentry foreman, was gonna be, et cetera, decided to go with me, and we did this big job over in Virginia.

[02:28:56] SL: Wow. So you had to like rent—lease all the gear, all the equipment to . . .

JM: Pretty much. We took some over there like trucks and, oh, the—but . . .

SL: Stuff that could su . . .

JM: . . . a lot of the bigger stuff we just rented over there. And then course a lot of it was subcontracted out.

SL: Right.

JM: The placing the concrete and the cement finishing and—but a lot of it we were doin' ourselves like the forming or the tying the rebar, that sort of thing.

SL: Right.

[02:29:29] JM: It was probably a—oh, I don't know, a \$75 million job or so and . . .

SL: That's a big job.

JM: But our part was, oh, \$3 or \$4 million worth of concrete, just the concrete end of it. That didn't count the pre . . .

SL: Forms.

JM: . . . the precast sides.

SL: Oh, okay.

JM: The walls, precast wall panels and precast roof panels.

SL: So y'all did the precasting?

JM: No.

SL: Oh.

JM: No, that was, I don't know, \$10 or \$15 million just itself.

SL: Wow.

JM: It was a big plant that they were puttin' in over there to make

these cupcakes and junk food, basically. [*Laughs*]

SL: Unbelievable.

[02:30:09] JM: Those people were Seventh Day Adventists, and they believed in the Bible verse there about not hiring anyone on the Sabbath. And the Sabbath for them is Saturday.

SL: Okay.

JM: And so from Friday night until—Friday sunset until Saturday sunset, there could be no work on the job. And they told us up front, "You better not be pourin' concrete Friday morning because if it's not set up and finished by four thirty, you're off. You've got to leave. And if it's not right, when we come back in here Monday morning, then you gonna" . . .

SL: You're gonna have to tear it out.

JM: . . . "you're gonna have to tear that out and pour it again."
[*Laughs*] And so we were real careful about that. Also no tobacco, which worked out really good for me because the job trailers usually . . .

SL: Pretty smoky.

JM: . . . were like a pool hall or something.

SL: Yeah.

JM: Ahh. I can't breathe in here.

SL: Yeah.

JM: But there, there was no smokin' in the job trailer and no smoking on their—out by the car or anything unless your car was off the site, which nobody's were. And so our contact man would come to the job meeting, weekly job meeting, with a big cardboard box full of those Little Debbie snack cakes. And, "There you go, boys. Help yourself." And he's thinkin', "Yeah, we'll get those guys—get your guys all sugared up, and they'll produce some work, get this building built." And these guys'd drink coffee and eat about two of those Twinkie kind of . . .

SL: Yeah, sure.

JM: . . . snack cakes for ten o'clock break, and they'd eat maybe two more for lunch and two more in the [*SL laughs*] afternoon at the afternoon break. [*Laughs*] And so and then maybe take some home, I don't know.

SL: So everybody got—didn't—quit smoking but they became diabetic.

JM: I guess, yeah. Yeah, they were burning up the energy, and they didn't need to worry about gainin' weight.

SL: Right.

[02:32:27] JM: So I operated the—my own construction company, which, by the way, this B. J. Boyd by then was working for me as secretary. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah. That's nice.

JM: This Barbara Boyd. Byron liked hiring his son-in-laws or daughters and so forth in the . . .

SL: So your first Boyd date . . .

JM: That—yeah, so . . .

SL: The first lady you dated—Boyd . . .

JM: I was always around her [*laughs*], you know. Back in the Brennan-Boyd days, she was the secretary workin' the payrolls and . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . gettin' letters mailed, and then she was our one and only secretary there in my operation. My theory—business model, I guess you could say, was have fewer jobs and take really good care of 'em . . .

SL: Sure.

JM: . . . and not try to get lots of jobs and . . .

SL: Quality.

JM: . . . just hope that they're being looked after properly.

SL: Yeah.

[02:33:28] JM: And that tended to be a problem with Brennan-Boyd. I'd find myself spending an awful lot of productive energy and time tryin' to put out fires or solve a problem that should never

have come up, you know . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . that kind of thing. And so when it came my turn to try my wings, you might say, my model was to focus on just a few jobs and try to do 'em as well as they possibly could be done, profitably as much as possible. And so then as—after twenty years or so of bein' in business, I start gettin' into my sixties and thinking, "Boy, I wish I could spend more time with this family archive kind of stuff. I've got all these pictures that need to be scanned, and I've got home movies that need to be sorted out, I've got all kinds of archive kind of things that I would like to be preserved. I would like for my own memory to be preserved and that I won't some day just be forgotten, although I'm sure I will be after it gets, you know, so many years on down the line." And so we—at that point we had—the family farm was basically what was left from a 160-acre tract on the front end minus what the bypass had taken when the 540 came through and split our farm in half. And then we had the back half, which was on the west side of what's 49 is now. A big portion of that mountain on the west side and about 220 acres back there.

SL: Wow.

[02:35:30] JM: And so we sold that to Tom Terminella.

SL: [*Laughs*] Okay.

JM: And this was all right before the real estate bust. And so after all that settled out and I had my share of that, at that point, the whole farm was in a partnership, and we all owned partnership units and—a very complicated arrangement. But anyway, after I got my portion and got to thinkin' about, "Man, I don't see how I'd ever run out of money. I might as well retire now." And I'd been talking to my nephew who was workin' for me. That's Barbara—B. J.'s son . . .

SL: [*Laughs*] Okay.

[02:36:18] JM: Barbara's son and one of the key employees about buyin' me out. So we'd been negotiating for a long time about that. Finally we worked that out, and I was able to leave that with 'em and let them finish the jobs that were goin' on, and so I was able to get clear of it, you know. Otherwise if you're tryin' to shut it down yourself, you know, you're dribblin' it on out to the—take a year and a half to . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . close everything out and have an auction and sell all your used equipment and . . .

SL: Yeah, so there's a year and a half outta your life.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

JM: It'd be a lot of work, too, and not profitable work, either. Plus they have to take over the liability of the company because the bonding company's on the hook for, I don't know, five years or something and . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . if the roof leaks or floor cracks or—lots of problems can come up.

[02:37:30] SL: So how long ago was this that . . .

JM: Let's see, that was [19]85.

SL: Wow.

JM: Not ninety—[20]05.

SL: [Two thousand] oh five.

JM: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: So you've been out of it a dozen years.

JM: Yeah.

SL: How do you like it?

JM: Oh, I can't imagine how I had time to work. [*Laughs*]

SL: Most everybody I know that's retired—I say they have flunked retirement. They got busy onto something else. And you know, they continue to work, but it's on—it's not the same job that they had . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . they retired from.

JM: Yeah.

SL: But they find something else to get engaged in.

JM: Yeah.

SL: In your case . . .

JM: Yeah, I . . .

SL: . . . I wouldn't say you flunked, but you certainly done very well at . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . putting together your family history.

[02:38:17] JM: Yeah, I been doing a lot more than just the family history thing, so I—unfortunately we decided to invest in some real estate which I got involved with as a partial owner, but the problem is you don't ever wanna get into something where in the fine print it says something about being jointly and severally [*laughs*] responsible. So you might be a 10 percent owner . . .

SL: But you're responsible for. . .

JM: . . . but if everybody else goes bankrupt, and you're the only one that's not bankrupt, then you're on the hook for the entire mortgage. And so [*laughs*] anyway, we got—this was right before the big real estate bust of 2008. And so that was a really

bad five years or so gettin' rid of that. [02:39:22] But I found myself, having invested, say, in a strip center with a convenience store, car wash, and . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . other rentals and so forth—instead of just sittin' back and takin' my share of the profit, I'm up there cleanin' the car wash and keeping it operated and collecting the rents and makin' sure that somebody—the guy gets out there and mows the grass like they're supposed to, you know.

SL: Making sure the . . .

JM: Managing.

SL: . . . investment holds its value.

JM: Yeah. Make—doin the property management on several things. And . . .

SL: So you have flunked retirement.

[02:39:54] JM: Yeah, so I'm back workin' again, thinkin', "Man, I didn't plan that."

SL: Right.

JM: [*Laughs*] Didn't plan it this way.

SL: Well, maybe time to sell out again.

JM: Yeah. Well, I've finally gotten completely clear of all of that.

SL: Good.

JM: So, I don't know, it's been an number of years since I've been clear of it, but it wasn't easy to get that behind me.

[02:40:20] SL: We talked a little bit about—do we call him James or Buss?

JM: Oh, he—either one.

SL: We talked a little bit about him over lun`ch, and this is kind of a hard thing because—well, first of all, he's a brother, and that—schizophrenia is such a strange, mysterious condition. I have a minor in psychology, and I know a little bit about it. But I guess I've never heard a personal story of someone that came down with it. You know, I've always—it's always just been case studies of people that are in it that I've studied on or have experienced. So did—if you don't mind talking about it, this is interesting to me, and I think with all the health care stuff that's going on now—when I was growing up, mental health—you know, if you could walk and you could lift things, you were expected to work and to contribute to society. And if there was something wrong with your head, you weren't really sick, you were just labeled crazy, but you were still kind of ostracized because you seemed to be physically able to participate, but somehow or another, you just couldn't, or you couldn't—sometimes they weren't—they were dangerous to others, or they

were dangerous to themselves, and that kinda seemed to be the—and they'd lock 'em up. So I'm going through your timeline, and I see there's one entry in there that says, "Buss trial." And so I was just wondering do—is that something that you're comfortable to talk about or . . .

[02:42:28] JM: Yeah, it's not a big family secret or anything. But Buss started gettin' real weird, oh, about the time he was in the second year at the university and quit the university and just kinda started driftin' around. And tryin' to live independently but—and holding menial jobs, and maybe we'd go up to check on him and bring him some garden produce or something, and the guy would say, "I don't know where he went. He left. He left owin' me rent" or something, you know. And this . . .

SL: Now he had served in the armed s . . .

JM: Well, this is before that. I'm . . .

SL: Oh, okay.

JM: I'm comin' to that . . .

SL: Oh, okay.

JM: . . . here in a minute.

SL: Kay.

[02:43:18] JM: And there was one time where he called and said his car had broken down, and he was, oh, gosh, over by Jonesboro

or something.

SL: Wow.

JM: My brother Paul went over there to get him back to Fayetteville, and his car had been spray painted. He was tryin' to paint his car a different color so that these people that he thought were following him could—would quit following him.

SL: That's the . . .

JM: Would not be able to find him.

SL: That's the paranoid side.

[02:43:51] JM: Yeah, the paranoia part of it. And various things.

We were really worried about him and tryin' to get him into Ozark Guidance center and that—or any kind of help. We thought maybe he had gotten into some marijuana that'd been sprayed with insect—with herbicide or something.

SL: Right.

JM: That got imported from Mexico in spite of that or something.

SL: Right.

HM: You know, and then that got into circulation, and he smoked it, and it's causing these problems. We couldn't get anybody to tell us what was the matter. And so pretty soon he—he was livin' in Springdale, we went up to check on him, and he was gone. We didn't hear from him for years.

SL: Wow.

JM: And it turned out that he had gone up into Indiana somewhere trying to escape from these phantoms he thought were after him. And he'd work as a farmhand somewhere, just kind of a drifter, you know, and go—then he'd—these people—these phantoms were about to catch up with him. He'd go somewhere else.

SL: Right.

JM: And he'd drift around out to Colorado and get a job as one of these telemarketers of something. And it's all menial kind of jobs. And then he just disappeared completely. Well, actually, during all this time, he was disappeared. We were thinking about havin' him declared dead because he'd been unseen for about five years.

SL: He was missing.

[02:45:32] JM: And so then all of a sudden, he calls up from Colorado and says he's been in the army all this time. And turned out he'd been in the army for four years, I think it was, and serving in north ko . . .

SL: That's . . .

JM: . . . in Korea on the DMZ.

SL: That's kind of a miracle.

JM: And yeah, boy, that was very lucky because that qualified him for VA benefits and shots, which later on would've been like \$700 a shot every two weeks. So he calls up, and anyway, it—"Oh my gosh, you know, here comes the prodigal son back."

SL: Yeah.

[02:46:20] JM: And so at—but it turns out that he was having a very bad episode of schizophrenia. And he comes back, and he's workin' for Daddy, building a fence. And catches a time there when Mama was gone on a trip to see her sister up in Kansas City I believe is the sister that he went—she went to see. And he apparently had this delusion that my father was controlling his life and causing all of his problems. And at that point, he had bought a .45 Magnum, a pistol, big pistol, from a hock shop and some ammo. And they had had lunch. Daddy was takin' a nap on the couch, and Buss came in and shot him in the head. One in the head and one in the heart there on the couch. And then left and threw the gun in the pond down by our barn—where the barn used to be before it burned down. And some neighbors who had horses out there came and heard the television unusually loud. Apparently Daddy mashed on—after being shot was mashin' on the remote. And oh, Lord. And found him and called the police and so forth. And Buss had gone back out in

the field there and was continuing to build the fence as though nothing had happened. And so, oh God. [Pause] I keep thinkin' of the next sentence, but [*clears throat*] I can't . . .

SL: Well, I guess . . .

JM: . . . talk.

SL: . . . the police came out or . . .

[02:48:33] JM: Oh, sure, yeah. So we get a phone call from—I think Rosa's daughter Angela called, and she was nearly hysterical that something's happened, Grandpa's been shot, Grandpa's dead, you know, a phone call like that. "What? What? Where are you? What's happened?" You know, this sort of thing on the phone. And so we jump in the car and race out there thinking—I don't know why we're racing, you know, but anyway.

SL: Well, sure.

JM: You know, so we're come tearin' up the driveway there and walk in the house there, and it's full of police, and there's Daddy still on the couch. And, "Oh, oh, you can't—I'm sorry, sir, you can't come in here, we're—this—we're still doin' a crime investigation, crime scene here." And so after we had time to settle down [*clears throat*]*—course, the police had some questions and askin' anybody that was around for their shirts because gun powder will implant into your clothing if you're the shooter.*

SL: Sure.

JM: Course, it wasn't me but—so they were suspecting Buss all along, but we had no earthly idea, you know, and they were saying, "Well, did somebody break in?" I said, "No, they couldn't've broken in. The door doesn't even have a lock. We never lock the front door or any of the doors." And "Well, what about all these guns up on the—leanin' on—above the fireplace there." And said, "Yeah, yeah." I said, "You'll probably find they're loaded, too." [*Laughs*] I said—we usually kept loaded guns . . .

SL: Well, sure.

JM: . . . up on the mantle there. Daddy preferred to have 'em all loaded so nobody had the excuse that, "Oh, I thought the gun was unloaded." Mm, excuse me. And so, boy, it was just a terrible week or so there before they—the police finally narrowed it down to arrest Buss. They found in his car the package of bullets.

SL: Ammunition. Yeah.

[02:51:13] JM: Ammunition. Fire department came out and drained the pond. Quite an operation pumpin' all the water out of that pond. And the police were out there, you know, knee deep in mud with their metal detector there and located the gun. They

were—before that they were searchin' everywhere, in the well, and you know, out in the bushes and . . .

SL: Sure.

JM: . . . so forth, lookin' for a murder weapon. And so anyway, then he was arrested, and you know, we really were—as things moved along, we thought, "Well, you know, nothing—it wasn't a robbery. There wasn't anything missing."

SL: Right.

[02:52:00] JM: And Daddy didn't have any enemies, you know. What could this possibly have been? And so you know, we're callin' the other sisters that were elsewhere livin' away from here. Everyone comin' back to Fayetteville. And the newscasters wantin' to know what's the latest and . . .

SL: Oh gosh.

JM: . . . you know, all that sort of thing. It was just a horrible, horrible thing. And . . .

SL: I don't remember any of this.

JM: . . . and many, many levels. Besides losing your father in a horrible situation like that and thinking, "God, I'm glad Mimi's not alive to have seen this. This would've killed her."

SL: Yeah.

JM: And having the funeral and so forth. And so, ah, let me see.

Incidentally, that was during a full moon. My sister Paula has a theory about . . .

SL: Full moons.

JM: . . . people goin' a little bit more nuts . . .

SL: They do. I . . .

JM: . . . during full moons.

SL: . . . believe that.

JM: And that was . . .

SL: Yeah, Claudette works at the hospital, and emergence . . .

[02:53:13] JM: Especially around the equinox time, which was April.

This is when this was. And so anyway, by August, his trial—he was in jail up until then. And he was sent off for seven years in the state pen. Well, twenty year—let's see. The rest of the twenty-year sentence was suspended, but he would be under supervision of a parole officer, I guess you would say. And so he ended up servin'—we'd go down to see him occasionally at—not Dumas. But anyway, some different—two different prisons down in . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . southeastern Arkansas. And oh, so humiliating to see your mother have to sign into the prison to see her son. And you're goin' in among all these other scumbuckets, you think. [*Laughs*]

You know . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . maybe they're people like you.

SL: Right.

JM: All these other lowlifers are—we're all goin' in with you to see our jailbird here in the prison. And so—but it was a num—it was several years before we made our first visit to go see him.

When he finally got out, then, after servin' the full seven years, the first thing he wanted to do was stop off to the liquor stores and get some booze 'cause he hasn't had any . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . all that time. And so he was able to pretty well hold it together except that for being drunk and DWI problems and marijuana possession and that sort of thing.

SL: Right.

[02:55:23] JM: But he'd drink booze, drink alcohol, and smoke marijuana to kinda self medicate his condition. We immediately started gettin' him into Ozark Guidance center and tryin' to work with them and so forth, but boy, the problem—a huge problem in anything like this is you can't really get much feedback as to what's the matter with them? Or are they mad at me? You know, has he got some delusion that I'm causing his problem?

SL: Right.

JM: Am I in any danger?

SL: Right.

JM: You had to satisfy yourself with knowing that if he kills you, he'll get justice served. Yeah, well, that's all well and good. You're [*laughs*—some comfort that is, you know.

SL: Yeah.

[02:56:25] JM: But this secrecy thing with schizophrenia like that—you hear about people who went nuts and went on a rampage. My gosh, couldn't their parents have done something about it?

SL: Right, no, it's not . . .

JM: Well, no, their parents were kept in the dark because of this secrecy thing that is required. As things evolved, we were able to get him into the VA, and it was very fortunate that it became classified as a service connected because it had developed while he was—it had really . . .

SL: Blossomed.

JM: . . . blossomed while he was . . .

SL: While he was serving.

JM: . . . in the military. Maybe that's why he got out when he got out or s—when they processed . . .

SL: He couldn't handle it anymore.

JM: . . . him out because he was gettin' more than they could handle. So with that situation, then, he was eligible for these shots every two weeks, his psych shots, he called them.

SL: Right.

JM: And apparently they did him enough good and had few enough side effects that he was willing to get 'em. That's a problem sometimes that somebody . . .

SL: Patient doesn't wanna . . .

JM: Yeah, there're too many side effects, keeps 'em asleep all the time or whatever.

SL: Right, right.

[02:57:54] JM: But so he qualified for those shots. And he'd call us up. We'd go over and check on him at his apartment. And he'd say, "Well, I got my psych shot next Tuesday. I'll need a ride up to the VA." And so I'd take him up to the VA. And this one time it was raining.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And I said—well, he usually would walk home. Said, "Well, now Buss, you gonna want a ride back?" He said, "Oh, hell, it's rainin'." He said, "I'm crazy, but I'm not that crazy." [*Laughter*]

SL: Oh gosh.

JM: But one of the . . .

SL: I'm so sorry to hear all this.

[02:58:50] JM: Yeah, boy. One of the funniest 911 calls on record is this one occasion where he was on a big drunk, apparently. And he always had some ser—some couch surfers, he called 'em, hanging around his house, living there. Fact he'd rent out his bedroom, and he'd just sleep on the couch, but he'd rent out his bedroom if this guy would provide some marijuana [*laughs*] or fifteen dollars a month or something.

SL: Right.

JM: Or provide his food tip—food . . .

SL: Food stamps?

JM: Food stamps, yeah. And so he was on a big drunk this one occasion there. He called 911 to have the cops come out and help find his stash that had been lost somewhere in his couch, his marijuana stash. [*Laughs*]

SL: I read something like that not too long ago.

JM: Oh, it's been long ago.

SL: Yeah. But just within this past year . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . there was . . .

JM: And so he—so the cops came, and he invited 'em in to have a smoke. And he ended up with a \$350 fine that he had to pay

off. Course, we were havin' to pay it off.

SL: Right.

JM: 'Cause he didn't have any money. But he was gettin' a check from the VA, but—well, no, I take it back, we didn't pay it off. He paid it out of his own money, and so h—these guys know all the ropes. They know when you have a fine like that, you can go—as long as you're makin' payments on it, you can go up to the cop shop, he calls it, over here at the police station and go in and make another five-dollar or twenty-dollar payment . . .

SL: Sure.

JM: . . . towards this fine. Which he had me do several times here, give me the money and send me up there to make a payment.

SL: Right.

JM: [*Laughs*] You're tryin' to go in and act like you're not the . . .

SL: Not guilty.

JM: Look like—yeah, look like you're not guilty yourself.

SL: Right. [*Laughter*] Right, right.

[03:01:05] JM: But anyway, we're really grateful to the VA that . . .

SL: There was a solution for it.

JM: . . . they took care of him so well like that. But there were many times where he'd go in and be evaluated and so forth and adjust his medications and so forth, but that shot really did help him.

Didn't have any significant side effects.

[03:01:42] SL: So how long had he been back before he was working with your dad that day?

JM: Just a few—just a month or so.

SL: Yeah.

JM: So he—in fact, he'd been—he hadn't been back long enough for me to have even seen him. I knew he was back, but I hadn't even seen him. And he had stopped off in Amarillo on his way home from Colorado to visit with my sister and family. And so when I called, she said, "Oh my God, I knew there was something wrong with him. He was nuttier than a fruitcake when he was here. And he just left unexpectedly without saying goodbye or anything. We looked out, and his car was gone." And another scary thing is sometimes you're drivin' down the road, and you don't know if the person drivin' that other car coming . . .

SL: Car is—has . . .

JM: . . . your way is . . .

SL: . . . their mind.

JM: . . . is . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . havin' a psychotic episode or something. But . . .

[03:03:00] SL: What's so hard about this story is that your father embraced him and took him back . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . and was working with him, and it didn't matter. Didn't—that's a really hard story.

JM: Yeah. Pretty . . .

SL: I guess everybody . . .

JM: . . . pretty rough chapter . . .

SL: . . . in the family was . . .

JM: . . . in our . . .

SL: . . . devastated.

JM: . . . family history.

[03:03:21] SL: Yeah. But you guys have recovered.

JM: Yeah.

SL: I mean, as much as you can. I lost a brother to suicide. And I was out of town at the time. And he had actually—I was doin' a—I had—I was out in the New Mexican wilds doin' stuff, and he had wanted to go, and he was at—I forget what it was called, decision point or something. He'd already started exhibiting some pretty severe depression. And so it's a hard loss when you lose someone to a mental illness.

JM: Yeah. Yeah, it sure is. And none of us really would've

recognized it. You know, like you say, if they're able bodied and physically fit, why don't you just straighten up and act right, you know?

SL: Yeah. That was my father's attitude.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Toward my brother. And you know, that just doesn't work.

JM: Yeah.

SL: That's not—I mean there's tough love, and then there's just kinda stupid love, too. I mean, it's—I don't know.

JM: Yeah.

[03:04:58] SL: It's a—well, I'm so sorry to hear that, and I didn't really mean to put you through all that, but . . .

JM: Yeah, it's a big part of our . . .

SL: It's that timeline [*laughs*] you've got.

JM: [*Laughs*] It's a big . . .

SL: I've seen the timeline. I'm goin'—all of a sudden there's a . . .

JM: I was thinkin' about that.

SL: . . . trial for Buss and go . . .

JM: That tri—that timeline—I thought, "Gosh, I wonder if there's somethin' in there that I'd just soon that". . .

SL: Yeah. Well, you know . . .

JM: . . . "they wouldn't see."

SL: . . . but it's a . . .

JM: But it—I mean, it's in the newspapers and, you know, lots of things.

SL: Well, and it's a story that . . .

JM: And it's . . .

SL: . . . is real, and . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . people need to be sensitive to those kinds of things.

JM: Yeah.

SL: They need to be able to recognize it and adjust for it.

[03:05:36] JM: And I just hope and pray it's not something that runs in the family. I see these little grandchildren . . .

SL: No, I don't . . .

JM: . . . or not my grandchildren, necessarily, but other siblings' grandchildren, and you think, gosh . . .

SL: I don't know what the stats on that are. I don't . . .

JM: I don't either. I think it's just the . . .

SL: I think it's pretty random.

JM: You just draw a short straw . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . you know, is . . .

SL: One little connection not quite right.

[03:06:00] JM: You know, I—when—after James was diagnosed with cancer and it spread to bone cancer and, you know, he knew he was terminal. He was talkin' on the way back from the VA hospital on this one occasion, and said, "Well, I've—I don't know, there's—I'm not doin' much in life anyway, I'm sittin' around watchin' television and smokin' and drinkin' and, you know, I'm not havin' parties and not goin' to Dickson Street anymore." And I said, "Yeah, you've just been dealt a really crappy hand of cards in your whole life here that"—you know, you get this paranoid schizophrenia. You're never gonna be okay again. You're gonna kinda keep it halfway under control at best, I guess, but it's not like havin' cancer and gettin' over it. Or some other ailment, you know, and gettin' over it.

SL: Yeah, you don't hear about many miracles . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . in mental illness.

JM: Yeah. Just try to control it and live with it and—you know, he could've—that could've been a whole other branch of the family. You know, he should've been married and some kind of career and grandchildren at this point, and but boom, just a . . .

SL: Did . . .

JM: . . . train wreck.

SL: Did he . . .

JM: Just a total loss.

[03:07:45] SL: Did he know what he had done?

JM: Yeah. Yeah, he—we never sat down and talked about it. It was just . . .

SL: Yeah. Too hard.

JM: Yeah. Yeah, I'm sure he knew. Yeah. But he knew he was a convicted felon. And I'd say sometimes, "Now, Buss, you haven't got any guns around here, do you? You know you ca—it's back to the clink if" [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . "if you do."

SL: Right.

JM: "If you get caught with any guns around here."

SL: Right.

JM: "No, no, no, I haven't got—you know, none of my friend—none of these bum friends comin' in here have"—that are homeless, basically, and they find people that are willing to let 'em come in and sleep on their extra bed or . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . sleep on the couch or something.

SL: Right.

JM: And they get run off. They've heard about somebody else over there that's a friend of a friend. And I thought, "Boy, if somebody comes in and has a .22 pistol or something, you know, well, you know, you're in trouble."

SL: It would seem like the armed services would've said something about his discharge or that there would have been some kind of profile or something. But I guess back then, you know, that traumatic syndrome stuff that veterans are—everyone's keenly aware of now.

[03:09:19] JM: Yeah, post traumatic . . .

SL: Post traumatic . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: Yeah. That wasn't really happening at the time of North Korea and the DMZ . . .

JM: No, I never heard about any traumatic experiences that he had doing guard duty on the DMZ. But . . .

SL: Yeah. Well, they can see each other, though, right? The enemies—I mean . . .

JM: Yeah. [*Laughs*] I guess that's . . .

SL: You can see each other, and so that's kinda spooky.

JM: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

[03:09:48] JM: But maybe there was something in his paperwork there that we weren't aware of that helped establish him— establish it as service connected.

SL: Yeah.

JM: If you've got a problem with the v—if you're in the VA system there and you've got some problem, like a cancer or something . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . but just recently happened, well, it's not service connected, so how much they'll do for you, well, that changes a whole lot.

SL: Right.

JM: If it's service connected, then they really bend over backwards to take care of you.

SL: To help out.

JM: In spite of what the politicians say. The local VA is really top notch.

SL: That's good news.

JM: Yeah.

SL: That's good to hear.

[03:10:34] JM: Yeah. Even I qualify for it, since I served more than five and a half months. [*Laughs*] That was one good thing about goin' to Fort Hood, Texas.

SL: Right. Right.

JM: We did the—we fought the Battle of Fort Hood.

SL: Well, that was interesting they tried to get you out—they get you out before six months because apparently that'll make them something, some benefit, but probably just—what, a dollar's monthly pay or . . .

[03:11:00] JM: No, to—it didn't affect that so much as qualifying for goin' to the hospital and gettin' . . .

SL: Health care.

JM: . . . the primary care doctor and gettin' your medicines for real cheap, and I qualify for the eye doctor and get my eyes checked every six months and a six-month physical with blood work and the whole workup on that. Checkin' blood pressure and colonoscopy, all kinds of things like that. Or any other problem, you know, come up with, "Oh, I got an ache over here," or something. "I'm havin' trouble with dizziness, and went to a 3D movie, now I'm dizzy all the time." [*Laughter*]

SL: Yeah. You know, I get vertigo just looking at pictures of heights. Yeah, I get just a queasy feeling whenever I just look at something where it looks like you could fall off of it. I don't have my—the timeline in here, and I'm tryin' to remember—seems like there were one or two other things in there that I wanted to

ask about.

[Recording stopped]

[03:12:11] SL: Okay, we're on our fourth segment today.

JM: Yep.

SL: And we've about gotten to the point where I think if you wanna save your own hide, you oughta say something about your own children. [*Laughter*] For starters. So tell me about your children. How many children do you have?

JM: Three daughters.

SL: Three daughters.

JM: Yeah. Melissa's the oldest, and she was the first grandchild.
And we . . .

SL: Right.

JM: Betty and I were the first marriage, and Missy came very soon.
And she was the light of my grandmother's eye.

SL: Sure.

JM: Always has—always was. And she's married to Keith Smith,
dentist in Little Rock.

SL: Okay.

JM: And they've got an adopted baby from China, which kinda will
lead me to a China trip here in a minute.

SL: Okay.

JM: And they've lived in either Maumelle or Little Rock there for a number of years, and they've previously lived out in Arizona and, you know, some other places. And so Sophie, we call her the international traveler because she's—Missy has inherited—Melissa is Missy—has inherited the travel bug that I guess I got from my grandparents and all his tours of Europe, and then Daddy always liked to make sure that we had a family vacation even if it was a camping trip, and I've tried to continue that. I wouldn't say I've tried to, I have. [*Laughs*] It hasn't been much of an effort to—it's been a more of a motivation.

[03:14:17] SL: She's come by it honest.

JM: Yeah. So fairly late in life, Missy and Keith decided that they really wanted a child, and so after a number of episodes—anyway, to make a long story short, they decided to adopt. And they went through a very long process there. I think they had worked on it for maybe five years.

SL: Wow.

JM: Trying to get an adoption in place, like in Guatemala. They almost had an adoption set up in Guatemala. We got so close to an adoption in Vietnam that Betty and I had gone out and got shots for yellow fever and a number of shots that you have to—had to have in order to get a visa for . . .

SL: Kay.

JM: . . . Vietnam. And it—very involved, and all of a sudden, Vietnam dried up. They were found to be human trafficking or something going on, selling babies.

SL: Gosh.

[03:15:32] JM: And meanwhile in the middle of all of that, Missy had been involved in this five-year process there of an adoption in China. And so just in case one of these others fell through like Vietnam fell through, well, then China was still a prospect. Finally that materialized. And it was through an agency that put together a group of peep—of us, of adoptee families. I think there were about twelve other families in our group. Missy and Keith were kind enough to invite us and pay for a lot of the expenses of gettin' over there and bein' over there. We went over for about twenty-five days.

SL: Wow.

JM: The first part of the trip was basically tourism, tourist kind of things. Flew down to Hong Kong and did a bunch of the tourist things there, sightseeing around Hong Kong. And then from there we took the train up to—well, let's see, we took the train over into China, which is just across the border there from Hong Kong. Hong Kong is—I don't know, it's not exactly China, but

it's . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . used to be part of—it used to be an English possession.

SL: Right.

JM: But that was given up several years back. And turned over to China. So they still had their own currency compared to the yuan there in China. It was Hong Kong dollars where it was yuans over there. And so then the train up to Beijing.

SL: Oh my gosh.

[03:17:26] JM: And this is in December. And it—like the twentieth or eighteenth or so of December—it was very close to Siberia.

[Laughs]

SL: Very cold.

JM: And these storms were comin' down, big wind storms and freezing, freezing weather, and we're—at that point, then, we're joined up with the rest of the families, and a guide who was taking us around to have another look at something. *[Laughs]* Going into a pearl operation there where they're having jewelry that's all made—it's all pearls in this particular place. And you just got a huge jewelry store there and all these people standing around hoping to sell you some jewel—some pearl . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . necklaces and whatever, and so he was always telling us about this other factory where they make cloisonné, for example.

SL: Right.

JM: And would we want to go in and have a rook? [*Laughs*] And so one of the funny expressions there—he was talking about the Forbidden City. He was gonna take us through the Forbidden City, and he's gonna—he's tellin' us about the yunicurs that the emperor would have, all these people—once they went into the Forbidden City, they were just there. They were not permitted to go back out and intermingle with the rest of the population.

SL: Right.

[03:19:07] JM: And the emperor would always have about a hundred yunicurs, and we finally figured out he meant to say eunuchs. [*Laughs*]

SL: Right.

JM: And he said, "You know what a yunicur is?" And [*SL laughs*] one woman said, "I'm not sure." "Oh, it's a gentleman who's had a certain operation." [*Laughs*] We were always laughin' about the yunicurs. And we didn't wanna correct him. We thought that was just too cute. But [*SL laughs*] went to the Olympic Village and saw the bird nest and all these—the big bubble-looking

building there with the swimming competition.

SL: Yeah.

JM: It's very, very impressive with all the architecture. Not just at the Olympic Village, but many other sightseeing things. And then we went down to Nanchang, much further south in the country, for the actual adoption.

SL: Kay.

JM: And so Missy and Keith were mostly involved with that, and for about a week they'd go and have a certain process done with the American Embassy, and then something else with the Chinese Embassy. And the actual orphanage was, oh, maybe thirty, forty miles out of town there someplace.

SL: Right.

[03:20:32] JM: And finally it got down to the gotcha. They called it the gotcha day where you're actually presented with your baby that you been—that you've adopted. And so here all twelve families are meeting their kids for the first time. You know, it's very emotional.

SL: Golly. Sure.

JM: And some of the kids are screaming bloody murder, like "Who in the heck are all these white faces?" you know.

SL: Right.

JM: With ordinary looking—I mean, with eyes like we've got, you know.

SL: Yeah.

JM: They're not squinty eyes.

SL: Right.

JM: You know, we're . . .

SL: Right.

JM: What's goin' on? And taking group pictures on the couch, and this was a very, real nice hotel. Boy, really, really nice. Wonderful buffets and so forth. And it was really a wonderful experience. [03:21:27] And so one really emotional moment was when the plane touched down back in the—in San Francisco—or was it Los Angeles? Anyway, California. As soon as the plane touched down and the wheels hit the ground, that child was an American citizen. So our guide had said that—he said, "There're millions and millions of people here in China that would just give their left arm for an American citizenship." He said, "It's very difficult for us to travel out of the country. Especially to America because they're afraid we're gonna stay." He said, "For us to travel to America, we've got to go through a big process there to prove that we've got a lot of assets back here, we've got a lot of relatives, and we've got a lot of assets

that could be grabbed by the government if we didn't return."
And he said, "It's just—and that would just be for a visit. And
much less gettin' a visa or American citizenship, even." So since
then, the reason we call her the international traveler is that
she—Missy and Keith like to take trips and cruses and so forth.
They've been to all sorts of places in the Caribbean and other
travels. Keith had a continuing education program that he
needed to go to or decided to go to in Hawaii, and they took us
down there. So she's been to Hawaii and I don't know how
many other countries and so forth around in the—on these
Caribbean cruises.

[03:23:32] SL: She was ten years old when they adopted her or . . .

JM: Oh, no. No, no.

SL: Oh, she was . . .

JM: That's my sister Annie . . .

SL: Oh.

JM: . . . that adopted the girl form Thailand.

SL: Oh, okay.

JM: And so, no, she was one year old.

SL: Oh, okay.

JM: And she was just barely walkin' along the edge of the couch or
the edge of the bed, you know, holdin' onto the bed like this.

And she apparently had been kept in a crib a whole lot, not allowed to get down and crawl around on the ground or on the floor, and wasn't real sure about how to play with things. Except she loved balls. We knew that from her description.

SL: Right.

JM: That they had sent. And so anyway, it didn't take her long to—and people would say, "Oh, she's from China! Well, does she speak [SL laughs] Chinese?" "No, she was only a year old." And you ask her now, "Where are you from?" "Little Rock."

[Laughter] You know. So she's quite a character and . . .

[03:24:42] SL: So how old is she now?

JM: Woo . . .

SL: Oh.

JM: . . . about ten.

SL: Wow. Okay.

JM: Nine. I [laughs] . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: That's the . . .

SL: Well, that's a good story . . .

JM: The timelines in my mind—I'll be thinking of something that I would swear is like—can't be more than three or four years ago, and I check, and oh my gosh, it's nine or ten years ago.

SL: My son had a business conference in Beijing this past year, and the pollution's so, so bad. I don't know if it was like that when you were there but . . .

JM: Beijing, the day that we went out to the Olympic Village and the Forbidden City—very rare—it was very rare that they had a clear sky. And that was because this stor—this . . .

SL: Storm was blowing through.

JM: . . . winter storm had blown in from Siberia, and it was very windy. It was about to blow Betty off. She had a big, long coat. I had nearly everything on that I had brought in the way of—fact, I had two coats on. We had stopped in San Francisco on the way out to have an overnight there before we went on the next day. That next flight was gonna be so long. And so we went out to see the harb—the dock area and, I don't know, kinda like a riverwalk there and restaurants and that sort of thing. See the seals loafin' around. Course it got—once the sun went down, it was cold.

SL: Yeah.

[03:26:18] JM: And this was December, and I didn't have a coat, so I had to go in a shop and buy a coat, which luckily was a little on the big side, because I could wear my regular jacket and put this other jacket on on top of that. And then my down jacket on top

of that.

SL: Wow.

JM: And then I'd have long handles and wool slacks on for pants, and woolen, big, heavy woolen socks and a big ski mask kind of a thing on.

SL: Right.

JM: And the hood up like this, and here we go out to see the Great Wall or something, you know, on a cold day. [03:27:01] But anyway, down in beij—in Nanchang where we were actually getting the baby, oh, you could probably see about two hundred yards or so. It was just terrible, the pollution, the smog.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And you could smell it. And people goin' around with masks on and so forth.

SL: Yeah. My son and his wife were wearing masks. And they had a very nice hotel room on, I don't know, the fortieth floor or way up there. And I swear the sky and—was just a cloud about the color of this background behind us.

JM: Yeah, you'd swear something . . .

SL: It's really dense.

JM: . . . was on fire.

SL: Yeah.

JM: It looks like there must be five or six buildings on fire and the whole place is smoked-up, you know, lookin' and . . .

SL: Right. Just hanging there.

JM: Yeah.

SL: It's really oppressive looking. Yeah. Sometimes we don't know how good we've got it here.

[03:28:01] JM: Yeah. Our second daughter—we—there were several years' lapse there between the first daughter and the second daughter, and the gynecologist was worried that maybe we weren't gonna have any more babies. But as soon as we moved back up here and [*SL laughs*—I guess we both quit worrying about [*laughter*] it.

SL: It's in the . . .

JM: Bingo.

SL: In the water.

JM: Yeah. You know, I kid Betty about, "Oh, we got a new milkman showing up or something."

SL: Oh.

JM: And so our second child, Lara, was born. And Dr. Cole delivered her and . . .

SL: John Cole.

JM: . . . was so convinced we probably wouldn't have another one,

didn't need to worry about birth control.

SL: Right.

JM: Nothing likely to happen. And bingo, Lydia was born. But anyway, back to Laura. She's—her husband works for Morgan Stanley, and he's in charge of the Morgan Stanley office up in Pinnacle, in Rogers.

SL: Right.

[03:29:24] JM: And has several—a number of people workin' for him and financial consulting and the whole thing there. He had been workin' for Morgan s—I mean for—I can't think of the name anymore. Anyway, he's been a financial consultant his whole working life after getting out of the university. He was a graduate here in the University of Arkansas

SL: Walton College.

JM: Yeah. And so the first little bit of their marriage, they were livin' in Wisconsin. He was from Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin. And so he came home one day and said to Laura, "Well, what would you think about movin' back to Fayetteville?" And Laura says, "When can we move?" [*Laughter*] She was dyin' to get back down here where they make decent iced tea.

SL: Right. There you go.

JM: And the winters aren't so bad and . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . whatever.

SL: Right.

JM: Get closer to us, family, and everything.

SL: Right.

[03:30:42] JM: So as happens a lot of times, not only do university students move back to Fayetteville, but their parents also decide to move from California or wherever they are to Fayetteville.

SL: Because of the grandkids.

JM: And their other—their siblings move, and so they—people just come back and decide that this is a pretty nice place to be.

SL: It is a great place to live.

JM: Yeah.

SL: They like to take trips, and she's not into taking pictures and keeping a lot of records and so forth like I am, but they've taken, gosh, a number of trips. He likes to play golf, and he's gone to Scotland and played on the . . .

SL: Wow.

JM: . . . original golf course over there.

SL: Right.

JM: He's got a big thing of the United States here with places where you can put golf balls, souvenir golf balls from [*SL laughs*]

different historic golf . . .

SL: Courses.

JM: . . . golf courses. And has a lot of pictures of famous golf courses around the country, and they've taken trips to Europe and so forth. And Lara sometimes will organize a trip with some of her girlfriends to go to New York and see a s . . .

SL: Broadway show.

JM: . . . couple of Broadway shows.

SL: Yep.

[03:32:24] SL: She was organizing one the other day fairly recently.

They were all chippin' in I think \$450 a piece or something for whatever part of it that she was gonna need the money for upfront. And Lara had this stuff spread out on the coffee table. Some paperwork and a check from this girl and a check from that girl and \$450 in cash from this girl. And [*SL laughs*] she and Brent leave to go to—go somewhere, go to some party, or go out to eat, or something, and anyway, they come back, and they're kinda tired. They go to bed. Her two boys were home downstairs in the home theater [*laughs*] watchin' a movie and had ordered pizza and so forth.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And next morning she says, "Well, I guess I better get back into

orderin' those tickets to the Broadway show there," and she's goin', lookin' around. "Oh, no. Where's the rest of this money?" She's sees forty or fifty dollars of currency still on the table there, but the rest of it was gone. And the checks were still there and the papers were there. Messed up, but it was there. And so call—she calls the boys in and, "Oh, no, we didn't get into that." And, "What about the pizza deliver guy?"

SL: Oh.

[03:33:51] JM: "No, no, he came to the door, we got the pizza, gave him the—you know, paid for the pizza. You know, you left us money for the pizza. We paid him. He left. He didn't even come in." "Well, was there anybody else here?" "No, no. Just us. We were watchin' a movie down in the—downstairs." And so they couldn't figure it out. They called the police, and the police came out and interviewed the boys. The youngest boy, who's quite a character, says, "Well, you know, if anybody did it, it'd be my brother, you know." [*Laughter*]

SL: Oh my God. Oh my God. That's good.

JM: Drake found out about that later and said, "Payne, you ratted me out."

SL: That's funny.

JM: And so they've got a golden retriever. [*Laughs*] You might

guess where I'm going with this. The next day Lauran's mother-in-law, who lives elsewhere on the golf course . . .

SL: Right.

JM: This house is on the golf course. They live over on the other—another part of the golf course—called up, said, "Oh, Laura, you won't believe what I found in Summer's poop. Little bits of twenty-dollar bills." [*Laughs*]

SL: Wow. I've never . . .

JM: "And little pieces of currency that that dog had eaten up." So it's like the—Laura says, "Oh my gosh, I was gettin' ready to order a burglar alarm system and start lockin' the doors. You know, we usually don't worry about lockin' the doors except maybe last thing at night or something, you know. And you know, I could've been out a lot of money there."

SL: Golly.

JM: "Besides havin' to put money back in because I couldn't go back to that girl and ask for the rest of her money. You know, only got \$50 here, supposed to be \$450." And . . .

SL: Wow.

JM: But . . .

SL: I've never heard of such a thing.

[03:36:03] JM: Yeah. Drake, her oldest boy, is—likes golf. He's—

has his—he's through with his first year at the university in business and datin' a real nice girl and loves to travel, also. But anyway, he's got a—when he turned sixteen, his dad got him a Jeep, real nice Jeep. And it's got a winch on the front.

SL: Sure.

JM: With a cable and everything.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And I told him—I said, "Now, Drake, you better not get this Jeep off in someplace where you actually have to use this winch to get yourself out." And I often—when I see him, I'll say, "Now, Drake, have you had to use that winch yet?" I hate to tell him about some of the places deer hunting or whatever that . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . we've gotten into places where we'd be stuck and have to try to find somebody to pull us out. Payne is—his big hobby is tennis. And he's won awards and competes in playin' doubles. And . . .

SL: How old is he? About.

JM: [*Laughs*] He's sixteen now.

SL: Oh, okay.

JM: Yeah, so . . .

SL: He's in high school.

JM: Yeah. Yeah. So he's real close to college, and it's not long before he's flyin' the coop.

SL: Right.

JM: Laura's worried about that and thinkin', "Oh, no, my boys are leaving." [*Laughs*]

SL: Oh, I know. It's hard.

[03:37:43] JM: Yeah. Lydia is our youngest, and we—when Laura came along, we called her our miracle baby, and we also call Lydia our miracle baby. [*Laughter*] I guess all of 'em are miracles . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . anyway, really, when you come down to it. And she lives in Lake Forest, Illinois, which is a suburb of Chicago, basically.

SL: Okay.

JM: It's a good forty-five minute drive if you're doin' seventy miles an hour or so on the interstates and so forth from downtown Chicago . . .

SL: Chicago.

JM: . . . up to Lake Forest. Lake Forest is a real, real nice suburb, and he works for ACCO Brands. He's the president of ACCO Brands. It's a multi-national company on the stock market. He travels—recently had to go to—oh, was it Sweden? Denmark?

Sweden, I think it was, for three or four days concerning a company over there that they were buying. The other day we were talkin' to Lydia and said, "How's Tommy?" "Oh, he's in Canada right now," and you know, that sort of thing. So they get up, I don't know at what time, five o'clock or something like that. You know, he works long hours to start with, but he goes to the gym and works out first.

SL: Yeah.

[03:39:34] JM: Comes back and . . .

SL: That's good, though.

JM: . . . mixes up a protein drink for breakfast and goes to work.

SL: That's good.

JM: And so they like to travel also. And they recently just got back from bah—let's see, what is it? What's down on the bottom of Baja, California?

SL: Cabo?

JM: Cabo. Yeah. They've got a timeshare down there. And so . . .

SL: Now so is this the couple that also adopted?

JM: No, no.

SL: Oh, okay.

JM: No. So anyway, they—well, they do travel. Lydia is not a traveler at all. Or she'd just as soon stay home because it's so

much work and trouble to travel. [*SL laughs*] In fact, there was one trip that we were gettin' ready to go on. We were gonna fly to—this was when our oldest daughter lived in Arizona. So we were gonna drive to Tulsa, get on a plane, and fly to Tucson or—anyway, someplace there to visit our daughter and her family out there in Arizona. We got as far as Tulsa, and Lydia was just havin'—just goin' into—havin' the blues really bad about not wantin' to leave her boyfriend, who she's married to now.

SL: Yeah.

[03:41:11] JM: And we ended up just havin' to let her take the car back to Fayetteville, and we just . . .

SL: Y'all got on the plane.

JM: . . . we just forfeited her ticket. And so that's the kind of traveler Lydia is. But once she gets there, she loves it, you know.

SL: Right.

JM: But it's a lot of . . .

SL: Gettin' her there.

JM: It is a lot of trouble to . . .

SL: It is.

JM: . . . travel. And It's so much easier just to stay home.

[*Laughter*]

SL: It is. There's always something to do.

[03:41:39] JM: So Luke and Rachel are their two children.

SL: Oh, okay.

JM: Luke is very much into golf and has taken private lessons for years, it seems like. Like twice a week private lessons. And when he's not—if he's not taking a private lesson, he's going to another golf thing where you just get out there and you practice your own thing.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And you can see it on a screen, and you whang and hit it against a tarp over here, and it shows that if it did this or that or . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . so much—your head angle was a certain thing, and your . . .

SL: It's the science.

JM: . . . your ball speed was this or that and all these kind of technicalities or putting practice. And Tommy, his dad, will sign him up for a golf tournament in somewhere, Florida or Georgia or someplace. And sometimes they'll have us come out and go with 'em to a golf tournament seein'—on the coast of Georgia.

SL: Just amateur stuff or . . .

JM: Yeah, yeah, amateur.

SL: Okay.

JM: Yeah. Yeah, he's just now goin' into high school.

SL: Oh.

JM: He's in the ninth grade.

SL: Okay.

JM: Which that's high school up there.

SL: Right.

[03:43:05] JM: And so Tommy, by the way—in fact, back to him before I get to tellin' about Rachel. We just found out that Tommy's been invited to come down and speak to the Walton school of business in October. And we're proud as punch about that.

SL: Sure.

JM: You know, it—here's one of their graduates that has made it all the way up to president of a large corporation. ACCO Brands sells on very big bulk basis to Office Depot and school systems and that sort of thing, large industries. And like I said, they're multi-national. And so anyway, that's a recent development that Tommy's gonna be . . .

SL: Well, congratulations.

JM: . . . involved with and . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . golly.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And then they're comin' down that weekend. It'll be the Auburn game, and they've been invited to sit in the dean's . . .

SL: Sure.

JM: . . . box at the—in the stadium there.

SL: Right.

[03:44:27] JM: So it's quite an honor. Rachel is the younger, and she's still playin' with dolls, quote, quote. Like I wrote in the last—this year's O'Connor newsletter [*SL laughs*], playin' with dolls is not like it used to be. It's not what it used to be. [*Laughs*] Playin' with dolls—she's got—her dolls are the American doll, which is a particular brand of dolls.

SL: Okay.

JM: And has a particular following of girls that like those dolls. So it requires a real nice camera set up here with a . . .

SL: Shu . . .

JM: . . . clicker.

SL: Right. Remote control thing.

JM: Remote control thing. And you set this doll up, and you figure out a storyline, and you have this—you make this stop-action movie.

SL: Wow.

JM: You make these—you move the arm a little bit, click, move the arm a little bit, click, move the arm some more, click. And you maybe you blink the eyes and click. And you know, you turn the head just a little bit. So you've got this stop-action movie . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . that you're making—that she's making, and then she runs that through a program on the computer which splices these things all together, and then you—then she does a voice over, and maybe more than one tone of voice for this character or that character and inventing a storyline that this little . . .

[03:46:04] SL: Wow.

JM: . . . kid has now decided to take a walk in—out in this forest that she's never been in before. Now she's lost. And now the wicked witch had gotten ahold of her, and she's in prison. And this other doll is tryin' to save her, you know, and all kinds of situations like that. And so they had a competition recently. We got a phone call that we needed to go on the website on the computer and find—go through this particular step. Or actually, it was on our cell phone. And vote for her that we liked . . .

SL: Her show.

JM: . . . her show. There were about five categories of best dressed or the best movie theme or . . .

SL: Best story.

JM: . . . different categories.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And so anyway, she ended up winning.

SL: Oh my gosh.

JM: Got the most votes, anyway, from her friends and supporters.

SL: Yeah.

[03:47:11] JM: And so it's really amazing, and you'll see her out in

the backyard with a little setup here and maybe a background.

She'll take a cardboard box and make the inside like a dollhouse or something.

SL: Right.

JM: And have some storyline there. She's made a number of these, and she's got—they've gone to a kind of a convention for this sort of thing down in Dallas. They hauled off and went—flew off to Dallas or Houston. Anyway, and—to come up—talk stop-action movies of the American doll things. And [*laughs*] different tricks and different ways of doing it and better ways and so forth and dresses and costumes and hair and all sorts of stuff. It's really amazing. And we're tellin' her, "Boy, you know, you might become a movie producer some day.

SL: Sure, or a director.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Sure. So how old is she?

JM: Ah, gosh, she's nine or ten.

SL: Is that all.

JM: Yeah.

SL: That's unbelievable. To have the discipline and . . .

JM: I hate to . . .

SL: . . . patience.

JM: . . . say it because she's probably twelve, I don't know.

SL: Yeah.

JM: Yeah. I think she more like eleven or twelve.

SL: That's really good stuff.

JM: Yeah.

SL: She . . .

[03:48:43] JM: We were gonna talk about trips there, and I one . . .

SL: Got one to go.

JM: One kind of a humorous story about—trips have kind of—are in my DNA, you might say, or . . .

SL: Yeah, I can—I read that.

JM: . . . vacations. And so here I married Betty and was working and goin' to school. Typically carrying about twelve hours of class.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And fifteen would be a full load.

SL: That's right.

JM: Well, I'm carryin' twelve hours and workin' twenty-five or thirty hours a week as the bookkeeper in the construction office.

SL: Right.

JM: And so, boy, I was just about burnt out . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . this one summer, and we—I decided, boy, in between the summer school and start of the fall semester, we're gonna take a vacation. Part of that would be Labor Day, but . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . we're gonna take a vacation for a week and a half or something like that in there, go to Florida. And so I got up enough nerve to spring it on my father-in-law. "Oh, heck," he says, "vacations are something you earn. You don't just get to take a vacation." [*SL laughs*] And I was hourly, you know, he wasn't gonna be payin' me while I was gone.

SL: Right.

[03:50:12] JM: "No, no, I have worked for twenty-five years, and I've never had a vacation." And I'm thinkin', "Well, [*laughter*] welcome to" . . .

SL: You might think about it.

JM: . . . "welcome to the [19]90s, Mr. Banks," or the [19]60s, as it was.

SL: Yeah.

JM: As it were. Seems like that's bad English. But anyway, so I'm thinking, "Oh, I have either got to go or I'm gonna go crazy." And he says, "No, you know, you can't be leavin', and then I end up havin' to se—cover the bases while you're gone and people callin' up wondering why we don't have the money yet on this or something and—no, I'll tell you what, if you leave, you won't have a job when you get back."

SL: Gah.

[03:51:03] JM: And I'm thinking, "Holy cow." So we left.

[Laughter]

SL: Okay.

JM: With Missy at the age of a year and a half and no seatbelts in the car or anything.

SL: Of course.

JM: In a convertible. That—you . . .

SL: Yeah. I remember.

JM: And you know, she's climbin' around in the—back and forth and so forth. We did have a car seat, but it just hooked onto the

seat.

SL: Yeah.

JM: Both the front seats went this way . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . because it was two door.

SL: Right.

[03:51:31] JM: And so and she had a little steering wheel here like this, you know, but if we'd had a wreck, you know, you just go through the windshield.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And went down to Florida there, and we got over on the—we didn't go all the way down. Went about halfway down and started across over to Daytona Beach there. And a hurricane was threatening to come through.

SL: Oh gosh.

JM: And I was thinkin', "Oh man, I've always liked storms."

[Laughs] And because out on the farm, whenever it was raining, you got to quit and sit out on the porch and just enjoy the cool . . .

SL: Sure.

JM: . . . rainstorm, you know, and watch . . .

SL: Too wet to plow.

JM: . . . watch the—yeah, the hay production and everything just comes to a grinding halt.

SL: Right.

JM: Otherwise—you're either are workin' or you need to be workin'.

SL: Right.

JM: And so anyway, we went on over to Daytona Beach on the Pacific—on the Atlantic side there and back. And I just showed up—when I got back, I just showed up, went back to work again and never said a thing [*laughs*]*—there wasn't ever a word said about it. And but anyway, he always was real touchy about vacations. [03:52:50] And so along in there, I'd joined the Jaycees.*

SL: Kay.

JM: And the Jaycees, I kinda realized or quickly realized, were real big on bringing people up and developing—improving yourself.

SL: Right.

JM: And I felt like my job was holding me back, and you know, it—I don't know if there was kind of a jealousy factor there that Byron had, but I felt like I needed something to help build me up and improve my confidence and improve my ability to speak in front of a group, that sort of thing.

SL: Right.

JM: And so became real active in Jaycees. Well, they have major conventions every quarter. They call 'em board meetings.

SL: Kay.

JM: They'll have an August board, the October board, and so forth. And so it got to where, for a number of years, that was our vacation outside of a little camp trip—camping trip maybe on the weekend or something. And we'd go to these board meetings in Pine Bluff or Little Rock or various places. And even Harrison, over to Dogpatch one year.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And sometimes we would sponsor 'em here. It's amazing how much of a party we would have for a twenty-five-dollar registration.

SL: Yeah.

JM: But we would give these people a full, big band and a hall and maybe a hospitality room with free beer and cheese and crackers and . . .

SL: Wow.

[03:54:37] JM: And meals. And a banquet. And Saturday night was the awards banquet, and we'd have a big banquet up at the student union.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And all this for twenty-five dollars. And [*laughs*] course, gas was twenty-five cents, though, so anyway. So for a number of years there, that was our main social contact. And a lot of lifelong friends were made there. And I think it helped give me the courage, probably, to go out into business myself and not be afraid to do that. And it takes a lot of guts to do that, really, and . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . and make a success of it.

SL: Well, there's so many people . . .

JM: Especially if you have somebody that's beatin' you down all the time. I [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Well, there's that.

[03:55:37] JM: I don't wanna say too much bad about my father-in-law because, God bless him, if it hadn't been for him, we never would have been . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . never would've figured out a way to get back to Fayetteville, and he helped us out in many, many ways. But . . .

SL: Well, the scary thing about having your own business is you're responsible for all those folks that work for you. And it matters, you know, matters to you how they are and . . .

JM: Yeah. And you're worried about keepin' some work in front of 'em . . .

SL: Yep.

JM: . . . and not havin' so much work that you can't get around to it or havin' too little and now you've got—you've still got to keep them paid and . . .

SSL: Right. Well . . .

JM: You hate to send 'em home to draw unemployment insurance and run the risk of losin' 'em.

SL: Right.

[03:56:35] JM: So another subject I haven't touched on is Cursillo. I had—when I was out of college and just starting with Continental Oil Company, we went to a company picnic, and a couple of the guys were playin' the guitar and playin' "*Oh! Susanna*" or something like that, you know. [*Laughs*]

SL: Okay.

JM: Little tunes, you know, on the tailgate of the truck or something like that. Oh my gosh. I told Betty that man, I would like—I want to—I've got a wild hair, now. Sit down. You're gonna have to be ready for this. I've got a wild hair of gettin' a guitar and getting to play it well enough to be able to play some songs at a picnic like those guys were doin'.

SL: Right.

JM: "Oh my God," she says, "I would die—I just [*laughs*] I wouldn't want that at all," she said. So I got a—I went to a music store and rented a guitar and signed up for lessons. And the lessons were like doon, doon, doon, doon, doon.

SL: Sure.

JM: And tryin' to read the music, you know.

SL: Scales, yeah, sure.

[03:57:48] JM: Learnin' the scales. Oh gosh. And so [*SL laughs*] I was talkin' to some people at the office, Conoco, at the time in Enid when we lived—now we'd moved to Enid—about it, and they said, "Oh, have you seen that guitar lesson they have on television Sunday afternoon?" I said, "No, I didn't know about it." So he told me what channel it was. Next Sunday I saw this chant—this guitar lesson on television, and it was folk guitar, and it was strumming. And you get on a chord and strum this, and then, mmm, you get on this other chord and strum that chord for a minute.

SL: Right.

[03:58:33] JM: A couple of licks and [*makes guitar sound*]

SL: Right.

JM: I thought, all right, now. I have learned how to type. I know I

can control my digital control here with my fingers.

SL: Right.

JM: I'm bound to be able to do these things with my fingers over here on—for makin' chords. And of course, strumming's not a problem. And so I start watching that and ordered me a good, fifty-dollar guitar from Sears. [*SL laughs*] A classical guitar, I decided, because it—the fingers . . .

SL: Easier.

JM: . . . the—it's further apart, you know.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And that was plastic strings and . . .

SL: Yeah, the nylon's much easier . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: . . . on your fingertips.

[03:59:19] JM: Nylon, yeah. Easier. And gave up on the music lessons. [*Laughs*] Formal music lessons. And started learnin' how to play these folk songs. And she would—we didn't—there wasn't any such thing as a recorder then. And so we would be real careful if we went out on a camping expedition or something to get back before three o'clock Sunday afternoon 'cause I wanted to see that show. If I missed the show, I wouldn't know how the song went. They just had the words and the chords.

SL: Right.

HM: No music or anything that—even if you could read music.

SL: Right.

JM: And so if I didn't hear it and really get it straight in my mind as to how this song went, you know, basically learn it . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . by ear during that show, then it was just gone. [*SL laughs*]
I won't have any of the words, I'd just have to guess by playin' these chords as to what that melody must've been.

SL: Right.

[04:00:19] JM: And so anyway, I really liked bein' able to quickly learn some songs and some arpeggios and finger picking and . . .

SL: Sure.

JM: . . . different things there, and I'm thinking, "Oh my gosh, it's killin' me. How can anybody make—do these songs like that?"
And so anyway, I had continued to play some songs and usually by the time I would learn a song, I'd be sick of it. It'd just take so long to finally get it down to where I could halfway do it. I'd be sick of it, I wouldn't wanna play it. Practice up on some Christmas songs for Christmas time or that sort of thing. And so along the way here, we had decided to start goin' to the

Episcopal church. And so they were havin' church picnics. And so church picnic also involved a mass. They needed some music. This was out here in the outdoors.

SL: Right.

JM: Not in the church parkin' lot or something.

SL: Right.

JM: Up close to the church. And so I got invited to come and join 'em. And oh, man, yeah, I'll learn some new songs. [*SL laughs*] And so Conley Battisbough, who is now an Episcopal priest—but anyway, he invited me to start coming to Ultreyas, which were the monthly get-togethers for people who have been on Cursillo.

SL: Right.

JM: Through a Cursillo weekend, which is basically a four-day weekend revival kind of focus on your religious—your journey.

SL: Right.

[04:02:21] JM: And okay. So I started goin'. And within—there was another girl that was—had been the song leader, and she was the main song leader. And I started learnin' these songs. I'd come home while I still could remember 'em and practice up on 'em, you know, because there again, you just had words and chords.

SL: Right.

JM: And so I started learning, building, getting more of a repertoire up. And she moved in about six months or so, and I found myself responsible for it. And so . . .

SL: Oh! Okay. *[JM laughs]* That's a promotion

JM: So these—somebody'd say, "Oh, let's play So-and-so." "Gah, I don't how it goes." "Oh"—then they'll demonstrate how it went. There was one song that was supposed to be in 3|4 timing.

SL: Sure.

JM: And she was demonstrating how it went, except she was demonstrating it in 4|4.

SL: Oh.

[04:03:23] JM: And so anyway, you know, I'm—I'd take off playin' it, tryin' to lead it, and somebody'd be saying, "Something's really wrong. I don't know. It's not supposed to—something's the matter with this. *[Laughter]* I don't know what it is, but something's wrong." And finally after, golly, I don't know, a year or two, I finally found somebody that knew how that song was supposed to go. And found out, oh, it's supposed to be dah-din dah-dee dah-dun dah-dah, you know. Whatever it was.

SL: Sure.

JM: And that was not at all the way I had been doin' it. And some people preferred the way I—my original, you know. "I like it the

more bouncy way."

SL: Four|four?

JM: Yeah. [*Laughter*] The 4|4 version, not the 3|4 version. But . . .

SL: I always think of a waltz.

JM: Yeah.

SL: The 3|4.

JM: Dah dah dah, dah dah—let's see. And but so I—anyway, so that—after being song leader there on a monthly basis, I decided that, boy—I was hearin' a lot about people coming back from the Cursillo weekend talkin' about how wonderful it was and so forth.

SL: Sure.

[04:04:47] JM: And I decided, "Man, I think I—we need to do that." So Betty and I went and—this is like about 1984.

SL: Right.

JM: And, man, I was just blown out of the water. You know, it was just—our—on the first night we were having kind of an orientation and so forth. And it had been raining cats and dogs at Camp Mitchell up on Petit Jean Mountain.

SL: Okay.

JM: And real stormy night. And so we're in the lodge kind of setting there, and someone's talking, and we're getting ready to do the stations of the cross. And the power goes out. And so we're

just doing stations of the cross with flashlights and looking at what we're supposed to be reading, you know.

SL: Right.

JM: And so forth, and it was the first time I'd ever heard the song "Seek Ye First." "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." And I thought, "Oh my God." I was, course, in the zone already, you know.

SL: Right.

JM: But I thought, "Oh my God, that's the prettiest song I have ever heard in my life, you know." And it's common as grass.

SL: Right.

JM: In the Cursillo movement, anyway, and revival kind of thing. And so I decided that boy, my life cannot be over until I'm the song leader. And so I went out and bought a nice guitar and just set in learning more of these songs and workin' on gettin' a decent songbook put together. And so ended up talkin' my way—offering to be the next song leader. And I probably done that about twelve times, different times there. And each time it's just really more fun than—just really a lot of fun. Very enjoyable and really good to renew your connection with God and see people that are having the same sort of experience and—mountaintop experience on a mountaintop [*laughs*] you

might say. But . . .

SL: That's very rewarding.

JM: Yeah. I've since developed arthritis so much that I just pretty much can't play . . .

SL: Yeah. I've got some of . . .

JM: . . . the guitar anymore.

SL: . . . that too.

[04:07:39] JM: You know, and but, you know, after—one thing that they do at Cursillo is the people who've been before will write little cards about, "Oh, we're praying for you this weekend," or "We hope you have a—you know, that the—experience close to God," or something like that.

SL: Right.

JM: And I had—and they'll put down that they're—which Cursillo they went to, like Cursillo twelve or something. And I thought, "Golly, here's somebody went to Cursillo four. You know, that's obviously a long time ago. They only have two a year."

SL: Right.

JM: And I thought, "Oh my gosh, people—this is something where you stay connected and stay all charged up with this kind of glow for year after year after year." And I thought, "Gosh, I've got to find a way to stay connected with this." And being

connected music—through the music was what worked for me. And so I had that connection of improving my relationship with God for many years like that through Cursillo and through the music, and so that was a real big . . .

SL: That's a big deal.

JM: . . . aspect in my . . .

SL: That's a very big deal.

[04:09:11] JM: I was thinkin', you know, tryin' to go to sleep at night after Wednesday and thinkin', "Oh, I can't fail to mention that. That was a" . . .

SL: That's . . .

JM: . . . "really big thing in my life."

SL: It is, and how—is that current?

JM: No, I've . . .

SL: Because you've had to . . .

JM: Kind of . . .

SL: . . . drop off.

JM: . . . kind of . . .

SL: Because of the arthritis.

JM: . . . become inactive in it. And it's hard to keep it from becoming old hat.

SL: Right.

JM: You know, and without the music involvement and so forth, it's—
but we've gone back to, oh, different functions that they would
have like a regional get-together or a statewide something.

SL: Right. Not so intense.

JM: And you kinda get reconnected with it again, but you know, still
it's hard to keep it from becoming and old—something you used
to do . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . kind of thing. But that was a real big . . .

SL: Well . . .

JM: . . . part of the development . . .

SL: . . . I'm glad that you . . .

JM: . . . of who I am today by itself.

[04:10:23] SL: I'm glad that you got that in.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Because you would've—we would've really regretted if you
hadn't.

JM: Yeah. Yeah. I would've been thinkin', "Oh."

SL: Yeah.

JM: You know, I . . .

SL: And it's a good—it's good stuff.

JM: Yeah.

SL: You know we didn't really talk a whole lot about religion in the home at all. I usually ask things about like if there was a Bible in the house and if the family ever studied the Bible together or if there were—if you were expected to read up in the Bible when you were growing up and, you know . . .

JM: Yeah, not so much.

SL: Some households did, and some didn't. And I can't remember if we ever talked about any kind of musical instruments in the house. Did we ever say anything about that?

[04:11:12] JM: Daddy had a guitar and played the guitar.

SL: Okay.

JM: I sure wish we had been able to get a . . .

SL: Recording.

JM: . . . recording of that but I . . .

SL: He was good?

JM: Yeah. Country-Western kind of songs.

SL: Yeah. Swing?

JM: And he played the accordion. And . . .

SL: Wow. Now that's big.

JM: . . . and the . . .

SL: That's a big sound. [*Laughs*]

JM: Maybe he got interested in the accordion after his trip to Europe

and spendin' the summer mostly in Italy and with cousins . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . over there, basically. But I've still got three of his
accordions in suitcase kind of . . .

SL: Yeah, sure.

JM: . . . things.

SL: Yeah.

JM: And haven't had 'em out to look at 'em and—but I know nothing
about how to play 'em.

SL: Yeah. They're a beautiful instrument.

[04:12:11] JM: I do have an autoharp. That's very easy to play
and . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: But . . .

SL: Punch the . . .

JM: . . . even so, my fingers will get sore, you know, tryin' to reach
and mash . . .

SL: Doin' . . .

JM: . . . around and make those chords.

SL: Right, right.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Yeah. We used to have a . . .

[04:12:33] JM: I took lessons to learn to play the banjo but—and I had a banjo, and anyway, that's—I don't know, it wasn't something I really was getting into so . . .

SL: It's so percussive.

JM: Yeah.

SL: You know, there's really something about it that's almost like playin' a snare drum in a way. It's so . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: It rings, and it's percussive like a snare drum.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

[04:13:00] SL: Well, John, it's comin' up on five o'clock.

JM: Oh my.

SL: Is there something else that you wanna say before I . . .

JM: Hmm. I think we covered everything.

SL: We've done—we've got a lot of stuff. We got two days of . . .

JM: More stuff than anybody'd be interested in, I think. [*Laughs*]

SL: Well, you know, it takes—no, I don't think that's necessarily so. And family wise . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: I think your family will love this. But you'd be surprised at how all this stuff interconnects with all the other interviews we've

done, and it's a really—it's a great gift to give everybody to come in and do this. I—and not just your family, but all the folks that follow the Pryor Center.

JM: Yeah.

SL: And historians and documentarians. And you've got some great stories that I can see in moving image.

JM: Yeah.

SL: You paint good images with your stories.

[04:13:55] JM: Like to add that little girl in the middle of the couch that day has been my wife for fifty-three years.

SL: She's put up with you.

JM: Yeah, yeah, and she's . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: She's been the matriarch of the family now, and I look forward to getting home this afternoon and tryin' to see if I can beat her with some double solitaire. [*Laughter*] And . . .

SL: That's good.

JM: That's become our hobby of late is playing double solitaire. We'll watch TV, and pretty soon there's nothin' on, and we'll . . .

SL: Yeah, we . . .

JM: . . . "Oh, heck, let's" . . .

SL: We've heard all that before.

JM: . . . "let's play some double solitaire and" . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: And Betty says, "Oh, I regret ever having taught you how to play this," you know, when I'm on a winning streak.

SL: Right. Sure.

JM: We keep score on a notepoo—notepad. And we'll play best two outta three, and whoever wins gets a big X, you know.

SM: Sure.

JM: And so but Betty's a super cook and just a wonderful wife. We never fight 'cause I know [*laughs*—I know my place.
[*Laughter*] No, I should—I'm joking about that.

SM: Yeah.

JM: If ever there's something that I have the slightest thought that, "Maybe I shouldn't've have said that, maybe I"—I'll let her read it, and she, "Oh my God, you weren't gonna say that, were you?" You know. Or "You weren't gonna do that, were you?" in the—you know, I'll run that past her. And but . . .

SM: Fifty-three years.

JM: Yeah.

SM: That's quite something.

JM: And she's—like I said before, she's one day younger. So one day a year, I'm married to a sweet young thing. The rest of the

time it's just [*laughs*—so I don't wanna—wouldn't want Betty to listen to this and, "Well, you didn't hardly talk about me."

SM: Well, you know, you've—we—you've talked some about Betty in a very great way.

JM: Yeah.

SM: And you know, at fifty-three. . .

JM: Every now and then . . .

SM: . . . fifty-three years . . .

[04:16:27] JM: Every now and then she'll catch me watching *Dirty Dancing* again. "No, Johnny, you watchin' that again?"

[*Laughter*] And I'll change . . .

SL: I think I'm gonna have to watch that again. That was a good film.

JM: Yeah.

SL: That was a good film

JM: Oh, the premise of it was really stupid, you know, but . . .

SL: Yeah. But not if you were a kid.

JM: Yeah.

SL: If you're a young kid and finding your way and . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: All that kid and parent dynamic, it was all . . .

JM: Yeah.

SL: Taught to add something, you know.

JM: Yeah.

SL: In that.

JM: So when *Dancing with the Stars* came on and Jennifer Grey was one of the stars . . .

SL: Right.

JM: . . . and well, we had to watch it. Well, of course . . .

SL: Well, sure.

JM: . . . the worst thing Jennifer Grey ever did was to get her nose fixed.

SL: Oh. [Laughs]

JM: You know, I thought her nose was just perfectly fine.

SL: Yeah, I thought so too.

JM: Before.

SL: Yeah.

JM: Course, she was younger, you know.

SL: Yeah.

JM: We all get a day older every day goes by. Another day older.

[04:17:22] SL: Well, be sure and thank Betty for us, too, for . . .

JM: Okay.

SL: . . . lettin' you do this, and we'll get you a copy of everything that's happened today or past few days. And I have—I can't tell

you when we'll get the thing transcribed. That's the hardest thing we do and the lengthiest thing we do, but you'll get the raw footage, and so you'll have that, and what we like to do, we like to put it on a thumb drive so you can put it on your computer, and you can do with—whatever you want to with it. But [*JM laughs*] as we get closer to posting it . . .

JM: I might put it in the lock box at the bank.

SL: There you go. There you go. As we get closer to posting it, we'll . . .

[04:18:00] JM: Betty will want to see the whole thing, and she'll say, "Why didn't you say something?" [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah. Well, it's hard to remember everything.

JM: Yeah. Yeah.

SL: And especially when memories are floodin' back to you anyway, they kind of . . .

JM: Yeah, when you've been on the hot seat here for all day, you know . . .

SL: Yeah.

JM: . . . you think, "Oh my mind" . . .

SL: Yeah. Yeah.

JM: . . . "is a blank."

SL: Well, it's not quite the star chamber in here, but it's not far from

it.

JM: Yeah.

SL: Yeah. Well, listen . . .

JM: Well, it's been a pleasure.

SL: Thank you. Thank you so much.

JM: Yeah, it was great.

[End of interview 04:18:44]

[Transcribed and edited by Pryor Center staff]