

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

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**Arkansas Memories Project**

John Tolleson  
Interviewed by Scott Lunsford  
February 13, 2018  
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 files, video highlight clips, and photographs are made available on the Pryor Center Web site at <https://pryorcenter.uark.edu/about.php>. 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.
- Double underscores indicate two people talking at the same time.
- 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:
  - annotations for clarification and identification: and
  - standard English spelling of informal words.
- Commas are used in a conventional manner where possible to aid in readability.

### **Citation Information**

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**Scott Lunsford interviewed John Tolleson on February 13, 2018, in Fayetteville, Arkansas.**

[00:00:00]

Scott Lunsford: John Tolleson. Um—you are here with me, Scott Lunsford, at the Pryor Center in Fayetteville, Arkansas. And today's date is Tuesday, February 13, 2018. And we'll—uh—be talking about your earliest memories all the way to the present day. And we'll be recording this here at the Pryor Center, and we'll preserve it forever. We've got some folks out in the—uh—conference area that're scanning your family photos, and we'll make copies of all this material, and they'll be given to you. They'll—I consider this your interview and your materials. Um—we will preserve them forever, like I say, and then we will post them on our Pryor Center website. And we will encourage students and documentarians r—any researchers doing any kind of research about Arkansas, we encourage them to come to our website and use our materials. And we require them to—if they're going to use them, we require them—uh—to put in a permission paper that we'll review,

and we'll let you know if someone is wantin' to use your material. Uh—so we'll be good stewards of it. But what I need to ask you now, if you're comfortable with all that, then we'll keep going. But if you have any concerns, this is a good time to express them, and we'll stop, and we'll work that out and then go.

John Tolleson: Well, I feel fine, and I'm ready to go.

[00:01:33] SL: All right. Well, here we go. My first question is almost always when and where were you born?

JT: I was born on July 29, 1937, in a place not so well known but here in Arkansas named Board Camp. Two words, just like it sounds. Board Camp is about eight miles east of Mena.

SL: Okay.

JT: And . . .

SL: South of Fort Smith, then. Well . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: . . . south of Fort Smith.

JT: Yes, and there's one thing that I think is a little bit interesting about my place of birth there near Board Camp or in Board Camp. My—uh—I was born at my

uncle's home, and that home still stands, except not as a home. It's now called Camp High Point Girl Scout camp.

SL: Is that right?

JT: Yeah, and so it's well cared for. I think it's still there. I haven't been by it in several years. But Camp High Point was a really neat place, and the ori—original building was my uncle's house, where I was born. And I was born there because the doctor in Mena was more accessible there because it was on the Mena side of Board Camp where my uncle lived. So when m—at the time was—to—to be there, my mom and dad—uh—went to my uncle and aunt's home, and—and that's where I was born.

SL: So no hospital delivery. This . . .

JT: No hospital . . .

SL: . . . is a home birth.

JT: . . . delivery. Right. And at—the house—and the—the location still stands. I like to go by and see it, in fact, but I haven't in a while.

[00:03:11] SL: So was Board Camp a camp in itself?

JT: Well, I don't know, originally wha—if it was or not. But it—there was a lot of lumber business there and cru—saws going and . . .

SL: Uh-huh. So there was a mill there, I bet.

JT: A mill.

SL: Yeah.

JT: Yes.

SL: Sawmill.

JT: And so I do not know the history of Board Camp itself, except it's still there. It's a little—it was like a lot of little places in Arkansas then. It had a school, its own school system of three grades in a room. And so in my one year that I went to school there before we moved away, I was in a class with three rooms. And I noticed their graduation picture when—of the whole class had seniors down to my age in there. [*SL laughs*] It's a—it's a funny thing to be looking—taking part in a graduation when you're six years old. [*Laughs*]

[00:04:07] SL: That is—that's a—a—really pretty precious. Uh—that was not uncommon in Arkansas small communities that there would be one school and a number of classes . . .

JT: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . would be in that—in that same—sometimes there was only one room.

JT: Right.

SL: Um—so but this school had more than one room, probably.

JT: It had more than one room, yes.

SL: Uh-huh.

JT: We had be—we did have three grades in a room. [00:04:29]  
My mother was one of the teachers there.

SL: Is that right?

JT: Yeah, and so when it came—uh—time for me to go to school—  
there was no kindergarten. But when it came time for me to  
attend school sh—um—I knew how to read and write and count  
and spell and all of that because of my mom. Uh—so the school,  
whoever made the decision there, they decided to start me in  
the second grade. And that is something I wouldn't recommend  
'cause boys tend to be less mature than girls and—and—uh—so  
that being a grade ahead—we moved away when I was about  
eight years old, and that's when we moved to Greenwood.  
And—um—it's—it's tough to grow up when you're the youngest  
one in your class, I think.

[00:05:14] SL: That's right. Mmm. You were probably picked on a  
little bit.

JT: Little bit. [*Laughter*] Yeah, I . . .

SL: I guess . . .

JT: . . . I—a little bit until—you know, you—nobody ever got hurt,  
but kids had fights in those days, boys did.

SL: Sure.

JT: And—yeah, until I had to f—demons—demonstrate myself with a fight or two, I was—people won't leave you alone, but then they do leave you alone.

SL: You know, it—a—it is interesting that the guys kind of enjoyed fighting. It was like friends fought.

JT: Yeah.

SL: And they were friends after a fight.

JT: Yeah, it was a rite of passage. I remember a kid that used to sort of pick on me and—and one day I just had enough, and I just kind of—*[laughs]* I whipped him. And I never had a problem after that. *[SL laughs]*

[00:06:06] SL: Well, let's—since you brought your mom up, what—what was your mother's maiden name?

JT: Her name was for—well, her first name was Ida Jo, *J-O*, Harrison. She went by Jo.

SL: Uh-huh.

JT: And all of the students and—uh—called her Miss Jo so—even my dad after they married—'cause she was teachin' school when they married—uh—often called her Miss Jo.

[00:06:31] SL: Well now, where was she from?

JT: She was from Board Camp.

SL: Okay.

JT: Yeah.

[00:06:37] SL: Uh—what is the earliest memory you have of her?

JT: The earliest memory of my mother. Well, I th—one of the earliest memories would be because of, later, my involvement in music—uh—was playing the big old upright piano we had at our house. She played all these peppy songs that I liked to hear like—um—well, I had it right on the tip of my tongue but—one—one of them was "Oh, dem golden slippers," the old spiritual.

SL: Uh-huh.

JT: She played that on the piano, and I—"Get out your old grey bonnet with a"—that's the one I was trying to think of . . .

SL: Right.

JT: . . . initially. But—"with the blue ribbon on it, and we'll hitch old Dobbin to the shay." Now it starts to come back to me. [*SL laughs*] But my mother played those home—those old songs on the piano as well as some hymns, and I remember her doing that. And I can remember 'cause that was the na—nature of things in killin' chickens di—for dinner, you know, when they twisted their necks and . . .

SL: That's right.

JT: Yeah.

[00:07:47] SL: [*Laughs*] Well, so—um—your earliest—uh—memory,

then, is kinda centered around the—the piano.

JT: Yes. My mother was determined that I was gonna play it at least till I got out of high school.

SL: Uh-huh.

JT: And—uh—that—uh—s—so yeah, she started me—was my first teacher when I was five.

SL: So did you enjoy that?

JT: I enjoyed all of it except practicing. [*Laughter*] But she made me practice, and that's an important facet, and it's—needs to be done and . . .

SL: Right.

JT: So I did practice.

SL: Right. Well—um—so did she—uh—first of all, before we get back to your mom, the house that you grew up in—um—I guess you were only in Broad Camp for . . .

JT: Board Camp.

SL: Board Camp for . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: How long were you there?

[00:08:46] JT: Well, I was born there and then we m—actually we moved away—I misspoke a little bit earlier. I said to—when I was eight, but we moved to a place called Caulksville,

*C-A-U-L-K-S-V-I-L-L-E . . .*

SL: Uh-huh.

JT: . . . down—well, sort of near Ozarks where Highways 22 and 23 intersect is Caulksville. And—um—my dad's—uh—brother had a business there, and—uh—he—he had my parents come and help run the store during the World War II when my uncle's son, my cousin, was away in the military. Uh—so for a li—for one year, we lived in Caulksville. I was age seven. And then we moved to Greenwood, what I consider my hometown.

[00:09:31] SL: We—do you remember much about Board Camp, that house at Board Camp?

JT: Uh . . .

SL: 'Cause you were only there a couple years, it sounds like.

JT: Well, we were there till I was seven.

SL: Oh.

JT: So yeah, I remember—I remember some things about it.

SL: Um—so was it a—a dirt road in front of it? Gravel or . . .

JT: It—it set far back off the dirt road. It was like . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

JT: . . . most properties there in the—you wouldn't necessarily be right on the road. You might be back . . .

SL: Mh-hmm.

JT: . . . in the part of a what would be a farm environment.

[00:10:02] SL: So did the house have acres with it? I mean . . .

JT: Not many 'cause—it—this was still coming out of the Depression, you know, and . . .

SL: Right.

JT: . . . there—we didn't have a lot of acreage, but w—we maybe had a few acres because we had a barn, and we had the house and—not a lot else. I can remember we had a nanny goat. I—  
[laughs] that's one of my earlier memories. That—that's what—'cause—that the goat followed us to church. I'm digressing again, but I think it's kinda funny. That d—this nanny goat came—followed us to church, unknown to anyone, and my mother was leadin' the prayer at the time. And—and I r—looked up in there, and I said, just a big, loud voice, "Mama, there's our nanny goat." [SL laughs] But everybody had looked 'cause who's this rude person walking in, clump, clump, clump? And it was [laughs]—was our goat. But that was the environment then, you know, the country and the . . .

SL: Well, sure.

JT: . . . not-so-country melded easily.

[00:11:06] SL: Well, so you probably had chickens, too.

JT: Yes.

SL: Um—uh—let me think. And a garden.

JT: Yes.

SL: And do you member how many rooms the house had at Board Camp?

JT: I would think it might've had two bedrooms, oh, bedrooms.

SL: Uh-huh.

JT: And it had a living room.

[00:11:27] SL: Uh-huh. And—uh—probably no running water?

JT: No running water. Outdoor toilet.

SL: Uh-huh.

JT: That's right. That was the way it was. I—there were—in the country towns of Arkansas in that World War II era and shortly thereafter till the REA came along, Rural—uh . . .

SL: Electric.

JT: . . . educa—Electrical—uh—it . . .

SL: Association.

JT: . . . yeah, there was . . .

SL: Of America.

JT: . . . a—very little power. They had it in the—for the town sort of down in Board Camp. They had a d—we called it a Delco 'cause it was made by Delco Remy, but it was a generator that ran—generated electric power that ran, I guess, a few buildings over

in the main part of Board Camp.

SL: Ran on gasoline?

JT: You know, I don't know if that was a gasoline engine. It would've ha—had to be, I think.

[00:12:19] SL: Yeah. So—uh—you didn't have electricity, then.

JT: No. No . . .

SL: At the house in . . .

JT: . . . electricity, no running water, no indoor plumbing.

SL: So . . .

JT: But I'm really glad I had a chance to experience that. Not to go back to it, but I think it's a kind of a treasure you get to—get a glimpse of a way of life that was going away.

SL: Yeah.

JT: And we saw it, lived it, before it went away.

[00:12:45] SL: So you learned to li—read—uh—by kerosene lamp?

JT: Yes.

SL: And—um—the cookstove . . .

JT: Was woo . . .

SL: . . . wa—was the kitchen in the house, or was it outside on a porch?

JT: It was inside, and it was a woodstove.

SL: Uh-huh. And then . . .

JT: A wood cookstove.

SL: Wood cookstove.

JT: Yeah.

SL: And then was there a potbelly stove in . . .

JT: Yeah, that was in . . .

SL: . . . the living area of the house?

JT: That was in the living room, right.

SL: Uh-huh. I remember—uh—my grandmother's house, the dining table had benches on either side of it instead of chairs. Did—do you remember your dining table at all?

JT: I don't. I don't remember the table what—I don't think it had benches, though. I think I'd remember that some way.

[00:13:30] SL: Uh-huh. And was there a porch?

JT: There was a back porch. And maybe there was front porch, but the back porch I remember was a more of a center of activity when they—uh—had the cream separator that they—separated milk and . . .

SL: Right.

JT: . . . and—uh . . .

SL: Is that a churn? Do they call that a . . .

JT: Well, no, that was a—I think that might've been called a separator.

SL: Okay.

JT: The churn was where you made butter.

SL: Yeah.

JT: Yeah.

SL: Right. Right.

JT: And we had that and—uh—had the old churn that was my mother and dad's for—for a long time. It got broken during the move years ago.

[00:14:13] SL: Hm. So I—maybe a fruit cellar?

JT: No, we didn't have any cellar.

SL: So was there ice delivered to the house or . . .

JT: There was not to our house there in Board Camp that I recall. I've seen those—the ne—I've got some picture somewhere that's got one of those how many ice—uh—pounds of ice you want to order. You got . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

JT: . . . a little card that you set out.

SL: Uh-huh.

JT: And—uh—I don't think we had ice service.

SL: In . . .

JT: At Board Camp.

SL: In Board Camp.

JT: We had that in Greenwood when we first moved there. My dad had a store and—service station and grocery store, and he had an ice house. And it had—he'd bring—he'd go to Fort Smith with our truck and get a big load of ice and then deliver it. People'd come by, pick it up and—yeah, it was . . .

SL: Big service.

JT: . . . still a popular way.

SL: That . . .

JT: Yeah, there still weren't all that many refrigerators when we moved to Greenwood in 1946.

[00:15:14] SL: So—um—two bedrooms. Were there—did you have any sisters or brothers?

JT: No, I'm an only child.

SL: Uh-huh.

JT: And I don't—I don't remember the bedrooms much. They—I remember things about it that—my mother would put—would heat irons and put 'em—wrap 'em in a quilt and . . .

SL: And put 'em at the foot of the bed

JT: . . . put 'em at the foot of the bed.

SL: Right. For the winter.

JT: Yeah.

SL: Uh-huh.

JT: That was kind of neat. I r—I can remember how cozy that felt.

SL: Uh-huh. Yeah, I've heard of—uh—of people doing that with stones.

JT: Yes.

SL: As well. Um—and then—uh—of course in the summer, it was hot.

JT: Yep.

SL: Um—a lot of s—a lot of folks I've interviewed—they had a—they would move the—um—beds out onto the porch and sleep on the porch . . .

JT: Mh-hmm.

SL: . . . a screened-in porch that afforded more breeze than what would come through a window, but you don't remember sleeping on a porch?

JT: I don't. I don't—I don't know that I slept out on the porch.

[00:16:22] SL: Mm-hmm. Um—all right, so back to your mom.

Uh—so she s—she's determined that you learn the piano.

She's—uh—also a school teacher at Board Camp. And so you're learning—uh—readin', writin', 'rithmetic.

JT: Yes.

SL: There at the house.

JT: That's right.

SL: Um—so you were—you knew how to do all that by the time you were five or . . .

JT: Or by the time I was normally starting to school. I had—  
which . . .

SL: Six.

JT: . . .was six.

SL: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

JT: 'Cause there was no kindergarten in that part of the world anyway.

SL: Right.

JT: That didn't really count for . . .

SL: Mm-hmm.

JT: But what would—uh—yeah, I—I would've started in the first grade, but I did have those skills. And—uh—then after we moved away, that put me in—as the youngest [*laughs*] member of my class from then on.

SL: Right.

JT: Uh—from the second grade through graduation. Or maybe I was into the third grade when I moved to Greenwood.

[00:17:24] SL: Uh-huh. Uh—so what about—um—um—the books that you had at the house. Do you member any of those books?

JT: No. I—ye—I—well, I still have them, or one of my daughters

does. Uh—but I couldn't tell you the names.

SL: Mm-hmm.

JT: It seems like Tom and Nancy were the characters.

SL: Okay.

JT: And they go to the city, and they go to the country, and they have adventures. They were reading books, I think. That was the—the idea was to help you learn to read.

[00:18:01] SL: Were—uh—what about newspapers? Did newspapers ever come to the house?

JT: No. Not—not in Board Camp that I remember.

SL: Okay.

JT: In Mena the *Mena Star* still exists, I suppose.

SL: Yeah, I'm not sure. I'm—I'd have to look that up.

JT: Yeah.

[00:18:21] SL: Um—okay, so—um—I'm tryin' to think. Your mom—uh—taught you piano, taught you to read and write, some arithmetic, but . . .

JT: Yes.

SL: . . . skills that you would take to elementary school. She also cooked?

JT: Yes.

SL: And—um—did—was there any hired help with the household at

all? Do you remember any—anybody helping your mom with the chores around the house?

JT: No. My—my dad wo—would help, of course, when he was there, but I was born in [19]37, so from the middle of about [19]40—well, to—from the time I could re—have memories, really, until after World War II, my dad was off doing defense work. He was born in 1902, so he was a—just a little bit too old to be a—in . . .

SL: Soldier.

JT: . . . in the military.

SL: Uh-huh.

JT: And he'd been just a little bit too young to be in World War I. So he did defense work. Worked on ship building in—down in Galveston, Texas . . .

SL: Is that right?

JT: . . . during World War II. [00:19:26] I—I did think of one memory of the—of the cook—the back porch, the side porch. And that is—that's where I took a bath. We had a number 3 washtub, and I still have that washtub. [*SL laughs*] It's hanging on a fence underneath my deck and—at the house. And . . .

SL: Uh-huh.

JT: I've—I don't need it, but I don't—I can't bear to just—'cause it does hold some memories.

SL: I understand.

JT: But—and I've got a big old black, heavy, black washpot that my mom used to wipe—or wash my diapers and baby clothes in that—that's still back under my house now, too. Uh—so I've got some memories that relate to that.

[End of verbatim transcription]

[00:20:09] SL: So was the well—now I've seen some houses where the well was actually on—covered by a porch roof coming off the house. Do you remember where your well was? Did you have a well?

JT: We did have a well, yeah. And it was beside the house, but not under a roof. And before we moved, we had this amazing modern convenience of a pump. We had a pump installed, and that didn't have that far to run to get to the kitchen from the well. But we got—we had that red pump. And I still remember—and that—I still got that, too. [*Laughter*]

SL: You may be a more sophisticated hoarder than I am.

JT: Well, thank you. [*Laughter*] Yeah.

[00:20:56] SL: Yeah, that's fun. So but that pump was never—it never had plumbing into the house.

JT: Na—well, it had a—it sat in the house, and so it . . .

SL: Oh, I see.

JT: . . . it did . . .

SL: So it did.

JT: It—yeah, once we had the pipe ran from the well to the kitchen pump—and the pump was set, as I remember, on the sink. Probably right beside the sink. And . . .

SL: That made a difference.

JT: Oh yeah. Sure.

SL: Big quality of life jump there.

JT: You could stand there and wash your hands. Wash your face.

[00:21:30] SL: Well, let's talk about your earliest memory of your father. Now what was his full name?

JT: His full name was Hulbert, *H-U-L-B-E-R-T*, Gordon Tolleson. And he went by Hub. He . . .

SL: Hub.

JT: Everybody called him Hub, *H-U-B*. And he was born in 1902, as I mentioned a while ago. And he did various things, construction work and defense work, but by the time we moved to Greenwood it was to—he bought a little store that had been—the owner had died. And so my dad had a great personality, and everybody liked him. He was trustworthy, but he was also friendly and outgoing and very nice. And when—he opened that station in Greenwood, then he did that, basically, for the rest of

his working career. They had this grocery store and a service station init—but then after the torn—there was a terrible tornado at Greenwood in 1968.

SL: I remember that.

JT: And that took the grocery store down, which my dad had sold. The grocery store was being operated by another man, and my dad had built a station, service station next door to it. Well, the service station survived, but the grocery store did not. And I'm not sure I know where I was going with that story on the grocery store except that ended the grocery business. But he continued with the service station all through the years.

[00:23:12] SL: So was he—when did he do his work in Galveston? How old were you when that—when he was doing that?

JT: Well, I was a sm—he did it during World War II, and so I've got faint memories of World War II with people gathered around the big old floor radio, you know, the battery-operated . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: . . . listening to—the news reports were critically important to people.

SL: Absolutely.

JT: I remember that—that made an impression on me that people—they just lived and died by the news and got very worried when

the—you know, some of the reports that would come in.

But . . .

SL: So . . .

JT: . . . my dad was working in Galveston during all that, so that would've been, I'd say, from about 1941 or [194]2 till about 1946, 1945.

SL: So you would've been seven or eight years old, six, seven, eight years old.

JT: Yeah, five or six is . . .

SL: Five or six.

JT: Yeah.

SL: So that's pretty big doin's for the head of the household to be gone.

JT: Yeah, I don't think it was big doin's then because imagine how many fathers and some of the mothers, too, I suppose, were gone because of the war.

SL: Right.

JT: And so my dad, even though he was not in the military, was still a part of the supporting the effort.

[00:24:44] SL: So did your mom have support while he was gone? Did any of her relatives come and help with the house and . . .

JT: I don't think they probably came and helped with the house, but

they were—her brother and his wife lived in Board Camp out in the country on the farm on the old home place, actually, that was where my mother had grown up. But that particular uncle had retained and had bought the home place and they—hi—her brother, Iley, *I-L-E-Y*, Harrison, had the farm, the old farm place. And they had two sons. One was named Bill, and he died a few years ago. And the other son died a—on—when his ship was sunk in World War II. He was in—Clyde was his name. And he was in the navy.

SL: I saw that.

JT: It's sad—I remember very much going over to their house and my—the terrible grief my aunt was manifesting, you know, and—when we went there. 'Cause I'd never seen anything like that. And but many families did during World War II, of course.

SL: Yeah, I saw that notice from the secretary of defense, I guess, about the ship sinking.

JT: Oh yeah, that's right. I—that is in some of those materials I brought.

[00:26:23] SL: Yeah. I—so did you ha—you had a radio in Board Camp. Is that right?

JT: Yeah, I think we had one. I know there were some around.

SL: By the time you got to Caulkville, you probably . . .

JT: Yeah, we actually had electricity in Caulksville.

SL: There you go.

JT: Still . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: Still outdoor plumbing, but we sort of made a little progress.

And then we only lived there a year, and then we—my dad bought the business—my cousin came back from the war and resumed operating the business there in Caulksville that my uncle had owned. And so, yes, that's when we moved to Greenwood and went from there.

[00:27:13] SL: So kinda touching back on that story about the goat following you all to church [*JT laughs*] and—in the middle of a prayer that your mother was reciting?

JT: Yeah.

SL: Is that right? So what role did your mom and dad play in the church? Your earliest memories about that?

JT: Well, there was only one church in Board Camp, and it was a—I think, back then. Only one I ever knew of. It was a Baptist church, and so that's where we went. When we moved to Greenwood, we—my mother had always been a Methodist, so we joined the Methodist church there in Greenwood, which eventually my dad did as well.

[00:27:52] SL: So was—so you went to church every Sunday?

JT: Yeah.

SL: And did you have Sunday go-to-meetin' clothes that you wore to church? Always clean clothes or a special set of clothing that you would wear to church? Do you member that?

JT: Well, I was just a little kid, so I don't know that mine were all that special, but yeah, I think we sorta dressed up to go to church.

SL: Course Baptists—what about Wednesday e—did you go to church on Wednesdays or any of the—was there a youth group?

JT: No.

SL: That you remember being a part of early on?

JT: I was too little to be in a youth group when we lived at Board Camp. I mean, that was—'cause I was still—it was early in year—I was still five or si—no. Six or seven years old, I guess. Anyway, I wasn't in a group that I remember. That was kinda came later a little bit.

SL: Di . . .

[00:29:00] JT: I can remember Sunday school. That's the only kind of group you'd've been in at that age, mostly.

SL: Do you member your Sunday school teacher?

JT: No, not in . . .

SL: Or teachers.

JT: Not initially. I can remember some later on.

SL: Okay. And then what about—did your mom and dad ever have the preacher over for Sunday lunch or . . .

JT: Well . . .

SL: I mean, do you remember . . .

JT: They certainly did after we moved to Greenwood.

SL: Okay.

JT: 'Cause my dad was back in the wor—in—doin' his work and living and building his career there in Greenwood. So yeah, they've—they entertained the minister a lot, and my mom was a good cook, so it was an easy sell.

SL: Right.

JT: I'm sure to get him . . .

[00:29:45] SL: Of course. [*JT laughs*] Well, at the—wh—your mom would prepare the meals. And I'm assuming there would be breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

JT: Yes.

SL: And . . .

JT: Except it'd be breakfast, dinner, and supper.

SL: Right. [*JT laughs*] Okay. So as you grew older, were you expected to be at the dinner table at a certain hour, or was it

less formal than that? It was just whenever it was ready, you knew to gather or . . .

JT: I think my mother was a—she was very organized, and things would've been done at pretty much the same time each day, so I think—it wasn't like a command that you did—at five thirty or twelve noon or whatever, but it would be at about the same time every day.

[00:30:44] SL: Was grace always said at the ta—at the meals?

JT: Absolutely.

SL: And was it your father, or did y'all take turns?

JT: It was my mother.

SL: Your mother.

JT: Yeah.

SL: So I'm startin' to get to the impression that your mom kind of drove things there at the house. She's teaching you how to play piano, she's teaching you all the early skills for school, she's cooking, she's saying grace at the table.

JT: Yeah.

[00:31:19] SL: Di—were there any chores that you were given early on?

JT: Bringing water from the well, I can remember doin' that. When we came to Greenwood, at first everything was back to outdoor

plumbing and—well, we did have electricity, but I had to go to the well for water. And so I had a few simple chores 'cause—I was still pretty—just a little kid about eight years old, you know.

SL: Right.

JT: So I didn't—there weren't a lot of chores that I had. But my mom was—had a lot of leadership about her. She was—whether it was Methodist church of Greenwood or anything that she was involved in, she was involved in a full and powerful way, I think. [00:32:12] My dad was—I don't wanna paint him as uninvolved because he was certainly involved, but he was—he worked—he ran that service station as I got older after the—when they had sold the grocery store so that my mother—because she had had to work over in the grocery store a lot.

SL: As well.

JT: But not the service station. So when the tornado took the grocery st—well, the one—we sold the grocery store before the tornado took it away. She didn't have to do that as much. And so my dad was workin' real long hours. He would open at about six in the morning and close at about eight at night.

SL: Right.

[00:32:56] JT: And he occasionally would try to take a little nap after . . .

SL: Lun . . .

JT: . . . after the noon meal. And sometimes he could, but nearly every time, somebody'd come over because there was a question about a flat tire or a . . .

SL: Of course.

JT: . . . question about something.

SL: Yep. Those early tires weren't quite as robust as they are now.

JT: Oh, man. [*SL laughs*] Even when I started to driving and had my own car in the [19]50s, it was—the tires, if you got 20,000 miles, I think you were doin' well.

[00:33:32] SL: That's right. That's right. So I'm fascinated by your mom being in the middle of reciting a prayer at church when the goat came in. So was she at the podium, so to speak, leading the service or—this is fascinating to me 'cause it—first of all, it's a woman that's speaking in the church at these early times, and I'm just wondering what role she had at the church. Was she a Sunday school teacher as well or . . .

JT: She was a Sunday school teacher, yes. She was in the choir is where she was praying from 'cause I think she was singing in the choir. And 'cause I've not been sure—you know, they told me that later because it's always been a family story that . . .

SL: Right.

JT: . . . my kids have learned—that have laughed many a time at it. When it gets told, it always draws a laugh even if they've heard it a . . .

SL: Well, sure.

JT: . . . million . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: . . . times. So she was there, and the clump, clump, clump came in, and I just raised my head and looked and evidently blurted that out. And so . . .

[00:34:45] SL: So were you singing along with the piano when you were learning to play the piano? Did she teach you to sing as well?

JT: No, just to play.

SL: Just to play.

JT: Yeah.

SL: Did you become a member of the choir in the church?

JT: Not there because, remember, I'm still a little kid. And it was an adult choir, and or at least in the main service was. And I think there probably was nothing but the main service, now as I mentioned it, at Board Camp. By the time I got to Greenwood and I was eight years old and Greenwood Methodist Church was a bigger, more on—church, it would—I would sing in various

musical things with—that the kids might do but—and then later on in the adult choir.

[00:35:36] SL: So before we leave Board Camp, do you member the church in Board Camp?

JT: It was the Board Camp Baptist Church, I . . .

SL: One room, pews.

JT: It had—it's—let's see. It was more than one room 'cause it kinda had a room or two on the back, I think, for like Sunday school . . .

SL: Baptism area . . .

JT: . . . Sunday school. No, for baptisms, they used—Board Camp Creek was nearby.

SL: Where the baptism spot.

JT: And so they would immerse. Baptists immerse, and . . .

SL: That's beautiful.

JT: . . . they would—yeah. And that creek had an old swinging bridge that went across. You ever seen one of those bridges?

SL: Absolutely I have. Yes.

JT: That was going there then, too.

[00:36:24] SL: Well, so were you baptized in that creek?

JT: No, because I was young enough when we moved away. I was baptized at Greenwood.

SL: Okay.

JT: So when the kids were being brought into the church as members, I had not been baptized, so I was actually sprinkled and not poured. Or [*laughter*] not immersed.

[00:36:45] SL: Me too. So what about transportation? Wa—did y'all have a car in Board Camp?

JT: Yes. My dad, when he—we didn't always have a car, 'cause he was driving—this was the Depression time, remember.

SL: Yes.

JT: He was driving a school bus. And the school bus was a thirty—1937 Chevrolet. And . . .

SL: That's brand new when you were born.

JT: [*Laughs*] Yeah, when I was born.

SL: Yeah.

JT: This was a few years later. Anyway, he was—he drove that. And you know, it was—that was what he was doin', really f—at—and . . .

SL: Did they keep it parked at the house?

JT: Yeah. They kept it parked there. And I don't know where I'm going with that now.

[00:37:41] SL: Oh, well, we're talking about cars and . . .

JT: Oh yeah.

SL: . . . and when transportation became—when it became available to you so . . .

JT: Oh, and whether my da—whether we had a car at home.

SL: Yeah.

JT: And I mentioned that we—he kept the school bus there when he was—when it was not in use but we—and yeah, we had a car later. I remember he had a Model A Ford. And I always—it kindled my interest in antique cars, I'm sure, coming out of that era there.

SL: Sure.

JT: 'Cause I had the—I no longer have any antique cars, but I used to have a few. And they weren't all restored, but some were, and some were not. But I loved tinkering with them and loved having them, and I'm sure a lot of it went back to that era.

[00:38:34] SL: Okay, I wanna go back to a radio.

JT: Okay.

SL: And what you guys listened to on the radio. What's your earliest memory of radio programming?

JT: Well, it's listening to the World War II—the scary broadcasts about the—you know, the authoritative voices of the radio announcers. I don't know which ones they were, Drew Pearson or Walter Winchell or . . .

SL: Right.

JT: . . . who, but I think that's what I remember mostly about the radio prior to going to Greenwood.

SL: That's an interesting first, early experience with radio, that it would be the drama . . .

JT: Yes.

SL: . . . of world war.

JT: Yes. Right.

SL: Going on. Yeah, I don't know that I've ever gotten that kind of answer from anybody. You know, they usually talked about serial programs like *The Shadow* or . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: . . . *Amos 'n Andy* or . . .

[00:39:35] JT: Yeah, I had those later a—'cause when we moved to Greenwood, I was eight years old, so let's see. Yeah. And was nearing nine, and so I remember those programs then. And there was especially one I liked called *Big Jon and Sparkie*. [SL laughs] Came out of—and I learned later it came out of Cincinnati 'cause I spent my c—primary career with Baldwin Piano & Organ, a fine old Cincinnati company.

SL: I remember that.

JT: Lived there a total of nineteen years, and it was, I think, talkin'

to a friend in Cincinnati once about this *Big Jon and Sparkie*, and he said, "Well, you know that's a WOW created program. Came right out of Cincinnati," and I was—thought that was really neat.

SL: It was pretty serendipitous that . . .

JT: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

SL: . . . you went to that home, that show.

JT: Yeah.

[00:40:31] SL: What about music in the house? Did you listen to music over the radio early on, or was that all the way—get there until Greenwood?

JT: Yeah, I didn't listen to the radio when there was music until probably not even in the beginning of Greenwood, but you've gotta be a certain age . . .

SL: Closer to the [19]50s.

JT: . . . to be payin' attention—to pay it much mind, I think. So yeah. But I began to listen to it especially in high school.

SL: So that would've been—what. That'd be early [19]50s.

JT: Yeah. Right.

SL: Yeah.

JT: Junior high and—we didn't have junior high at Greenwood, then. I think we just had high school, seventh through twelve.

SL: Wow.

JT: And . . .

SL: That's quite a gathering of kids. Quite a range of age.

JT: Yeah, it is. And Greenwood had a consolidated school back then, too, so even though the town was—the town has grown amazingly now, but it's—it was about 1,600 people when I finished high school. But my high school class was about sixty-five, my graduating class, so it was a decent-size class because of the consolidation in the school system.

[00:41:55] SL: So do you remember anything about African Americans in your childhood, or did you know any African American kids or families in and around even starting at Board Camp through Caulkville and then into Greenwood? Di—was there a community, an African American community in all—any of those places?

JT: There was not. And when I say there was not, there was almost not. When we came to Greenwood in the mid [19]40s, [19]46, there was an African American man who was there, an older man, but he—and I mainly remember seeing him on Saturdays. He'd be on the square 'cause people kinda came to town on Saturdays and walked around on the Greenwood square and stood in front of the bank and talked or whatever. And . . .

SL: You bet.

JT: He was there, and when he died, there was not, I believe, an African American in Greenwood. And I think there still aren't probably that many people in that part of the country, but there have been some along the way. And presumably, I'm sure there's some now that live there now.

SL: Do you remember much about him in Greenwood?

JT: No, he ju . . .

SL: Have any idea what he was . . .

JT: . . . just a big guy, and he wore big overalls, and he—so I have a memory of him 'cause he was unique there.

SL: Yeah. Exactly.

JT: At the time.

[00:43:36] SL: Yeah. So the race relations then were just a non-issue.

JT: The what were?

SL: Race relations . . .

JT: Oh, right.

SL: . . . were a non-issue when you were growing up.

JT: Yeah, you're gonna think this is funny, and I'm getting ahead of myself, but the first African American person that I got acquainted with and felt like I truly knew was [*laughs*] Bo Diddly. [*Laughter*]

SL: Over the radio.

JT: No.

SL: No.

JT: In person.

SL: In person.

JT: Yes. When we played two summers in Canada, the second summer of 1959, we played next door to Bo Diddly for about six weeks. He was playing in a club, and we were playing in a club. We'd go back and forth and listen to each other. And we were staying in the same hotel. We'd go to the movies. And then after I left Canada and graduated and went on to a different kind of career, I never saw him again.

[00:44:32] SL: Yeah. So whe—do you member when you started picking up on the music off the radio?

JT: Yes.

SL: As far as it having an influence on you.

JT: Yeah. We bought—my parents bought a radio with a record player on it. It played 78 rpm . . .

SL: Yes.

JT: . . . records. And that would've been while I was in high school, maybe as a sophomore, give or take. 'Cause I was so young when I finished high school, so maybe my sophomore year I

would've been about sixteen. And fifteen and sixteen, I guess.

SL: Right.

JT: Anyway, the kind of music that I heard and just went to my brain immediately was Dixieland jazz.

SL: Sure.

JT: And I wanted to learn to—I wanted to play the trombone. And but I listened, and the trombone player was the leader of a band called Turk Murphy out of San Francisco, and he is still in this—to this day a great, great traditional jazz role model. He—well, he's deceased now, but he's—anyway I—Turk Murphy, and the Firehouse Five Plus Two [*SL laughs*], which was a group, I learned later, an aggregation from Disney Studios. A bunch of employees, Disney employees that played in that group.

[00:45:59] Anyway, Dixieland first, then some popular tunes, and then about 1955, 1956, I remember the radio more, and jukeboxes. I remember—started to remember jukeboxes, and that's probably where I first heard, "Shake, Rattle and Roll" and—'cause that was a pretty early song by . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: . . . by Joe Turner initially and then . . .

SL: Big Joe Turner.

JT: . . . by Bill Haley and, you know. But so it all evolved.

[00:46:33] SL: So is there anything about—you were only in Caulksville for a year. Is there anything that you remember about Caulksville that we should . . .

JT: Yeah, well . . .

SL: . . . talk about?

JT: Caulksville, actually.

SL: Caulksville.

JT: Yeah, since we're for the record here. [*Laughs*]

SL: Thank you. [*Laughs*] My bad.

JT: No, no problem. No, there's not—I didn't have a great time livin' there, and I didn't store a lot of memories up there, and we were only there a year. It was okay. We had—you know, we had a group that played and did the usual kid stuff. You run around barefooted in the summer time, and I don't remember much about the wintertime except of going to school, so.

[00:47:19] SL: Well, let's go ahead and talk about the after-school kids getting together and all that. What kind of games would y'all play?

JT: Kick the can was a popular game. And steal the flag. And I've forgotten how that—how you play that. But anyway, there were a number of games like that that kids played outside, boys and girls. And Monopoly indoors if—everybody had a Monopoly set.

I'm sure everybody didn't have one, but a lot of kids did.

[00:48:03] SL: Do you member any sports broadcasts as a kid growin' up?

JT: Yeah. Harry Caray when he was still doin' the broadcast for the St. Louis Cardinals, yes. 'Cause that was, again, I was probably in high school, tenth grade or so, but yeah, I may have been fifteen. Or, yeah, wait a minute, I was earlier than that. It was—because I went to see the Cardinals play when I was a kid, and that was a . . .

SL: Now how did you get to . . .

JT: That was a mem . . .

SL: . . . do that?

[00:48:35] JT: At my—our service station—my dad and my—seemed like my mom was there, too. Wa—came—were at the service station one evening, and Hoffer Lucas, who was the man who owned the Lucas Cafe there in Greenwood—and he said, "Well, Mary and I are just about to head to St. Louis." And then he said, "John, why don't you come and go with us?" They didn't have kids. "Why don't you come and go with us?" And you know, the usual tap dance where you say, "Oh, you know," 'cause you tha—he just bein' ni—he said, "No, really. We'd love to take him." And my mother would say, "Oh, no, he can't do

that." [SL laughs] And then my dad would say, "Well, Mom, why don't we let him go." 'Cause I think they knew that they really meant that—meant it on the invitation, so I did. And this is still one of the highlights of my life, I tell you. We got there, and my hero, Stan Musial, of course, we saw him play. They played the Dodgers, Brooklyn Dodgers, three times, and they beat 'em all three times, and I saw r—Jackie Robinson, Roy Campanella, Gil Hodges, Duke Snider, all these famous—Dodgers as well. I'm—of course, a die-hard Cardinal fan, then, but—I say that because somewhere along the lines I became a Cincinnati Reds fan.

SL: Of course,

[00:49:59] JT: But 'cause I lived in Cincinnati and worked for . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: . . . Baldwin, but I loved the Cardinals, and all those great guys that were on the team, Enos Slaughter and Del Rice and Red Schoendienst. But anyway. We went to St. Louis, and I saw the Cardinals whip the Dodgers good. [Laughter] And that was a thrilling weekend. We did that, and I never forgot the Lucases for their generous invitation to take me along. It's one of the things when your dad has a retail business, you don't go anywhere.

SL: That's right. Has—he has . . .

JT: He doesn't go . . .

SL: . . . to keep the shop open.

JT: He gets no vacation.

SL: Right.

JT: He'd finally get—later when he was still workin' and I was livin' somewhere else, Phoenix or Cincinnati perhaps, they'd come and visit, but they couldn't come often, and they couldn't stay very long because my dad treated the business seriously, and you know, he had his rules and guidelines. When one of 'em—I've used a lot through the years that my dad—was sort of engrained in me 'cause I used to work in the station growing up, and I really liked—I never did care for the grocery store, but I loved workin' in the service station. And one day I came over to work—do my job, and I had a book. I was reading a book, and he said, "Son, you can't read that here." I said, "Well, I'll put it down when a car comes in the drive, you know, for gas or greet—I won't"—he said, "No," he says, "when a customer comes in and they see you lookin' at a book, they're gonna feel like they interrupted you, and then that you—they're an imposition on you." And so he me—and so he made that so clear to me that through the years, I've seen people do things

like that in their other position. They'd be collecting money at a—for a breakfast at church or something, but if they're reading a book when you come up, I've always said, "You know, you really ought" . . .

SL: Oughta pay attention.

JT: "You really shouldn't read that book there."

SL: Right. Right.

JT: [*Laughs*] But that was one of the gr—lessons my dad taught me, and a good one. 'Cause he had a knack of being well thought of and doing the right thing in business.

[00:52:28] SL: Let's talk about the—those businesses, both the grocery store and the service station. So you mentioned that your mom worked in the grocery store. Did she—did they also make sandwiches there?

JT: You know, they may have because they had a—one of those kind of industrial type like . . .

SL: Slicers.

JT: Yeah, a sli—well, not a slicer, not a big one, but they had the meats—you know, they had a meat cabinet or—you know, they kept 'em cold, and they sold meat, lunch meats, by the pound. And they did—they sliced 'em—yeah, they sli—sure, he had a slicer, I remember now, an adjustable one that—and . . .

SL: I remember working at West Fork at the West Fork Conoco and so, you know, fix tires, oil changes, all the car stuff, but also they had a sandwich counter where you would make sandwiches for folks that have driven up or whatever. It was kind of a combination grocery store/sandwich shop/gas station. And I always thought that that was really smart to put all those together so people could do their kind of their one-stop shopping there and . . .

JT: Right. And they . . .

SL: . . . get their car gassed up.

JT: . . . did. And they—'cause we had canned—shelves with cans of grocery items and fresh meats and—yes. And that was a common thing. It's like a convenience store is today except . . .

SL: That's right.

JT: . . . that different designs and formats, but they were serving a function. More of a grocery store function, but a function that's similar to the convenience stores today.

SL: Yeah, but kind of a mom-and-pop . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: . . . atmosphere about it.

JT: Yeah.

[00:54:32] SL: So did you learn to fix flats and change oils and

service customers that . . .

JT: I did.

SL: . . . came in?

JT: And it was an interesting time to do that because there were a lot of brands of cars on the market when I started working in my dad's station. You know, we greased and changed the oil on Studebakers and the Nash and Hudsons and all k—as well as chevra—GM products and Chevy and Ford products and things like that.

SL: Yeah.

JT: And I lik . . .

SL: They required different parts.

JT: And I loved working in the station. And I had—the gre—I knew where all the grease fittings were, the plugs were underneath . . .

SL: The zerts.

JT: The zerts, yeah.

SL: Yeah.

JT: Zerks. And under the hood and up in the . . .

SL: Knew how to change a . . .

JT: . . . chassis.

SL: . . . fan belt.

[00:55:23] JT: Yes. We didn't do much service work, really. We did—'cause there were some garages nearby in Greenwood. But yeah, a fan belt you could do at . . .

SL: Loosen up the alternator and . . .

JT: . . . a service station. Sure.

SL: Yeah. Slap that on. [*Laughs*] Well, I thi—you and I probably have some shared experiences as far as the service side of that goes. I'm—I worked at one for a while, too.

JT: Oh yeah. I bet we do.

SL: Yeah. So now how long—so they continued to live in Greenwood after you left Greenwood . . .

JT: Yes.

SL: . . . and came up here to school.

JT: Yeah.

[00:56:02] SL: So back to your classmates at Greenwood, so they had—how were you as far as a student goes? Were you—I know you were a year ahead, you were placed a year ahead, but were you able to keep up with the studies and . . .

JT: Yeah, I was a good student, but I didn't ste—address that as fully as I might've, but yeah, I was a good student. I made pretty good grades.

SL: Did—d—were your mom and dad active in making sure you did

your homework and even helped you with your homework from time to time or . . .

JT: Mh-hmm.

SL: They kinda tracked it.

JT: My mother . . .

SL: What you were doing with your time.

JT: My mother particularly on that. Again, my dad was probably over at the service station workin' when other dads might've been able to offer more assistance in that area. And secondly, my mom had the expertise in it.

SL: Right.

JT: Yeah.

SL: Right. So . . .

[00:57:04] JT: My dad was plenty smart, but you know, it's—was pretty normal. I don't know if your dad finished high school or not, maybe he did.

SL: He did, but that was it.

JT: Yeah, my dad didn't finish high school, and but he was smart—he knew his math, and his skill level was great. I mean . . .

SL: Yeah. Well, both of my dad's parents were teachers.

JT: Oh, okay.

SL: So, you know . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: He had it goin' and comin'.

JT: Yeah.

SL: They—yeah.

JT: And my dad was born in, as I've mentioned, I think, earlier, 1902, so when he would've been in school, it was not unusual for kids to drop out and . . .

SL: Do the work . . .

JT: . . . go ahead and go to work . . .

SL: . . . around the farm or whatever.

JT: . . . go to work—yeah.

SL: Yeah.

JT: He left home when he was a kid.

[00:57:52] SL: So now where was he born and raised?

JT: He was born in Lavaca, and raised there till he was . . .

SL: That's Oklahoma?

JT: No, Lavaca's down near Greenwood and . . .

SL: Okay.

JT: And but it's sort of near Branch or Charleston and . . .

SL: Okay.

JT: . . . Greenwood on the south side. But anyway, it's a little town down there on the Arkansas River.

[00:58:22] SL: So how did your mom and dad meet?

JT: They met—well, my mother was doing—somewhere doing college work—she didn't actually have a college degree, but she—in those days you didn't have to have the full degree, and she was a teacher for quite a few years, did a good job of it and—but she came home one—she was taking, I meant to mention, a summer course down at Arkansas AM&N, which was—is now Southern State University at Magnolia, I think.

SL: Okay.

JT: I mean, I know it's that school. I think I'm using the right name. But my mother—they used to have a high school class, and you could graduate from high school at A&M, as it was called then, in Magnolia. My mother went there and boarded with some people and finished her high school diploma and was the valedictorian, as a matter of fact.

SL: Wow. Kay.

[00:59:27] JT: And anyway. So we—she was coming home with Euneva—what would her name have been, my cousin Euneva—when—and my dad was there visiting 'cause this Euneva was her—was his cousin. And Euneva introduced my mother and dad there in Lavaca.

SL: So.

JT: Boy, I made that sound impossibly convoluted, but . . .

SL: [*SL laughs*] No, you didn't.

JT: Gah.

SL: No. [*JT laughs*] I understood all that. So they got introduced, and they just pursued a relationship . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: . . . from then on.

JT: They did, yeah.

SL: Even though they were living in different places.

[01:00:09] JT: Right. My mother was teaching school down in Hatfield, which is south of Mena a few miles. And my dad was—well, he was working around the country and doing—I don't know if he was doing construction work or whatever 'cause this would've been in the early [19]30s, but it was Depression days and people had to work. They couldn't get married and necessarily move to the same place to live. You know, they needed to be able do what they were doni'. And so they finally got enough, you know, kind of coordinated effort to—they were married in 1935. So but th—it was my dad's cousin that introduced them.

SL: In [19]33 or . . .

JT: Probably.

SL: . . . [193]4, maybe?

JT: Yeah. Right.

[01:01:00] SL: Yeah. That sounds good. You know, it sounds just the way America was back then.

JT: Yeah, it . . .

SL: During that Depression, those Depression years.

JT: Yeah, everybody had to make accommodations for the way things were.

SL: And both—it's interesting that both your parents were working.

JT: Right.

SL: Through all this stuff.

JT: That's right. Yeah.

[01:01:31] SL: Okay, so you started—when did you first start gathering friends to play with? Did that happen in—early on or not until you got to Greenwood?

JT: Oh, early on was getting to Greenwood as far as playing music with other people, you know, over the—with the group 'cause I was only eight years old when we moved there. And before I finished high school, and I was sixteen when I finished high school, yes, I started a li—a band, a group, and whether I'm the one who named 'em or not—I think I was. In high school of classmates and near classmates. I do—I started a little group

called the Jazz Katz, *K-A-T-Z*. [*Laughter*]

SL: You were already hip.

JT: Yeah. And anyway, we—it was a bunch of kids that played that I knew that—we played in the Greenwood band. 'Cause Greenwood didn't start a band until I was, I think, a senior in high school. And it's come a long way now, though. Now they've got their own semitruck. [*Laughs*]

SL: Right. Right.

JT: And so we got together and played the popular songs of the—and a few of the Dixieland songs, and we kind of used our music that we were already playing in the band when I was a senior. But the Jazz Katz—we played—we went up—we had a chance to play on TV in Fort Smith while I was still in high school, and that wasn't too far devel—there weren't all that many TV stations in Arkansas at that time. Probably Fort Smith and Little Rock.

SL: Fayetteville.

JT: Maybe Fayetteville had a TV . . .

[01:03:23] SL: Yeah, we played on TV, early TV here in Fayetteville.

JT: Yeah, but you're a lot younger than I am, Scott. [*Laughs*]

SL: I know, I know. But it was interesting.

JT: Yeah. And . . .

SL: Very simple.

JT: . . . anyway, we played that, and then after I went to the university, I always—I thought, "Well, maybe I can make some money playing in a ja—a dance band." 'Cause this is before rock and roll.

[01:03:48] SL: Right. And so in your jazz band, did you play both piano and trombone?

JT: No, I played trombone then. 'Cause I started it, and I—at that point, I was playing—I don't wanna sound immodest, but I was the top—the first chair in the Razorback band, so I was a decent trombone player, and I enjoyed playing it, and I loved Dixieland music and the slide element that everybody knows, to make those sounds in the . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: . . . Dixieland band, the trombone's got an important role. And *[laughs]* . . .

SL: Well, there's nothing like them.

JT: Right.

SL: Like the trombone.

JT: Yeah. So as the time moved along a little bit and we began to hear rock and roll songs—and they caught my ear immediately. All of my music major friends absolutely detested, hated rock and roll. I'd been playing in a friend's dance band. He was my

best friend. Fellow named Bob Donathan. And our bookings were steady, but they weren't very spectacular. And finally somebody at—a friend had said, "Well, I think you oughta get some guys together and bill—join—try for this talent show that the Southwest Conference, that Texas A&M puts on, and then they—if you win it, they pick you, and you go to Texas A&M for the all—for their big talent show." Put on a big show. It's not competitive, but they go to all of the schools in the conference, which those were competitive. So I thought that might be fun, and we did. I got—there were five of us that got together and entered that show. And this would've been like in February of 1957.

[01:05:44] SL: So what were the instruments in that?

JT: The instruments—well, I played piano.

SL: Okay.

JT: And then Bob Donathan, my former friend and boss, played the alto sax.

SL: Okay.

JT: And I think the tenor sax would've probably been better. But he played alto, mainly. So the piano, sax, drums, a fellow named Johnny Sallis who lived in Little Rock, who was a pharmacist later and died a couple years ago here in Northwest Arkansas.

And Teddy Souter. Teddy was pa—one of the twenty-five little pigs, 1954 Razorback football team. He was the first guitar player in my band. He was from Spring Hill, Louisiana. And then—who am I skipping? Bill Rath was a rhythm guitar player. Anyway, there were five of us, and we won. And we went to the All-Southwest Talent Show in College Station, which was a lot of fun. And it was not competitive. You didn't win or lose there, you just . . .

SL: You just played.

JT: . . . entertained.

[01:06:56] SL: Yeah. So now did you said Sowder?

JT: *S-O-U-T-E-R*, yeah.

SL: So is he related to any of the Sowders up here?

JT: No, and that's spelled differently.

SL: That's what I . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: . . . was thinking. Yeah.

JT: It is. Glen . . .

SL: With a D.

JT: . . . Sowder was *S-O-W-D-E-R*, I think.

SL: Right, right, right.

[01:07:17] JT: And but Ted came from Spring Hill, Louisiana, was

his home town, and there was a famous pro football player named John David Crow who was from the cre—Queen . . .

SL: Louisiana.

JT: Yeah. And anyway, so Ted was in that group. And we all had good memories of when we went down to—*[laughs]* one of the funny things we did, we'd go—'cause I went to see Ted Souter a couple of times through the years. He still—he coached in Spring Hill, Louisiana . . .

SL: Okay.

JT: . . . his hometown, and was there when he died here very recently. And but when we were coming back from tex—from College Station, we—maybe that's why we went through Shreveport and over and up to towards Spring Hill 'cause we were gonna—Ted could stop and say hello to his family.

SL: Sure.

[01:08:14] JT: And so but when we—whose idea it was, none of us remembers, but we played on the Louisiana Hayride.

SL: Oh, there you go.

JT: And I tell you, that was tall cotton for country music. But it was country. If you would've said, "What was it like?" you could said, "It was country." I had never been around country musicians. And *[laughs]* it was different.

[01:08:37] SL: Well so, were you all pullin' a trailer?

JT: No, we didn't have any instruments with us.

SL: Oh, you didn't.

JT: No. [Laughter] We went—they provided—we used the equipment they had.

SL: Oh, okay.

JT: Which was probably fine, but—and but anyway, we—the—one of the guys in the band and I—skipping the drummer in my—I mentioned the drummer in my first band, but his name was Bud Jones. He was from Park Hill, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, and his dad was editor of *Sports Illustrated*, I think is what—but anyway, he came to the University of Arkansas initially to play football, but—Jones did, but he got injured as a freshman and didn't play. [01:09:20] But so we—anyway, he was there a part of this thing, and when I was talkin' to him one day about the fact the band was—that we were there at the spri—at the . . .

SL: Hayride.

JT: . . . Hayride, and he said, "Do you remember when that announcer when he came out," 'cause he said, "Here we all showed up wearing suits and ties, matching suits at the"—'cause when we knew we were gonna be on it, we put on our . . .

SL: Sure.

JT: . . . our suits. And he said—and the announcer came out and said, "And these guys are hillbillies?" [*Laughter*] But it was a fun experience. Johnny Horton was on it that night, and he was great. A good, fine country singer.

SL: Right.

JT: And there were other people on it, too, that—some of 'em I probably know their names now, but I probably didn't then.

[01:10:16] SL: Right, right. So what was you—what kind of—what were some of the songs that you all worked up in your ensemble?

JT: Well, when we—there was a—even then, in early—in the [19]50s and—[19]56, [19]57 era, some people just hated rock and roll. Others loved it. And we got the—started on this talent show. We were signed up to it as a calypso band. [*Laughter*] There was a song back then if—by Terry Gilkyson called "Marianne." "All day, all night, Marianne."

SL: Okay.

JT: "Down by the seaside" . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: . . . "sifftin' sand."

SL: Yeah.

JT: And so we did. We did a calypso song. But I was—didn't

wanna—I was always wanted to be a rock-and-roll band. So we ended with a rock-and-roll song, too. But we did kinda both in the very beginning, and then "Marianne" became less and less a part of our repertoire. We were playin' the rock-and-roll songs of the day. So but . . .

[01:11:32] SL: So really your ensemble work didn't—it started when you got to Fayetteville. You didn't have any groups . . .

JT: The Jazz Katz.

SL: The Jazz Katz.

JT: In Greenwood High School.

SL: Jazz Katz were in Greenwood.

JT: Yeah. But that would be it. Didn't have anything too much my freshman year at the University of Arkansas. I was a music major and gettin' a better—play better on the trombone. And I was also takin' a lot of—doin' a lot with the pia—I was a music ed major with the trombone major, with a piano minor. And I was playin' a lot of heavy-duty stuff on the piano. But then when—later on when I started the band, I didn't play as much heavy-duty classical . . .

SL: Right.

JT: . . . on the . . .

SL: So . . .

JT: . . . anymore. I didn't have the time. We . . .

[01:12:27] SL So you were steep into the classical training.

JT: Yeah, I grew up with it . . .

SL: Early on.

JT: Yes. That's right.

SL: And that's what kinda what you practice at home when you—  
your mom was teaching you to play the piano and . . .

JT: That's right.

[Recording stopped]

[01:12:39] SL: We went two hours this morning, and we just had  
lunch. [*JT laughs*] And so we're back at it. You're back in the  
star chamber here. We had started to talk about your playing  
music and different members of your early bands, but before we  
continue with that, I wanna get back to Greenwood. And I want  
you to kind of talk a little bit about the town of Greenwood or  
how your family fit into Greenwood and what it was like for you  
spending, really, some formative years there in Greenwood. So  
Greenwood back then, it was a pretty small place, wasn't it?

JT: It was. It was about 1,600 people when I finished high school.  
And now it's nearing 10,000.

SL: That's amazing.

JT: It is amazing. And I happened to ask someone what the school

enrollment was and—recently, they said it was 3,700 students.

In my high school class, there were sixty-five. [*SL laughs*] Now that was just one grade, but it doesn't translate any way . . .

SL: Right.

JT: . . . to something near 3,700.

[01:14:00] SL: Right. Well, what were some of your—I mean, were you at all sports minded when you were in the school system, public school system?

JT: Oh, like most kids, I—somewhat sports minded. The trouble—the ability and the minded didn't always [*laughs*] pan out to . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: . . . to work well. I was not an athlete. And you know, my parents kind of discouraged me on football because Greenwood was—well, it's a power now, but they weren't weaklings back in those years, either, in their categories. And anyway, they sort of eased me out of the football thing by sorta—I forget—diverting my attention some way. And so I didn't play football or any of the other sports. We didn't have track back then, we had football and basketball, essentially.

[01:14:57] SL: Baseball, maybe? Was it the . . .

JT: Well, not rea . . .

SL: . . . Little League team or . . .

JT: Not really. Well, Little League or something like it, I guess, during the summer time, but it wasn't a real school function 'cause school was out when most of the season would've been taking place.

SL: So really, that area of Arkansas was probably dominated by Fort Smith, wouldn't you say?

JT: Right. Sure.

SL: It was kind of the biggest metro area closest to Greenwood, right?

JT: Right. And . . .

SL: So . . .

JT: . . . people in Greenwood, in many cases, worked in Fort Smith, and there were a number of industries there, and I think they've lost some of those industries in Fort Smith, but Greenwood's managed to pick up and become a substantial enough town that it keeps growing. Good school system, I hear.

[01:15:52] SL: Now did it have a downtown square?

JT: Yes. It did.

SL: 'Cause not all towns did, but a lot of the small towns . . .

JT: Yes.

SL: . . . started with a square.

JT: Right.

SL: I mean, established a square.

JT: And Greenwood had a square and was kinda well known in those days for the croquet court in the middle of the square, too, because the old guys—you'd look at the square, and there'd be a hotly contested [*SL laughs*] croquet game underway.

SL: Everybody playing for braggin' rights.

JT: Yeah. And then the tornado changed all of that 'cause it tore—it took the courthouse and took many of the businesses on the square. Leveled 'em. And so there was talk initially of not even trying to be—keep Greenwood as the second county seat in the county. It's one of those counties in Arkansas that has two county seats, and they're . . .

SL: Oh, I didn't know that.

[01:16:44] JT: Yeah.

SL: So that and Fort Smith or that . . .

JT: Yes.

SL: Wow.

JT: But they didn't . . .

SL: That's pretty big.

JT: They did rebuild the—actually the courthouse, and all is well.

[01:16:56] SL: So—course you were gone from Greenwood when the tornado hit.

JT: I was.

SL: But your folks were still there.

JT: Yes.

SL: And they lost the grocery store that they had sold . . .

JT: Yes.

SL: . . . to someone else, and that didn't get rebuilt.

JT: No, it did not.

SL: Okay.

JT: That's right.

[01:17:11] SL: So what about—did Greenwood have any movie theatres?

JT: It did back when I was a student and back in the early [19]50s and—it had—fact, for a while, it had two theaters, seems like, at the same place. The old Palace Theatre's where I sat many a Saturday afternoon and watched Roy Rogers or Gene Autry ride across the screen. And then there were—there was another theater there in town as well, and they had all—they had circulars that they'd send out for what was going to be showing for the next month or so so you'd have an idea of what was what.

[01:17:56] SL: Do you remember how much it cost you to go?

JT: No, but it wasn't a lot.

SL: It was not a lot, I'm sure. I would guess maybe twenty-five, thirty, fifty cents, maybe?

JT: Yeah, probably. Yeah.

SL: Would get you in the door, maybe ten cents for popcorn and another dime for a Coke or something.

JT: Yeah, it didn't cost a lot. 'Cause even here in the big metropolis of Fayetteville in the mid-[19]50s or 1958 or so, if you had a date on Sunday night and go to the AQ Chicken House and go to the movie—you could do both for about five dollars.

SL: That's right.

JT: Yeah.

SL: Those were great times.

JT: Yeah.

[01:18:36] SL: Well, so what about any school clubs? Did you belong to any clubs in school at all?

JT: They did not have a honors society—I mean, a—I guess that's what they called it—in Greenwood, but they had a Beta Club. In small towns they often did that, and I was a member of the Beta Club, which you're invited into on the basis of your scholarship, so . . .

SL: Your grade point.

JT: . . . as I said, I was a pretty good student then.

SL: And di—what did they do? What did the Beta Club do?

JT: We—what did we do? [*SL laughs*] What did we do? We put our little publication every so often, the little newspaperette. And we went to the state convention of the Beta Clubs once—I went in high school at the old Marion Hotel.

SL: In Little Rock?

JT: Yes. So we did a few things.

[01:19:44] SL: So what about dating and the social life? When did you start—first start paying attention to the girls? When did the girls start to invade the boys' life?

JT: Well, I had to—I had a pretty girlfriend in high school. Even though I was the youngest in the class, I did have a girlfriend for a while. And but the girls at the university—I began—I didn't date a whole lot until maybe I pledged a fraternity, and I didn't do that as a freshman. I didn't go through rush like the normal routine was to do. And so I was a little slow getting on the dating scene, probably, because of that. You don't—you just don't get the introductions to people if you're living in Gregson Hall that you would living in a fraternity.

[01:20:44] SL: Well, did you even have your own car until . . .

JT: I . . .

SL: You know, when did you get your first car?

JT: I did not, no, not in the beginning, and that wasn't unusual, either.

SL: Right.

JT: For—'cause I didn't have one until after I pledged the fraternity. My dad was generous enough to let me borrow the family car for periods of the—at a time. And we had a 1948 International pickup truck, and I brought it up here for a while, too.

SL: Right.

JT: And so . . .

SL: Yeah, the first vehicle I was really kind of given to call my own was a [19]52 Ford pickup truck. I called it Ol' Blue.

JT: Oh yeah.

SL: So I didn't really—I borrowed my parent's car for a date or—so it's—you know, it's not unusual. And I guess I landed that car my senior year, that truck my senior year in high school. But until then . . .

JT: The time that . . .

SL: Most kids didn't have cars.

JT: Yeah, that's right. But a Ford pickup of that era, that was a good vehicle.

SL: Oh, my gosh. Yeah, we called it Ol' Blue.

JT: Yeah.

[01:21:51] SL: Yeah, that's good. Yeah.

JT: It is. So anyway, I had dates and girlfriends, and I had a girlfriend when I initially was Sigma Nu, but not all courtships end up in marriage, obviously.

SL: Right.

JT: And so I went on along and eventually found the right one.

SL: Yeah. She's a keeper.

JT: Yeah.

SL: Yeah, she's . . .

JT: Your neighbor. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah, she used to take care of me as a baby.

JT: I know it.

SL: In fact, I think all of her and my sister's friends used to take me around in the car as a little kid. I grew up surrounded by great gals.

JT: Yes, you did. [*SL laughs*] Yeah.

[01:22:36] SL: Well, I just wanted to get kind of a little bit better picture of Greenwood when you were there 'cause it's changed now, and also I think the community that you were raised in kind of preps you for your own life later on, and so I know here in Fayetteville if we're—you know, we would walk to our elementary school. Did you used to walk to the school in

Greenwood?

JT: I rode my bike.

SL: Rode your bike? If anything happened going or coming back from that school or anything happened in school, by the time I got home, my mom and probably Gail's mom and all the parents knew what the kids were up to.

JT: Yeah.

SL: All the time. Did you ever—was there that kind of network in Greenwood where kind of everybody knew what everybody was doing, kid-wise or . . .

JT: Yeah, I think so. I think that's probably true. In most small towns, it's a little bit like that. Yeah, I love Greenwood, too. I still do. And I think it was a good hometown and I—it thrills me to see it prospering and growing the way it is.

SL: Me, too.

[01:23:58] JT: It's great. And the—I think it was a privilege to grow up in a small town where most of the people were sort of of a common bent as far as their assets and their wealth, and there was nobody that was real mega-rich, or at least they didn't show it if were. And if there were those that were really hurting, they didn't show that much, either. And most of the kids there were of a similar economic background.

SL: Yeah, I hear all the time that kids growing up—their families were poor, but they didn't really know it.

JT: Yeah.

SL: You know, there was this willingness to work hard and live simply and have fun and try to make things better, and it just never—the economy of the family just never really—the kids were not really aware of it that much, they just knew that Mom and Dad—Mom basically took care of the house, Dad basically worked, and there was food on the table and clothes on the back and a roof over the head. And that's really a—all a kid would want. Basically.

JT: Yeah.

SL: So yeah, I would say you were fortunate to grow up in Greenwood. It's probably a nurturing community, it sounds like.

[01:25:36] JT: Yeah, a lot of nice people there, and of course, I still see people there now and then. I don't have any relatives there. That probably limits my travel to Greenwood just because I don't have any roots there anymore. My family moved to Greenwood in 1946, so that's starting to be a while, but my parents have both been gone for a while, too.

SL: Right.

JT: So I just don't have a lot of tie ins with Greenwood folks except

for a few friends and classmates.

SL: Right. So you still keep in touch?

JT: Yes.

SL: With those folks?

JT: Yeah.

SL: That's a good sign, really, to stay in touch with your high school buddies.

JT: Yeah, well, I enjoyed—I don't do it that often because I do—but if—they have a kind of a get together where they have certain years of classes and . . .

SL: Multiple . . .

JT: . . . a lunch . . .

SL: . . . reunions?

JT: Yeah, and so I try to go to that every year or two when I—when they have it.

[01:26:41] SL: Yeah. Our class hasn't had a reunion in quite some time. We're past due.

JT: Yeah. Well, we—we're—I'm the p—to the point where we don't do much anymore at reunions. We sorta had the fiftieth reunion and then dropped it—all we do now is have a little reception with cookies and coffee [*SL laughs*] at the Farmers Bank. They're nice enough to loan us their big room, and that's kind of what

we do, and that's good.

SL: That's still great.

JT: Oh yeah, yeah.

[01:27:09] SL: Yeah. So when you were in Greenwood and you were going through high school, did you—was it just assumed that you would attend the University of Arkansas?

JT: It was assumed that I would go to college, and I didn't know where I wanted to go, really. I went down—my mother and I went to Arkansas Tech 'cause it had a music—strong, well-known music program. And then we went to the University of Arkansas, too, and I had met one of the—the man who was the chair of the piano department at the University of Arkansas was a man named Dr. Bruce Benward. And he—I'd been really impressed with him at some auditions that went on every spring and that I'd played in, and so we went to Fayetteville to visit with him. And far as I was concerned then I—this was where I wanted to go. And then when I look back on it, I have no regrets. None. Because it's a good place to be, socially as well as academically.

SL: Yeah, when I was growin' up, they had band camps here at the University of Arkansas. They probably hadn't started that back when you were first attending or in high school. They didn't

have a band camp up here, did they?

[01:28:30] JT: Not up here but they may have had some band camps. We—'cause there were band camps—that was a common thing to do in towns with a—that had a band. I was—member we just barely had a band in Greenwood when I graduated from high school. So we didn't go to a band camp while I was there. But seemed like we went to some festivals even then, weekend events in other counties like the Johnson County Peach Festival, that kind of thing, where our band went down for that. And maybe they had a parade in it. I guess they did. I don't remember but . . .

[01:29:09] SL: So how many members were in your high school band?

JT: I don't know, but it was quite a few. They—'cause they were gettin' the band started, so they had little—there were *[laughs]* little bitty kids in the band as well as seniors in high school.

SL: Right.

JT: So they really stacked the deck, in a way, to get the enrollment in band, but that was proper that they were tryin' to build it up and get it . . .

SL: Right.

JT: . . . get it goin'.

SL: Right.

JT: So.

[01:29:37] SL: So did the Greenwood band play at football games and basketball games and . . .

JT: Yeah, at football games.

SL: Football games.

JT: Yeah. I don't remember 'em playing at basketball.

SL: Did y'all take the field at half time and do formations and . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: . . . play . . .

JT: Right. We did those usual things.

SL: Right. Right. Whatever was popular at the time, they would send out the charts for the marching bands to play and . . .

JT: Right.

SL: So you were pretty well versed, then, in the music world by the time you hit Fayetteville.

JT: Well, it was my interest. It was certainly my area of strong interest.

[01:30:23] SL: So it was when you got to Fayetteville that, really, rock and roll was starting to flourish and started to become something that was marketable at a local level. I mean, there were bands forming here and there everywhere across the

country.

JT: I guess there were. When I first came up here, I was a little ahead of rock and roll, but—being here on campus, and I played in the dance band, in Bob Donathan's band, my friend. So . . .

[01:30:57] SL: Now he was the leader of the band, right?

JT: He was the leader of that—this dance band, where they sit behind the music stands, and I played trombone in the group, and . . .

SL: And he played sax.

JT: He played sax.

SL: Right.

JT: Yeah, and if you look at a picture of the band, it looks like those dance bands of the [19]40s and early [19]50s. But anyway, when music began to change and when I—it really caught my ear was when rock and roll was starting. 'Cause there were—I may have been a sophomore—let's see here, in [19]56 I started playin' rock and roll. And we did the Bill Haley and His Comets songs . . .

SL: Comets. Of course.

JT: . . . all those . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: . . . "Rock Around The Clock" and "Shake, Rattle and Roll." I

never heard Joe Turner's "Shake, Rattle and Roll" until later.

SL: Right.

[01:31:44] JT: You know, all the African American music, which was—it was being popularized, but it wasn't always by the original artists.

SL: It was by the white . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: . . . bands.

JT: Yeah. Because you had Pat Boone, who had a huge career, successful career, playing songs that were written by Fats Domino or Little Richard, "Long Tall Sally" . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: . . . and "Tutti Frutti" with—Pat Boone had a big hit of that.

SL: Yep.

JT: That was by Little Richard. And Fats Domino had a lot of his music was done by Pat burn—Boone, too. And nothin' wrong with that, but then we didn't hear all those in western Arkansas. Now the guys over in Helena, probably, knew who all the good Black performers were way before we did.

SL: It's interesting how—what roles or what major role Helena played with rock and roll. And also how it kind of drew Northwest Arkansas into a rock-and-roll network, I would call it.

It was—you had Conway Twitty was raised in Helena.

JT: Right.

[01:33:05] SL: And he kind of established the contact in Canada, didn't he? As far as the trail from Arkansas up into Canada, he kind of made the initial contacts up there that had—that other bands from Arkansas followed and that established path is the way I've read it. Now, I did want to read you something. I—when I was studying up for our interview and—I wanted to get the music side of this pretty well documented because I think it's pretty important. But in 2007 you did an interview with Bill Wright who—I believe he used to play bass with the Cate Brothers later on or maybe at that time that he wrote this, but he says, "Some of the key players started reaching their prime in the late [19]50s and early [19]60s, but they actually arrived in Northwest Arkansas before then. There was a time in the late [19]50s when the typical choice of live entertainment boiled down to performances led by the McClelland Combo, John Tolleson, or Ronnie Hawkins." So at what point in time did those three groups of musicians kind of come together and become kind of the default rock-and-roll music here in Northwest Arkansas? Was that about the time when you were drifting toward or running straight into rock and roll? Is that . . .

[01:34:52] JT: Yeah, if by a specific time—it's—by—in my case, I was singing rock-and-roll tunes as a novelty song of—with the Bob Donathan orchestra. 'Cause rock and roll was like tryin' to stop the tide or the sun from comin' up. It was gonna burst through regardless. And so the dance bands, they began to realize that they needed to do something. They were gettin' all these requests to play "Shake, Rattle, and Roll" or one of those songs. And so they would just have me go out and stand in front of the band and sing those songs, even though they hated 'em, you know [*laughs*], I did . . .

SL: The market demanded it.

[01:35:37] JT: Yeah. Right. And so that was in [19]56. In [19]57 I formed this group to enter the talent show that I think we talked about this morning. Then went to Texas A&M. And that was—when I got back there was a man well known for clubs and arranging bookings and stuff by the name Dayton Stratton.

SL: That's right.

JT: Here in town. And Dayton called me and said, "I hear you guys have got a band, and you're pretty good," or something like that. And he said, "I've got a club called the Shamrock Club out north of town and" . . .

SL: Yup.

JT: . . . "if you would ever wanna come out and play, you know, we'd love to have you." And we did. And that went well.

[01:36:20] And by the way, Ronnie Hawkins—I outghta needle him a little with this thing. When I mentioned that talent show—I have the—goin' through the materials to get ready for this interview today, I found the original program from this Southwest Talent Show here in Fayetteville. And I won it. Well, Ronnie Hawkins was in that, too. I didn't even remember he was. [SL laughs] But I looked at it, and one of the contestants was Ron Hawkins. No Ronnie, just Ron.

SL: Ron.

[01:36:57] JT: But he and I had already gotten to know each other a little before then because Ronnie was not a schooled musician. He was totally self-taught, and so he would—if he wanted to have you play an interlude on a song, the guitar part, the ride or the solo, then you had to play it just like the record 'cause he didn't know when to come back in otherwise.

SL: [Laughs] There you go.

JT: But he learned quick, and he came back in, and he's still the hero—you will never meet a Canadian that doesn't know who Ronnie Hawkins is, I guarantee you. And if—anybody from Canada is familiar with him. He's just—he was—is was and is a

great entertainer. And he was—we got to be well acquainted.

[01:37:46] So to your original question as far as getting—how'd you get this group going to Canada? Well, Ronnie and I were sittin' out at the Shamrock one night, just there. Neither one of us was playing. And he said, "You know, Harold Jenkins has changed his name to Conway Twitty [*SL laughs*], and he is havin' a lot of success up in Canada. He's—says it's really good." And he said, "He's tryin' to get us a booking there." This is Hawkins talkin'. I said, "Well, why don't you ask him if he can get us a booking up there, too?" 'Cause I knew him as well.

SL: Right.

JT: And so he did. And Ronnie went up, and he stayed, and he became Mr. Canada, like I said. He's received the Order of Canada, which is kind of like our Kennedy Center Honors, really.

SL: Right.

JT: Except Canada's a much smaller population, but nevertheless the honor is similar. And so I bugged him or—to bug co—Harold Jenkins, Conway Twitty, about getting us booked, and we did, and we went up, and I think we actually went up a week before Ronnie did, but he stayed, and we came back, and I went back to school in the fall. And but we were playing in London, Ontario, Hamilton, and some in Toronto. I didn't play in Toronto

in [19]58, but next year I did. Well, there were other bands by that time comin' up . . .

[01:39:19] SL: Tom McClelland.

JT: Yeah, the McClellands came up and played. There were other—not just Fayetteville bands, but there were other groups that went on to become well known. Some of 'em country, some of 'em rock and roll. There's a guy named Narvel Felts. He used to have a great range. He was a rock-and-roll singer, but he was a Canadian on that circuit, too. A lot of people were. And it was—the people did love the Southern rock and roll that—on that route. And a lot of guys that built their careers on it.

[01:39:58] SL: Yeah. So I kinda wanted to go over some of this interview with you. I rarely do this. I rarely go to someone else's interview. But this—I think this is such a good job that it—and it points out to some really interesting things. He says that in the early days, there were no music venues on Dickson Street.

JT: Yeah.

SL: Now does that exempt George's? Wasn't—did anything happen . . .

JT: No, George's didn't have live music in the mid-[19]50s.

SL: Okay. So that happened a little later.

JT: Mh-hmm.

[01:40:41] SL: So there was the—oh the place above the bowling alley.

JT: Oh yeah . . .

SL: The UARK Bowl had a . . .

JT: The UARK Bowl. But that was different. That was a private rental—I mean, a facility that you could rent from . . .

SL: Right.

JT: . . . Mr. Sonneman. Emil Sonneman owned it, and the—it was above the bowling alley. And the UARK Bowl was a very popular place, but it was not a—it was—the band could play bo . . .

SL: It wasn't a bar . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: . . . where there were . . .

JT: Right.

SL: Right.

JT: It was a . . .

SL: There was a venue of . . .

JT: A venue.

SL: . . . of . . .

JT: Exactly.

SL: . . . facility that you rented. Yeah, my parents used to go there

to dance with a group called Couplers.

JT: Sure, and we used to play for them pretty often. They didn't have very big budgets, so we . . .

SL: Right.

JT: . . . we sometimes played with a smaller group. But we played.

[01:41:31] SL: Yeah, I member seeing—it may have been the McClelland group. So I wanna—when did you start singing?

JT: Well, I started singing the old traditional jazz songs probably back when I was in high school. But then when rock and roll started, I started singin' it because I liked it at about 1956, and that's when the Donathan Orchestra was loathe to play much of it, but it kept goin' up, and they were complaining, "What is this novelty business?" [*SL laughs*] and all this. So I started singing rock and roll in 1956 'cause I had a yen to do it well. And the fact is, a lot of the big stars that were playing rock and roll then played piano. And . . .

SL: You bet.

JT: . . . that was a—and so I played piano, too, and enjoyed doin' that. And then I decided to stand up and play. And we had these concrete—well, at first we used Coke cases. Coke cases were a dime a dozen, you know, they were everywhere, you know, just—and you could put two of them on—under each leg

of the piano, and piano's about a foot off the ground, and you can stand up and play it pretty comfortably.

[01:43:01] SL: Yes, when I saw you play that afternoon, the piano was elevated.

JT: Yeah.

SL: And I can't remember if it was concrete blocks or Coke cases, but that was another element that . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: . . . I took note of at the time.

JT: Yeah, and the—it might not have been—it probably wouldn't have been concrete blocks 'cause those things are heavy and you wouldn't . . .

SL: Right.

JT: . . . lug 'em around. Now later we had some blocks, painted blocks, wood blocks . . .

SL: That's probably what I saw.

JT: . . . that were—that I'd had made specifically for that purpose, but the first few years it was the Coke cases. People every once in a while still come up to me and say something about "Let's get some Coke cases and go play a dance." [*Laughs*]

[01:43:42] SL: I don't know what year it was, but it had to be late [19]50s, I would think.

JT: Yeah.

SL: 'Cause I think Gary was probably still in high school, and he graduated in 1960.

JT: Okay.

SL: So I'm just guessing that's when it was. Now you know, some of my favorite recordings of live music were single microphone recordings at Fayetteville High School. Did anyone ever record you live when you were playing, do you remember?

JT: I do remember, but they didn't at Fayetteville High to my knowledge. One—there was a country club dance—'cause these guys showed up with the equipment, that we played in, must've been about 1961. Country Club in Pine Bluff. And we didn't—the mics weren't set—seem like it was, like you said, a single mic or two mics, and it wouldn't pick up everything as well as it should, but I've still got—that were made for me by somebody who did 'em back then to send—they thought I'd be glad to hear 'em, and I guess I am, but [*laughs*] . . .

[01:45:00] SL: I'd probably be glad to hear 'em.

JT: And then—but they are—I've got those recordings that they made that night at that Pine Bluff Country Club.

SL: So are they still on reel-to-reel tape?

JT: No, they're on CD. The guy . . .

SL: They're on CDs. Good.

JT: . . . that did—the guy that had the reel-to-reel tape that recorded them—I can't think of his name now, but he put 'em on a CD to send 'em to me.

SL: That's beautiful.

JT: Yeah. I'll loan you one or . . .

SL: Well, I'll . . .

JT: . . . someday and you . . .

SL: Yeah. We can add it to your collection here.

JT: Everyone's—they're high on energy, though. Boy, I'll tell you, they're not v—musically that good, but they sound a lo—they're enthusiastic. [*Laughs*]

SL: Aggressive. [*Laughs*] Well, that's good. [01:45:48] So can you say anything about the McClelland Group at that—at this time when . . .

JT: Yeah. A little bit. There were three of those brothers. I was talking to somebody the other day ab—their name came up, and he didn't realize they were other brothers because Leon was the oldest. And he died many years ago. And Tommy is second, and Tommy's a fine musician. Played trumpet well, sings well, and I don't think he performs any more. And Melvin was the third brother who played the drums in their band and—which

was known at different times as the Emcees, and it was known as the McClelland Combo. Two of the guys that played in my band for a long, long time came from the McClelland Combo.

SL: And they were . . .

JT: Chalky Dearien and Troy Brand and maybe Ken Clark. I know Ken was one of—friends of all those guys.

[01:46:50] SL: Yeah, I think he is mentioned in here as well. Let's see. Now—let me think, here. So it says here your early influences were Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Fats Domino, and Carl Perkins.

JT: Yes.

SL: All right, well let's talk about each of those influences. Tell me about what Chuck Berry did for you as far as influencing you.

JT: Well, of course, he invented rock and roll. That was handy.

SL: Yeah.

JT: And but I tell you, I—besides having done—which it—you're not exaggerating much when you say Chuck Berry invented rock and roll 'cause he—his lyrics were so outstanding, those wry, clever lyrics and—unlike a lot of rock and roll, which is kinda boring if—in a way.

SL: Yeah.

JT: The—Chuck Berry—his lyrics alone would keep it from—anybody

from bein' bored.

SL: "Roll Over Beethoven."

JT: Oh yeah, he . . .

SL: Who ever would've thought that Beethoven's name would be in a rock-and-roll song?

JT: Yeah.

SL: Yep.

[01:48:03] JT: He's just was great. And I—we were playing in Dallas a lot by the time I was getting ready to really to quit, and I was workin' for Baldwin already, Baldwin Piano. But we—some promoters in Dallas put together a show. It was in a big venue at the Dallas Merchandise Mart. It was the night of the—after the Texas/Oklahoma football game, which still packs the town in.

SL: Of course it does.

JT: And you know, we played there that—generally, we were down there playin' when that—when that particular weekend 'cause it was such a big weekend, and we played a lot in Oklahoma, quite a bit in Texas, so we'd gotten a—to be pretty well known there. Well, they put together this package with us and Chuck Berry.

JT: Wow.

JT: And not only did—somebody said, "You opened for Chuck Berry?" It wasn't like I opened for him. We were just

alternating sets. I would've been glad to open for him. But we played, and he didn't travel with a band, so we were the band, his band, you know. He would play a set, we would play a set, and when he was playin' a set, we were still playing, we were just booking Chuck—backing Chuck Berry. And he was so good. And the guy was just—he was professional, which you'd expect to do. He was not rude. Somebody's asked me, and I say, "He was neither friendly nor unfriendly. He was just professional. He was busy." 'Cause he was actually playin' another club—when we'd come to the time when it was our set to be playing the Merchandise Mart, he'd be going over—I member thinkin', "Well, that's pretty clever." [*Laughs*] He was playin' in two places on the same night.

SL: Was gettin' two paychecks.

[01:49:59] JT: Yeah. Anyway, he was great. When I first heard rock and roll, Little Richard and—had great piano sound and was high-pitched voice. I could sing the songs in the same key he did back then. I couldn't do that now if I tried. But he was a—I never saw him in person. But he was a big influence on me in the early days of rock and roll. And so was Fats Domino. Fats was a . . .

SL: Keyboard player, for starters, right?

JT: Yeah, that's right. He played keyboard.

SL: And sang.

JT: Yeah, and so did Little Richard. Yeah.

SL: Right.

[01:50:40] JT: Yeah. And anyway, that was a great influence. And

Carl Perkins, the only guy that was not an African American in the group, but char—Carl Perkins had this hard, dynamic, rockabilly beat that I just loved the sound of everything he did.

SL: Like a slap bass or . . .

JT: Yeah, not so much a slap bass, but kind of, yeah, the beat that'd go with that. Yeah. But . . .

SL: So . . .

JT: And it—and I thought he was clever on the lyrics, too.

SL: Yeah. So . . .

JT: He wrote "Blue Suede Shoes" before Chuck Berry wrote "Roll Over, Beethoven."

SL: Yeah.

JT: I know that 'cause I've got the record, and when he says, "Early in the morning, don't you step—don't—let me give you a warning, don't you step on my blue suede shoes," that meant that "Blue Suede Shoes" had already been written.

[01:51:34] SL: Right. [*JT laughs*] Right. Right. So back on the

local scene here, these were probably the same influences for Ronnie and for the McClelland Group as well.

JT: Yes.

SL: So you guys—those three bands were probably dominating any dancing events that were happening in Fayetteville, Northwest Arkansas. You guys were probably playing the same clubs in Oklahoma and down in Texas, too? Was—were the McClellands on the road that much? I never really understood . . .

JT: You know, I don't know where they played. It's funny because they were out there playing. I'm pretty sure they went to the Peppermint Lounge in New York when all this bunch of Ozark musicians and Arkansas musicians, otherwise were going up there—north to play. I know the Peppermint Lounge was the pla—popular place, and all the Canadian venues that we played and—yeah, I don't know, really, where the McClellands spent most of their time playing. One thing about if you're playing a band—in a band yourself and you're staying busy, which we were. We were in demand.

SL: You don't know what anyone else is doing. Yeah.

JT: You don't hear too many other bands.

[01:53:14] SL: Right. So just out of curiosity, what was a typical pay for a playing a dance back in the late [19]50s, early

[19]60s?

JT: Well, I'll tell you what ours was, and I think it was probably at the top of—we charged \$400 to go to play a da—three-hour dance in Oklahoma City or Norman, Oklahoma, OU. Which was pretty good money back then.

SL: Yeah, you could fill up your tank of gas for ten dollars, maybe, or less?

JT: Or less, probably.

SL: Yeah.

[01:53:54] JT: But it was—that—we played, I think, when there was no travel expense at all, I—we charged \$300 in Fayetteville. And that doesn't sound like anything today, but that was—fifty, sixty years ago, that was a lot more money.

SL: Oh.

JT: Mo—a white collar job like our fathers might or might not have had in those days would typically bring in an income of about \$5,000, \$5,100, [\$5,]200 a year, and that's about what you could . . .

SL: Do with a band.

JT: . . . do with a band, which was quite a bit.

[01:54:36] SL: Was there any pushback from your mom and dad when you started leaning toward rock and roll?

JT: Yeah, a little bit, but you know, I think they knew I was gonna play, and the money was good. And I also took a little extra—I took extra on it 'cause I booked the band and did . . .

SL: You were the leader.

JT: Yeah, I was the leader. And the guys, even though they may not have agreed that I was [*laughs*] worth that, they knew that we were getting the bookings and movin' on down the road with 'em when—so they—even though they were not gettin' the same de—money that I was.

[01:55:19] SL: Now all three of these bands—the personnel kept flexing. Someone would quit to go do something else, and someone else would come in. And sometimes some of the players would actually pass through the same bands. Is that the way it kinda was back then?

JT: Yeah, I think so. There were people that would come and go in bands, and we hired two or three people from—that I think had cut their teeth at the McClelland Combo or the Emcees as it was known. Of—so people—there was a rapport. You spend a lot of time together, you know that from your—maybe you didn't tour or travel as much, but you spend a lot of time together. If you don't like the people you're traveling with, it can get pretty grouchy in a . . .

SL: Right.

JT: . . . station wagon or whatever you're driving. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah. Familiarity breeds contempt after a while. But so at one point in time, you have somebody that comes on that plays the bass on the pedals of an organ.

JT: Yeah. That—sure, that was the best band I ever had. No question about it. But . . .

[01:56:43] SL: Now who was that?

JT: That—his name was Richard Gibson.

SL: Okay.

JT: He was from El Dorado, and he was a fine musician. Had perfect pitch. One of the things he could do with any of these songs was just dissect 'em and tell us what to play. And here I had a music degree, but I couldn't hear what he heard. He heard all of the chord changes and knew—could identify 'em, the perfect pitch. Richard Gibson, and unfortunately we don't have him here anymore, and I didn't see him for many years before I heard he had died so—I just don't know why. I just never got—we never got together.

SL: Well, when he was able to do that with the pedals, did that mean that you didn't have a bass player anymore?

JT: This was always on just a number or two that . . .

SL: Oh, I see.

JT: And . . .

SL: So it freed up the bass player . . .

JT: It freed up the bass player . . .

SL: . . . to play something else.

JT: The bass player, Ken Clark, who's my—been my State Farm agent for about the last twenty years, is still operating down in Van Buren. But Ken was—when—we had a song we did called "Black and Blue."

SL: Yes.

JT: And the version we did was one way—Ken did a solo trumpet version of it, real slow and bluesy. And so this way Ken could go play the bass while Richard Gibson would play the foot pedals on the organ.

[01:58:14] SL: Now Ken would play the trumpet while . . .

JT: Yeah. Yeah. Sorry.

SL: . . . while the . . .

JT: Ken would play the trumpet.

SL: . . . pedals took over the bass role.

JT: Ken would play the trumpet, and that went real well. And Chalky and I—Chalky was the guitar player in our band for the last six years. When we would—he played trombone, and I also

played trombone. We played duo tunes on the horns, and it really sounded pretty good. And we could do all that stuff because we—if—when we needed Richard Gibson to do the bass, he could do it well on the organs. But it made it come off real well. And we did—one of the things I've often laughed about was—we do—we did or—Everly Brothers songs on the two trombones and . . .

SL: [*Laughs*] Wow.

JT: . . . and that—with their voices the way they did and . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: . . . their high pi—they really sorta intertwined with the trombone sound quite well.

SL: Everly Brothers—you know, they were quite a force in and of themselves as far as influence goes. I know that the Cate Brothers really kinda started out as an Everly Brother duo, you know, just a couple of guitars and singing.

JT: Yeah.

[01:59:27] SL: And I wanted to ask you this. When you were first starting with rock and roll, how much amplification was there?

JT: Well, there wasn't a lot compared to—you go hear the . . .

SL: Everything is amplified now but . . .

JT: Yeah. But we had a Fender Bassman. It was the old type

Fender Bassman with vacuum tubes and . . .

SL: You bet.

JT: And then I was careless with one of 'em, and it got stolen.

SL: Oh.

JT: And so I bought one, another one. So when we got the original one back—we found out who had it, and I just went to him and said, "I want my amplifier back," and he pretty soon realized he shouldn't be denying it [*SL laughs*], that I pretty well knew. Anyway, that's an off the story, but we had two Fender Bassman, but that's why, and it was a good sound.

[02:00:19] SL: It wa—those were great amps.

JT: Oh yeah.

SL: I mean, they—sure, they handled the bottom end, but they were full range, too, as far as . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: . . . puttin' a guitar in 'em or whatever. So you never had—you never started with an upright bass?

JT: No.

SL: So it was already moved over into the electric world.

JT: Right.

SL: By the time . . .

JT: Right.

SL: . . . you got into it.

[02:00:39] JT: When we went to Canada in [19]58 when Conway had booked us up there, he still had an upright bass in his entourage. All—he had drums, guitar, the upright bass, then himself. And he was playin' a rhythm guitar. But upright bass was a nice sound but didn't amplify like you quite needed for . . .

SL: Right.

JT: . . . rock and roll.

SL: Right. I know Elvis started that way. I mean . . .

JT: Yeah. Right.

SL: . . . all the early recordings of—video recordings or film recordings you see of him, it's an upright bass.

JT: Yeah.

SL: That that guy's playing. And the Louisiana Hayride featured upright basses quite a bit.

JT: Yes.

[02:01:24] SL: So yeah, I—that's a—I just wondered if there was ever an upright bass in your instrumentation.

JT: No, we didn't play a ba—I didn't have a bass for a couple of years. I had said, "We don't need a bass 'cause I can play the bass on the piano." [*SL laughs*] But I'll tell you, I did need the bass because the sound is just—there's a gutsy sound you get

outta that deep, upright bass that you're not gonna get on the piano.

SL: That's right.

JT: Especially if you get there and the piano they offer you is not a very oomphatic piano. So [*laughs*] . . .

SL: Or not in tune. [*Laughs*]

JT: Yeah. We didn't have too much trouble at that. I had a clause in the contract that specified that 'cause I knew I—we couldn't fool around with havin' people show up without a tuned piano.

SL: Right. That's good. I bet those contracts were, back then, pretty simple compared to what they are now.

JT: Probably. This was—I used a template or form that the musician's union used. And . . .

[02:02:26] SL: And it spe—did it specify the kind of lighting required in the dressing room and a deli tray [*JT laughs*] presented in an attractive manner and . . .

JT: No. [*SL laughs*]

SL: You know, particular . . .

JT: Didn't have that or any . . .

SL: . . . brands of beer.

JT: . . . particular M&Ms that were . . .

SL: Yeah, right.

JT: . . . colors that were . . .

SL: Right, right. So but a tuned piano.

JT: Yes.

SL: Was in there.

JT: We needed that. And yeah, we did put that in there and always spoke—when booking it spoke and told 'em, you know, now . . .

SL: That's probably a holdover from the orchestra stuff. That if an orchestra was coming to town, they didn't travel with a piano.

JT: Oh yeah.

SL: Which you wouldn't travel with a piano, right?

JT: Right.

SL: So you had to have a piano brought in, and it had to be tuned for the rest of the orchestra to work. So that's probably a mainstay in those contracts from way back.

JT: Yeah.

[02:03:19] SL: Okay so I wanna go over some of these names. You had Bill Raff run guitar at one point and Bud Jones on drums?

JT: Yes.

SL: Now Bill—the rhythm guitar was an electric guitar.

JT: Yes.

SL: So there weren't any acoustic guitars really involved unless there was some kind of special song . . .

JT: Right.

SL: . . . at a break or something. Is that the way that went?

JT: Right. The only—I was thinking. There was a time about 1964 with Richard Gibson—and I would rarely take a break just me takin' a break. I mean, we all took breaks but—Richard and Chalky and—anyway, that—we did have an upright bass, and somebody was playing it, and they were doing folk—it's when the folk era was going . . .

SL: You bet.

JT: . . . so strong.

SL: Peter, Paul and Mary. [*Laughs*]

[02:04:19] JT: And so I stayed out of it, and but we had those guy—three of 'em, at least, were doin' the folk . . .

SL: Kingston Trio.

JT: . . . and the . . .

SL: Kind of stuff.

JT: . . . rhythm guitar—not rhythm but acoustic guitars and all of that, yes. And it worked out fine. It was kinda different. Gave me a little time to let—rest my vocal chords, too. But I was never a great singer, but I had a pretty strong voice in those days.

SL: Yeah. I might take issue with that.

JT: [*Laughs*] Well, I . . .

SL: Certainly you had a [*laughs*] major influence on my life.

JT: Well, okay.

SL: Not that I ever sang. I could never sing. But I really appreciated a good lyric and a good voice. [02:05:09] What about Bud Jones? On drums.

JT: He, as I mentioned, he came to the university 'cause his—I don't know, to play football originally.

SL: Right.

JT: And then ended up not playing 'cause he got hurt. He—the drums—well, now, I know I mentioned him earlier, and that he was part of the original group and—'cause he's the one that overheard the guy at the Louisiana Hayride say, "And these are hillbillies?"

SL: Right.

JT: 'Cause he was so bemused by the fact. . .

SL: You were all suited up.

JT: . . . we were out there in suits and [*SL laughs*—but Bud still lives in Park Ridge, Illinois. He's a retired—he was a marine helicopter pilot in Vietnam.

SL: Wow.

JT: So he paid his dues . . .

SL: A veteran.

JT: . . . I'll tell you. But he's okay. And doin' well.

[02:06:20] SL: So back then a drum set, a kit, would be the kick drums, snare, maybe one raised tom, high hat, right cymbal, crash cymbal, and maybe a floor tom? Was it that complicated?

JT: That sounds about right to me.

SL: Okay.

JT: I couldn't tell you for sure.

SL: Well, that's kinda—became the basic rock-and-roll set, but you know, some of—early on it was just a snare drum or maybe a snare and a kit—or a snare and a kick and a hat. You know, there wasn't a lot of rolls going around.

JT: Yeah.

SL: Or any of that. It was mainly just a metronome kind of thing. Anyway. I'm—I hate to kind of bore you with these details, but all this stuff fascinates me personally. [02:07:18] Johnny Sallis, Jack Nance, Tommy Markham. Says, "Nance and Markham both played in Conway Twitty's band."

JT: Yeah. Jack Nance cowrote "It's Only Make Believe." And Tommy Markham, I took to Canada in 1959, and he was, man, he was a wild man. He was just outta high school, and he was just—he was a handful. [*SL laughs*] And but Conway asked me,

he said, "You think Tommy Markham would work—could work out for us?" 'Cause Conway was still doing rock and roll in those days. I said, "Yeah," I said, "you're a big star, you could control him." I said, "I [*laughs*—I can't." And I think that was about the accurate—and he did, then Tommy spent his—the whole rest of his life with Conway. And Tommy got severe diabetes later on, and Conway kind of took care of him, I think, the last part of his life. [02:08:23] But when Conway died, I called Markham to—just to say "I'm sorry to hear about Conway. I know you're bound to be busy and—but I wanted to let you know I was thinkin' about you." And anyway, about fifteen minutes later, his wife, widow, Markham's widow calls back, and he had died.

SL: Oh my God.

JT: I didn't know that. And he had been dead for six months. I—you know, it wasn't like I talked to them every . . .

SL: Right.

JT: . . . two weeks, but I was still a little surprised when I called . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: . . . about Conway that Tommy was gone. But he did a great job for Conway, and all those rock and early country recordings, too. He played on the most of Conway's hits, which is unusual because it's usually it's all studio musicians.

SL: Right.

JT: And Conway did go to studio musicians 'cause I talked to Tommy about it. So it—he didn't feel bad about it. It was kinda the way the industry had gone.

[02:09:33] SL: So you did record—there are sessions, recording sessions, that you did of some of your band's music, right? You did, I know, "Tennessee Stud." And I—as my memory goes, seems like I heard that on the local radio whenever you recorded it. I remember hearing it before I played the record that you let me listen to.

JT: Yeah. I—it—I don't know where you would've heard it. You wouldn't have heard it on the radio because it was never released.

SL: Okay.

JT: It was—the guys in Dallas that were—that booked the room with Chuck Berry and when they—they said, "We wanna rel"—they were gonna put the record out, but they said, "Everything is Beatles, Beatles, Beatles right now," and said, "We don't think we can—we'd just be lost in the shuffle right now." And that could be true, I don't know.

SL: But it was wildly popular with the fraternities and the colleges, wasn't it? I mean . . .

JT: It was. Yeah. And the man who wrote it's an old, dear friend of mine. Jimmy Driftwood, the man who wrote "The Battle of New Orleans" and . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: . . . lot of other stuff wrote "Tennessee Stud."

[02:11:00] SL: So did he record "Tennessee Stud?"

JT: Yeah. He didn't have . . .

SL: I wonder if that's I heard it.

JT: He didn't have the big hit of it. Eddy Arnold did.

SL: Oh. Maybe that's. . .

JT: But Jimmy wrote the song and recorded it.

SL: Well, it seemed like I was familiar with it . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: . . . when I got to hear your recording of it. [02:11:20] And then what was the other one? Did you do—what was it called, "Black and Blue" or . . .

JT: Yeah, "Black and Blue" we had on the flip side of the record that didn't get released with the "Tennessee Stud." "Black and Blue" in today's society might be considered—for Caucasian guys to be doin' it might not be well accepted, I don't know. But we didn't think about it back then. But you know, the lyric is "old oaken bed, springs hard as lead; pains in my head, wish I was dead.

What could I do to be so black and blue?" Or "What did I do?"

SL: Right.

JT: Then "There's no joy for me, no company. Even the little mouse done left the house." That . . .

SL: That's hard stuff.

JT: Then "what did I do to be so" . . .

SL: Isn't it.

JT: Yeah. "I'm white inside, but it don't help my case 'cause I can't hide what's on my face."

SL: Wow.

JT: And "there's no joy for me, no company. Even the little mou"—no, I did that part. "My heart is torn. Why was I born? What did I do to be so black and blue?" I would, you know, not think of it as a—certainly not sarcastic, but it . . .

SL: No, it's . . .

[02:12:35] JT: You know, there's a lot of sensitivity to who does what, and in songs, you could have good intention and bad results, I think.

SL: Still, though, if it's a good song, you know, it—yeah, I can understand how it might be controversial now.

JT: Yeah.

SL: But you know, if it were sung by an African American now . . .

JT: Yeah, it'd be fine.

SL: It'd be a totally different level of acceptance.

JT: Oh, sure.

SL: I can see that.

JT: Yeah.

SL: But back then, there were probably more white groups than there were black groups traveling around.

JT: Yeah, probably.

SL: Playing these dances.

[02:13:17] JT: Probably. Oh, I could tell—hey, I've got a—that reminds me of something that I'd like you to get on this recording 'cause when you talk about things that happen and whether you could or couldn't they—whether it would happen today. "Black and Blue" we sorta covered. But there—the "Tennessee Stud" has got a verse called "Me and a gambler, we couldn't agree. We got in a fight over Tennessee. We jerked our guns, he fell with a thud, and I rode away on the Tennessee Stud." Well, when Mike—Mike Davis, my drummer, just thought this up on his own. It wasn't like we had a consultation. But he's—when we get to that "Me and a gambler, we couldn't agree. We got in a fight over Tennessee. We jerked our guns, he fell with a thud"—he pulled out a pistol, Mike did, and shot it

into the air. [*Laughter*]

SL: No wonder it was popular. It was theatrics, wasn't it?

JT: And well, "We jerked our guns. He fell with a thud. Pow! And I rode away on the Tennessee stud." Well the irony is we played mostly, you know, a lot of college—tons of college scenes and places where we were in environments where it was not exactly—you weren't out in the wild west. Well, nobody ever said anything to us. "Do you think you shouldn't be shootin' that gun?" Not one word was ever uttered by anybody about that.

SL: Now it would . . .

JT: As we sing.

SL: . . . clear a hall.

JT: But now—yeah, and you would never get anot—the school would never bring you back.

SL: That's right. Or the club owner probably wouldn't bring you back.

JT: That's right. Yeah, you couldn't do it. But I—we used to do that on that one song. We—Mike used to do it. And I didn't [*laughs*] even know he was gonna do it the first time he did it. Scared the heck out of me. [*Laughs*]

[02:15:13] SL: That's funny. So Mike is brother to Steve?

Fayetteville boy?

JT: No. This Mike Davis . . .

SL: No. Different Mike Davis.

JT: Yeah. Mike Davis was from Morrilton.

SL: Okay. I was so excited to see Mike Davis on here 'cause I know who Mike Davis was. So from Morrilton, huh?

JT: Yes.

[02:15:38] SL: What about Larry Morton?

JT: Larry's my good friend. Li—he's retired and lives in Fort Smith. He grew up in Fort Smith. A fantastic guitar player. He played for about thirty years as the guitar player for Danny Davis and the Nashville Brass. Do you know the Nashville Brass?

SL: I know that name, yes.

JT: Yeah, boy, they were good. They did horns stuff. Often sometimes with a driving, five-string banjo, but with horns. Anf snyway, Larry was with them for years before that. He went to Canada with us the two summers we went, and then he—he's just played. He's had a great career as a guitarist.

SL: So and this is—he's probably another musician that just did it by ear.

JT: Larry?

SL: I bet. Yeah.

JT: No, I don't think so. I think—he's a good musician. He could

play notes. He . . .

SL: He could read music and . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

JT: He could. Now his wife and her family, they were from Fort Smith, too. He—her brother—her name is Ann Morton. She had several minor country hits. And her brother Jim mor—Jim White, whose name he changed to Jim Mundy, *M-U-N-D-Y*, he had some country hits, and but the main thing Jim has done—he has set himself up for life. He wrote the jingle, the Miller Beer commercial . . .

SL: Oh.

JT: . . . of "When it's time to relax" . . .

SL: Lax.

JT: You know, that . . .

SL: Yeah. Yeah.

JT: He did very well with the commercials. He wrote a Coke commercial, too, so he's had a good career, and that makes me happy. He's in the gru—he went to Canada with us in [19]58.

SL: And came home with you.

JT: Yeah.

SL: [*Laughs*] Rather than stick in Canada.

JT: Yeah. But he didn't go back in [19]59.

[02:17:48] SL: Let's see. Charles Conine?

JT: Yeah, Conine died about a year ago. Yeah, he had serious dementia for years before. He's from Fayetteville. He joined the band in [19]59 but only played a couple of years because he was gonna drop out and concentrate on his studies. Well, that didn't last too long, but by that time, I already had a drummer in the band, Mike, and Mike stayed in the band till I quit playing, so there was no spot for Charles anymore.

[02:18:29] SL: Okay, so I've got Chalky Dearien and Troy Brand.

JT: Yeah, Chalky was the guitar player in the band from 1959 till I quit playing in mid-[19]65. And Chalk—the great thing about Chalky was when he played guitar—I always accused him of thi—I said, "You never play anything the same way twice."

SL: That's great.

JT: It is great. It is great.

SL: But you had to figure out when to come back in, is that . . .

JT: Well, I could—he wasn't that wild afield. [*SL laughs*] But it was funny. I—'cause he—at first I'd talk at—I took it as, you know, I'd think, "Well, that was good"—but he would do it mostly all well, each time. And it did always—you know, Jerry Lee Lewis doesn't ever do anything the same ti . . .

SL: Right.

JT: . . . same way twice, and that guy's a marvel. Absolutely head over heels in talent. Oh, who—was there—somebody else you named besides Chalky?

[02:19:31] SL: Well, Troy Brand.

JT: Oh, Troy. Yeah, tr . . .

SL: On sax and tambourine. Now tambourine is kind of an unusual thing to list as far as . . .

JT: If you can't play the sax anymore, what do you . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: That's why—that's probably how that got on there [*SL laughs*] 'cause Troy spent a career in the air force as an air force colonel or lieutenant colonel one. He's—and he went—set up an advertising business in Fort Wor—or San Antonio and has done real well. And doin' well. As far as I know he's good health. I talked to him late last year. So Troy . . .

SL: So but he played a good sax, obviously.

JT: Oh, he did when he—yeah, when . . .

SL: When he was with you.

JT: . . . when he was a sax player. And he repaired the soldering irons.

SL: Oh. That's critical.

JT: And the [*SL laughs*]*—*or the stuff with the*—*we used to kid him 'cause we*—*truly when anything broke, an electrical thing, he was out with the soldering iron, and Troy was fixin' it. [*Laughs*] It was so handy to have.

SL: Yeah. Well, I mean, those amps back then were pretty heavy and pretty well built, but they were on the road.

JT: Yeah.

SL: And you're loadin' 'em in and out and . . .

JT: Right.

SL: . . . rolln' 'em around. Different people are handling them and all that stuff, so they do*—*there was a position for someone that could do maintenance.

JT: I know.

SL: Yeah.

JT: That's*—*and it was free.

SL: Yeah. [*Laughter*] So you didn't pay him extra for the soldering iron.

JT: No.

[02:21:04] SL: [*Laughs*] Okay. So then you got Ken Clark in 1960?

JT: Ye . . .

SL: On bass. And then once again, Dearien, Brand, and Clark were together in the same band. So is this out of McClelland's group?

JT: Yeah, it is.

SL: So that's pretty big chunk.

JT: It is.

SL: From one group to another.

JT: Yeah.

SL: Let's see.

Sarah Moore: Scott, we're about an hour and ten minutes in. If you guys need a break. Just want to give you an idea of time.

[02:21:51] SL: Okay. I think we're about to finish up on this member list that's in front of me. Let me see. I guess we could talk about your last gig.

JT: Okay.

SL: That you did in Oklahoma City?

JT: Yes.

SL: What was that like?

JT: Well, you know, it's funny. You're young, and you've not even given much thought—I was gonna move on with my career with Baldwin and was gonna be quitting the band and we—there was a high school in Oklahoma City back in those days called Northwest Classen. *C-L-A-S-S-E-N*. And that's where we were playing for their senior prom when—the last night. And I remember givin' it a little thought when we drove back to

Fayetteville after it was over that night, but I've—I had three kids by then, and figured my career with Baldwin was—I had a promotion comin' up, and it was a good time to do it. Gail would've been more than a little disappointed if I'd . . .

SL: Kept on going.

JT: . . . continued to play.

SL: Well . . .

[02:23:07] JT: The thing that I could've done on the play—and every—sure, everybody that I know in music's probably always had some second thoughts as to whether they would've done well or not so well. But the biggest thing that I ever had was sol—that was a solid opportunity that I didn't do was back when I talked to Conway regularly, back in the [19]50s into the mid s—earlier [19]60s—he just really en—tried to get me to quit my band and come join him. And he said, "Look, if you wanna use the band to record, I'll help you, or you could do that." And n—those are opportunities you don't get offered . . .

SL: Right.

JT: . . . very often. And I've had a few thoughts of whether—what would've happened if I had done that. 'Cause that was bef—well, probably early [19]60s or late [19]50s. But I didn't do it, and I'm very happy with the career and the life I've had.

[02:24:13] SL: Well, also those opportunities may not be as obvious at the time that they're presented, too, because you're in the thick of it all, and you don't—it's harder to see a bigger picture. I mean, you probably had some obligations to the guys that were in your band, and you know, there was this—you had something going, and as great as Conway was it—and as assuring as he was, it would've been a change.

JT: Yeah.

SL: It would've meant . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: . . . a difference in not just your life, but those that were around you at the time. So I can see how you could second guess yourself on that.

JT: Yeah.

[02:25:01] SL: But there was probably something in your gut that made you feel like maybe you were going to be okay going the direction you were going at the time. I don't know. I mean . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: I know that the music business is brutal. [*JT laughs*] And it's a lot of work and . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: . . . it's a—it's rare when someone gets really, really successful

with it to where they can leave it and still be okay. I mean,  
that's . . .

JT: Yeah, that's true. And I'm happy and thankful with the time that  
I had to enjoy that. The newness of rock and roll made it an  
ideal time to be . . .

SL: That's . . .

JT: . . . on the periphery of and involved . . .

SL: It was exciting.

JT: . . . because it was an exciting [*laughs*] time.

SL: Yeah.

[Recording stopped]

[02:25:50] SL: John. You're still with me.

JT: I am here.

SL: You're survivor. [*Laughter*] Well, I think—let's see. I think  
we're starting on our fourth hour. I think we went a couple  
hours this morning before we had lunch, almost a couple hours,  
and then I think we just went another hour. So we're  
approaching starting on our fourth hour, here.

JT: Okay.

SL: You holdin' up okay?

JT: Sure.

SL: Is it—still havin' a good time?

JT: I am.

[02:26:18] SL: Okay. Well, we've been—we've kind of covered your earliest years, your earliest memories. You know, one thing that we didn't—really haven't talked about is any stories you may have heard told to you. I mean, di—was your dad or any of your relatives, aunts, uncles, were they storytellers at all? Do you remember any kind of—I just realized I haven't really dug down from the oldest story . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: . . . that you may have known.

JT: I don't think of my family as a storytelling family. And I enjoy a good storyteller when I hear one. But my dad, as I say, was a diligent worker, great personality. I mean, he was not a glum worker, but he was—his day and evening were filled with operating a service station. And so I don't think storytelling has a role in my family life in the past. Not much.

[02:27:30] SL: What about grandparents?

JT: I have no . . .

SL: Did you ever have any conversations with grandparents?

JT: No, because my grandparents were all four dead before I was born.

SL: Oh, is that right?

JT: Yeah.

SL: My gosh.

JT: I've got . . .

SL: I'm so sorry.

JT: I can . . .

SL: To hear that.

JT: . . . relate this quickly. Most people have a great-grandparent or maybe a great-great-grandparent that fought in the Civil War. Well, in my case, it's my grandfather. My father's father's a si— was a Civil War veteran. That's how much younger he was than his half brothers and sisters, who were older. So I don't—I had no chance to get to know my grandparents. And the ones— aunts and uncles and so forth that I knew I never—either wasn't around that much or never thought of them as storytellers, either. [*Laughs*]

[02:28:23] SL: Right. Well, it—you know, I would assume your granddad probably fought for the South.

JT: He did. And his father, my great-great-grandfather, fought for the South.

SL: Really?

JT: Yeah.

SL: So father-son . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: Southern rebels, I guess.

JT: Yeah.

[02:28:41] SL: Well, okay. Well, that being said, then, we've gotten you pretty much—I think we're pretty much through your rock-and-roll years, which were exciting, but you were also doing double duty going to the University of Arkansas at the same time, is that right?

JT: Right.

SL: So how did you work that out? How did that happen?

JT: Well, I think that worked out just sort of itself because I was enjoying playing rock and roll, but we also tried to kind of control our—have a certain image, and being a college student was good for that image, as well as being the fact that I was a college student learning a little bit. And you know, it was not my best time as a student because rock and roll will do that. And but I also did finish with a couple of degrees and limp out with a couple of degrees. [*Laughs*]

[02:29:46] SL: Well, what did you end up getting degrees in?

JT: Music education and business administration.

SL: Ah.

JT: So it was a pretty good combination for a guy that's gonna

spend thirty-six years with Baldwin Piano & Organ Company.

SL: It was . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: . . . kinda built to a *T* for that. That's kind of an unusual combination, isn't it?

JT: It is. Most people with good sense come out of that with a bachelor's and a master's, but not me. I came out with two bachelor's degrees. [*Laughs*]

SL: Yeah. Well, it's a broad stroke, though.

JT: Yeah.

SL: Yeah.

[02:30:15] JT: But it r—seriously, it was good, and the music made it more enjoyable. 'Cause it wasn't my best time as a student.

SL: Other than the chair of the music department you mentioned earlier, did you have a favorite instructor or course in the business school?

JT: I think my favorite professor in business—Dr. Orville Hall taught me economics. And when I was working on the business degree when I didn't think I had very much of an academic interest in my school studies—'cause in all seriousness, rock and roll is a pretty big . . .

SL: Education in itself.

JT: Yeah. Right. [*Laughter*] And but Dr. Hall was a great teacher, and I enjoyed being in his class.

SL: And he taught you economics.

JT: He did. He was also our first landlord. He owned some properties here in town, and when Gail and I were gonna get married, and I already liked him as a professor, we went to talk to him, and our first apartment we rented from him.

[02:31:28] SL: So not only are you running a rock-and-roll band, not only are you working on two simultaneous degrees at the University of Arkansas, but you're also smitten by Gail Cooper.

JT: Well, yes. [*Laughter*]

SL: And why wouldn't you be? How did you all meet?

JT: We met—she had a date with one of my fraternity brothers, actually. It was an afternoon date. Just one of those things they'd call a Coke date, I suppose. And she came into the Ozark Lanes with Wade Hahn, who was a Sigma Nu, and introduced—and I was in there bowling by myself, and she thought that was the most pitiful thing she ever [*laughter*] heard of. She said, "We came in there, and there you were in there by yourself, bowling." I said, "Well, I was just havin' fun." I lived nearby, and just thought it was fun to go bowl a little bit, and I did. But that's how we met was at the Ozark Lanes bowling alley. That

was when the Ozark Lanes were down here by the old UARK Theater, just across the street from it.

SL: The UARK Bowl.

JT: The UARK Bowl, yes. The bowl upstairs was doc—was Emil Sonneman's property. He rented that venue out. I think . . .

SL: Right.

JT: . . . we talked about that earlier. And so there I was, and we met, and the first two or three times I asked her out, she didn't want to do the thing I was gonna do. Once it was at the senior ba—Sigma Nu senior banquet. And I didn't—I knew that—I didn't tell her this—that I was gonna be the outstanding senior [SL laughs] voted by Sigma Nu. But she didn't think that sounded like fun to go to, so she turned me down. There was something else that I asked her to do, and she turned me down. Finally, I asked her if she'd go to the movie with me, and she said yes. And from then on it was smooth sailin'.

[02:33:27] SL: So what movie did you go see, do you remember?

JT: I don't remember. [SL laughs] But there's one thing that she does, your former neighbor and my present—my wife and—is that—I was the guy that wanted to know when the movie started so I'd go in at the beginning, which seems still perfectly logical to me. But I said to Gail, said, "What time does it start?" She

said, "Well, what difference does that make?" you know. "Why, I'd like to get in the beginning." She—a lot of people, including me, in years past, would go to the movie, and you'd just sit there till the time you came in, and then you'd leave. "Oh, this is where we came in," and you'd leave.

SL: Ah.

JT: But you miss a lot when you [*laughs*] . . .

SL: That's right.

JT: . . . when you mo—see a movie . . .

SL: That's right.

JT: . . . that way, but we la—Gail and I laugh about that every now and then now that I wanted to get there when the movie started.

[02:34:22] SL: Yeah, UARK Theater, as I remember, it had kind of ranked, stadium seating. It didn't have a balcony. It . . .

JT: I think that's right. It didn't have a balcony.

SL: Seating . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: . . . all the way to the back wall.

JT: I believe that's right. Yeah. 'Cause the Ozark Theatre was the big gun here in town then. And then the UARK. And then . . .

SL: And then the Palace.

JT: . . . there was that little—yeah, the Palace over on the square.

SL: Yeah. I remember all three of those . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: . . . venues.

JT: Yeah.

SL: Went to all three of them.

JT: I bet.

SL: [*Laughs*] So after the movie date, you said it was kind of smooth sailing after that.

[02:35:06] JT: Yeah, and I asked her to—out again, and it was probably to do the movie again. It was just the way couples progressed in things, you know. But we soon realized we were probably getting serious. I was—I had graduated once and was workin' on the second degree. And I was kinda ready to settle down, maybe because of the rock-and-roll band for all those years when—I never thought of eight and a half years very long, but I—we were as busy with our band at the end when we were—eight and a half years as we were at any time in between, I think. We were stayin' booked. But I realized it was time to get a little more serious about the rest of my life.

SL: There was something not predictable about a music career.

JT: Yes.

SL: You never knew where the next gig was a month away.

JT: Yeah.

SL: And also the trends of music were moving quite along back then.

JT: Yeah.

SL: Beatles had hit.

JT: Yeah.

SL: So.

JT: You say all that, and you know what's funny, though, the irony is I—who would've ever dreamed that the piano business as a manufacturing thing, I mean, would not be a forever kind of business. But actually the piano business sort of fell apart, too. That's maybe a little bit of an overstatement, but not too much. The market has gone down, declined, declined, declined, and that's hard year after year if you're with a manufacturer. You're pedaling a little bit faster every year to try to get to where you were the year before.

[02:36:54] SL: So one of the attractions for Baldwin Piano was probably that you could play the piano.

JT: Yeah, but it's a lot smaller percentage than you would think that would—that could play. But it is nice. It's a nice advantage to be able to play when you wanna show somebody something or demonstrate to have a quality of the piano or the organ,

whichever you're at, be something you can explain.

SL: So the Baldwin Piano—there was a Baldwin Piano plant here in Fayetteville.

JT: Yes, it was an electronics plant, and we made the Baldwin organs here.

[02:37:34] SL: Did they also manufacture the electronic pianos here?

JT: The electronic pianos, yes. They did. But at the—initially it was here to support the home organ, especially, some of the church organs, too, but the organ business. And then the pianos—we had a huge piano plant in Greenwood, Mississippi, 500 square—500,000 square feet under . . .

SL: Wow.

JT: . . . roof. It's a big plant. And that was when the market was goin' strong, too, of course. Then we had a grand piano factory in Conway, Arkansas, and another vertical piano factory in Trumann, Arkansas.

SL: Wow.

JT: We had a lot of employees in Arkansas at one time.

SL: Yeah. I'm assuming 'cause the labor was cheap and it wasn't a union state, right?

JT: That's right. That's in general true, yes.

SL: So did they ever manuf—where did they manufacture their amplifiers?

JT: They manufactured those, I think, in Fayetteville, to the best of my knowledge.

SL: I wanna believe that.

JT: 'Cause they were electronic, yeah.

SL: Yeah. I wanna believe that.

JT: We made some guitars in Fayetteville. We bought guitars from England from the Burns Guitar Company, and we made some more—some here. Excuse me. [*Coughs*]

[02:39:06] SL: So that—when you say you made the guitars, some guitars, here, was it just the electronics that were retrofitted into the guitar body that you got from somewhere else, or did they do the whole . . .

JT: I think they . . .

SL: . . . from beginning to end?

JT: I think they did some the whole thing here. I was never in the guitar section of the company. But they made some guitars in Booneville, Arkansas.

SL: Okay.

JT: For a while, too. East of—you know, green—east of Greenwood.

SL: They were heavy guitars, as I remember.

JT: Heavy as in hard to lift?

SL: Yeah.

JT: Yeah.

SL: Strap on and . . .

JT: I—not playing one, I don't know. They may have been.

SL: Un—they didn't—their guitar line didn't really take off.

JT: No. There were a lot of the big companies, music companies, that thought they could jump into the piano business and succeed, when in reality companies like Fender and Gibson and Gretsch and others were doin' a pretty good job and . . .

SL: Right.

JT: . . . weren't easy to take market share away from.

[02:40:17] SL: Right. I often wondered if the Mosrite guitars that were made famous by the Ventures kinda followed the Baldwin template, or if Baldwin kinda followed their template 'cause they looked kinda similar, and they were both very heavy.

JT: Yeah.

SL: So anyway. That was just a curiosity on my part about the Baldwin guitar element.

JT: Yeah.

[02:40:46] SL: So when you were in school and doing' rock and roll and working for Baldwin, you were based in Fayetteville, you're

reporting to the Fayetteville office.

JT: Yes.

SL: And were you basically sales?

JT: Well, I was in the manufacturing division while I was working here in the Fayetteville office.

SL: Oh, okay. So you . . .

JT: But . . .

SL: . . . actually put stuff together.

JT: Yeah. Well, yeah. I didn't physically put the stuff together myself, but I was more in quality control in the beginning. But the eight—after—in the middle of 1965 and—they'd offered me a position in the sales side of the company, and that was when I needed to either take it or not take it, and I didn't wanna turn it down. [02:41:40] The early years when I was working at Baldwin and could still play music is because I would either take off for whatever city I was going to on—near the weekend, or I could not be in the se—not be in manufacturing and go to sales, but I couldn't still work in the band if I went to the sales side 'cause it was gonna be a traveling position called staff organist. It was music, obviously, related. I went all around the country all over the place doin' concerts on the home organs. Home organs sell because people show 'em off and all the little bells

and whistles . . .

SL: Sure.

JT: . . . and the things that they can do.

SL: All the stops and . . .

JT: Yeah, right. So that's what I—then after I left manufacturing, I did that for a couple of years, then moved on into the organ part of the company in Cincinnati, where I was involved in the design of new organs and—as well as goin' out and playin' some concerts.

[02:42:47] SL: So I wanna ask you about keyboard action on an electronic keyboard as opposed to a regular, conventional piano. Is it the same mechanisms on an electric piano? Is it have to do with weights and balances, or is it somehow or another more mechanical than that or more controlled than that?

JT: Well, the ones we, Baldwin, made, the answer is they're gonna be several different ways. Some of 'em, the inexpensive ones, the keys may feel a little springier and not as much like a regular acoustic piano. But if you—the good digital pianos back then, and I don't have a lot of current knowledge on that now 'cause I been gone a long time from the company, but if you had wood—some wood key parts and all, then that makes it feel a little more realistic, and some of the better instruments did, and the

touch was more realistic like an acoustic piano. But usually a little more expensive product as well.

SL: So what would a home organ cost back then?

JT: The models were so varied. They could be from as little as two thousand—we're talkin' 1990 . . .

SL: Right.

JT: . . . or [19]80 dollars, maybe. But a couple thousand to twenty thousand. So it's just all over the place.

[02:44:29] SL: So you feel like maybe in most circumstances, it was kinda conspicuous consumption as far as having an electric organ in your home.

JT: I don't know if it was conspicuous consumption or not. It was—that was where the home organs were designed to go is in homes, and people had—the better the instrument, the more expensive, usually the better the electronics in terms of the way it sounds, more realistic. If an instrument's supposed to sound like a trumpet, it really sounds like one. Or if it's meant to sound like something else, that, too.

SL: So in my house, I have like a 1850-something pump organ.

JT: Yeah.

SL: You know, where you're actually . . .

JT: Sure.

SL: . . . pumping, and it's actually wind.

JT: I've played 'em many times.

SL: Going through, and so Baldwin introduced the electric counterpart to that. There was really no wind generated, it's just all, you know, transistors and diodes and resistors and—to make the pitch. Is that kind of the way that they're—I'm assuming that's the way those were put together.

[02:45:54] JT: Well, yeah. And the sound, the tonal of the individual sounds that are in there are—the electronics in 'em, I couldn't tell you exactly how they do it, but it's—the more electronics and the more sophisticated they are, generally the better it sounds. And the—Baldwin was—when I started with the company, they were starting to do all transistorized organs. Until then, they were still using some vacuum tubes. Sometimes it was a combination of vacuum tubes and . . .

SL: Transistors.

JT: . . . transistors. But then the transistors gave way to something else in the way of electronics in the product. But if you ask me to explain one [*SL laughs*], I can't do it. [*Laughs*]

SL: That's not your realm.

JT: Right.

[02:46:51] SL: Well, I just remember how impressed I was to have

a Baldwin piano and Baldwin amplifier in my high-school band.

It was just a . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: And junior high, actually.

JT: Sure.

SL: Started in junior high. So . . .

JT: And Baldwin was—as I always say "was" now because it—the still—they sort of exist, but it's mostly a name only. I'm sure Gibson does a great job, but with the Baldwin Piano name, they haven't done a lot with it.

[02:47:21] SL: So Gibson bought Baldwin.

JT: Yes.

SL: I see. Okay. Well, they've been in that business for a long time.

JT: Things come and go.

SL: Yeah. Yeah. So you start working at Baldwin, you're dating Gail. How long did y'all date before you . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: . . . proposed?

JT: Yeah, the order of it would be I was dating Gail, then I went to work for Baldwin.

SL: Oh, okay.

JT: 'Cause we had—Gail and I got married—we started dating in

August of 1959.

SL: Wow.

JT: And we got married in November of 1960.

SL: Wow.

JT: And I went to work for Baldwin in October of 1962. So that's kind of the way that progressed. And 1962—let's see. What did I say? That's when—Gail and I got married in 1960, and I, yeah, I went to work for Baldwin in [19]62, and already we were already thinking about the fact that when I went to work for Baldwin that sooner or later, I'd go into the sales side of the business. We progressed along until we had a—Jennifer, our first baby, was born in 1962.

SL: Was that in Fayetteville?

JT: Yes.

SL: Okay.

[02:48:48] JT: Right. So 1960 to nine—well, in 1962, Jennifer, 1964, Julie and Leslie, our twin daughters, were born. In 1971, our youngest, Susannah, was born. And since then, we've got six grandkids.

SL: Oh my gosh.

JT: Yeah.

SL: Well, that's good. So lots of beautiful, healthy girls.

JT: Four girls, and then of the six grandkids, three girls and three boys.

SL: That's good and even.

JT: Yeah.

[02:49:26] SL: So do you remember how you exactly proposed to Gail?

JT: Yes, I—she had gone to be a counselor at a girls' camp in Minocqua, Wisconsin.

SL: Wow.

JT: Which—and we had played a dance in Fort Smith. This was in the summertime. And when I got back and unloaded my station wagon with all the amplifiers and stuff in it, from Fort Smith, it was probably two o'clock in the morning. Then I pulled out for Wisconsin. [*Laughter*] And I took off, and I stopped to eat breakfast some place near St. Louis. I'd gas up the car when I needed gas, maybe get a Coke. I don't think I ate another meal 'cause I was wantin' to get there fore she was in bed for the night or something, so I went out to the campgrounds and sent a—met somebody and asked her if they could find Gail and send her out. I kinda explained 'cause I didn't want the girl to wonder about what I was—who I was or what I was . . .

SL: Right.

JT: . . . if I was real. [*SL laughs*] But so Gail came out and was surprised to see me, and I gave her a ring. And if she had turned me down, I don't know where I'd be. [*Laughs*]

SL: Well, now so this was like at nine o'clock at night or . . .

JT: Yeah. In fact, your time is—that's about when it was. Just about nine o'clock at night.

SL: And did you drop to a knee?

JT: No, I didn't drop to a knee. [*SL laughs*] I think she got in the car and we were sitting side by side is . . .

SL: I see.

JT: . . . how that worked. Yeah. But it was—it worked out.

[02:51:09] SL: Well, that's pretty romantic little story there. So you hung out for a few days and drove back to Fayetteville, is that . . .

JT: Right.

SL: Was she done with her job then or . . .

JT: No, she . . .

SL: . . . lef—you left her there and . . .

JT: She had to stay and work there a while.

SL: So did you—let's see now, how old were y'all then?

JT: Let's see, this would've been the summer of 1960, so Gail and I both have similar birthdays. Mine's July 29. So it would've

been—and then hers is August 14. So it—and that was summer of 1960, so we would've . . .

SL: Twenty-three.

JT: . . . either been twenty-three and twenty or twenty-two and nineteen, depending on how early in the summer we're talkin' about.

SL: So this was before her father passed, then.

JT: Yes.

SL: Did you ask for her hand?

JT: I had gone to see her mother. I didn't see her dad because he wasn't there when I went. I went by and showed her mother the ring that I wanted to give Gail. And she didn't say, "Don't you do it." She—you know, so I don't remember there being any unkind expressions of thought or word on that.

SL: No hesitation?

[02:52:28] JT: Right. [*SL laughs*] So anyway, I had showed it to m—Louise Cooper, and I'd showed it to Gail's best friend, Sarah Smith.

SL: Okay.

JT: I don't know if you remember s—do you remember Jimmy Smith on . . .

SL: I—Jimmy Smith?

JT: Yeah, he was the one that—well, Sarah lived over on—and her mom's still living, at the age of 103—savi—Park Street over by the . . .

SL: Is that right?

JT: Wilson Park.

SL: I don't think I ever knew Jimmy Smith. I don't think.

JT: Okay. Maybe not. But . . .

SL: Was he a musician?

JT: No.

SL: Okay. No, I . . .

JT: No, he's a retired attorney now.

SL: Okay. I don't think I knew . . .

[02:53:08] JT: But yeah, I got us off on that. But the—when I gave the ring or showed the ring to Gail's mother and she accepted the fact that I wanted to marry her daughter. And then I went to Wisconsin knowin'—I went by to see Sarah. That's where we were on—Sarah—I showed her the ring and what she thought, I don't know but [*SL laughs*] I was pretty determined.

SL: Yeah.

JT: I would've been highly pressed to not make that trip.

SL: Yeah, there—it is a little bit unusual that you were driven to make that trip at that point.

JT: It was a thousand—I think. I've thought about it more since. It's a thousand miles, and that's a heck of a trip when you already played a dance that night in a town sixty-five miles to your south, and then you take off north. It was a—but it was a good trip.

[02:54:10] SL: So you just—you couldn't stand the idea of just waiting till she got home?

JT: I guess not.

SL: [*Laughs*] You were urgent.

JT: Yeah.

SL: With it. Well, that's good. You were crazy in love with her. Still are.

JT: I am.

SL: I can see that now.

JT: Yeah, I am.

[02:54:24] SL: Yeah. So you're working at Baldwin, she comes home, you get married at Central Methodist Church, I believe.

JT: Yes. Except, remember, I wasn't working at Baldwin yet . . .

SL: Oh.

JT: . . . when I went to Wisconsin . . .

SL: Okay.

JT: . . . to see her. I joined the univer—or joined Baldwin in 1962.

We'd been married two years.

SL: Oh, okay. Well, for some reason I thought that you had some kind of part-time job at Baldwin . . .

JT: No.

SL: . . . when you were in college. Oh.

JT: No, I did not.

SL: Oh, okay.

JT: Yeah, they hired . . .

SL: Well, I'm glad you cleared that up.

JT: Mos—they hired a lot of engineers out there, But no. I was not an engineer for one thing, but I was never an employee until later, until [19]62.

[02:55:13] SL: And so you enjoyed that work.

JT: I was—knew I was probably more suited for the sales side of the company. I did enjoy it because it was a good group of people, and that always makes it nice, but I didn't figure I'd be there for my whole career.

SL: But you ended up being there for quite a while.

JT: Well, not—only till 1965, and then I moved to Cincinnati and worked in the sales side as designing the organs and still doing concerts on them and so forth. And then in [19]69 I became a district sales manager and moved to Chicago. Then in [19]71 I

moved to Arizona as a dis—still as a district sales manager, but it was a huge district. It was a good place to be. And did that one for eleven years.

SL: Wow.

JT: And then moved to Cincinnati and w—as a market development manager doing some s—well, no, let's see, what was I doing? I guess I became a general sales manager for the west side of the company. Anyway, then I was named a vice president, eventually vice president of domestic sales.

[02:56:42] SL: So early on in your career, you're talking about doing concerts for Baldwin. Now what was that about? I mean, what . . .

JT: That's still doin' those home organs with—where you're showing—your really purpose is to show the instrument favorably so people will want to own one.

SL: So they would—is this like you'd go to a music store . . .

JT: Uh-huh.

SL: . . . and demonstrate?

JT: Yes.

SL: And they—and the music store would announce that Baldwin Piano will be demonstrating or what?

JT: Or they announce it or put an ad in the paper that John Tolleson

district . . .

SL: Rockin' Johnny Tolleson. [*Laughs*]

JT: . . . district [*laughs*] sales manager or concert artist for Baldwin Piano and Organ Company will be presenting a concert at our store or at some other—wherever the location is and particulars, just like you'd advertise any upcoming event.

SL: Well, gosh, that kinda sounds like a solo music career in a way. I mean, you're still—you're back out on the road.

JT: Yeah.

SL: You're playing music in front of people.

JT That's a good point 'cause—and it was hard for Gail. She was sittin' there stuck with four little girls by that time and—while I was gone traveling so much. It was a hard time.

[02:58:09] SL: So how many years did you do that?

JT: Well, it depends on where you start, but if I started with—say the—I was still around home a lot when we were living in Chicago. When—we moved to Arizona in 1971, and I had Hawaii, Southern California, southern Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, and El Paso, Texas, all in my area of responsibility. It was a hard time for Gail because I was traveling constantly, and she was home with the kids. So when the ba—when the company decided to promote me in 1982, eleven years later, I

was ready.

SL: And Gail was, too.

JT: Yeah. And we weren't—I wasn't—I might still play the occasional organ concert while I was still with the company, but I wouldn't be out there constantly at it.

[02:59:14] SL: So maybe you were in a position where you were sending other musicians for those demos. Did they keep doing the demos and . . .

JT: Yeah. Sure. Yeah, I did those—I mean, had other people coming and doing them, too.

SL: So hard eleven years, but you stuck with the company, so it had to be a pretty good company to work for.

JT: It was. And then a little later than that, the whole industry began to change. The home organ business practically disappeared because those instruments are not easy to play. They make 'em look easy but—and then—there's nothing that is disreputable about it, but you wanna make them look easy because that's what . . .

SL: People want to buy.

JT: User friendly.

SL: Right.

JT: Yeah. You don't wanna have somebody say, "Gee, I could never

play this." And you don't wanna say, "No, you probably can't."

[*Laughter*] For one thing, they can, to an extent or another.

Some people master them much more than others, like anything else.

SL: Right.

[03:00:21] JT: So we—anyway, when we got back to Cincinnati, I was in a more overall basis toward the—when I first went back, I was in charge of western sales, and then I was given the sales responsibility for all of the wholesale sales in the United States and Canada.

SL: Man, that sounds like a headache to me.

JT: Yeah, but I wasn't travelin' that much. I didn't have to be at those places that often, so.

SL: So you know, raised in Greenwood, went to Fayetteville, but then you get out—you move to Cincinnati. Cincinnati's pretty big town.

JT: It is.

SL: So it's a different kind of setting than you were used to. It was—all of a sudden you were a major metro area, right?

JT: Yeah. Right.

SL: And that would be the same with Chicago.

JT: Yes.

SL: Even more so. And what was the place in Arizona?

JT: Phoenix.

SL: Phoenix. Phoenix is down south, way south in Arizona, right?

JT: No, it's more in the center.

SL: Oh, it's more in the center.

JT: Tucson is . . .

SL: Tu . . .

JT: . . . farther south.

SL: Okay, Tucson. Okay.

JT: Yes. Phoenix is a huge city. Huge. And it had grown that way when we moved there and is even more so now. I've not been there in several years. But Phoenix is quite the city.

[03:01:45] SL: Now it's by the mountains, right?

JT: Yeah, it's in the valley. They call it the valley of the sun, and it's—yeah, it's got some nice mountains you see at a distance.

SL: But it's a high desert, right, or it's a high . . .

JT: Not—high—the more high desert where people say that—Tucson is about 2,500 feet above sea level. Phoenix is about 1,200 feet above sea level, so that's . . .

SL: Ah, so that's more like Fayetteville.

JT: . . . so that's—so it's not very high. No, Phoenix is brutally hot. But man, it's nice in the wintertime. [*Laughter*]

SL: And then you had the West Coast.

JT: Yeah, but by that time, my responsibilities—I wasn't the district sales manager, so I wasn't there regularly in the West Coast.

But I got there now and then 'cause that's a heck of a market.

[03:02:38] SL: So eventually you become a vice president?

JT: Uh-huh.

SL: So what did you have to do once you became vice president?

JT: Well, we had a couple of divisional vice presidents, one for the East and one for the West. And then there was fifteen or eighteen district sales managers that reported to them. And so there was plenty to do. I supervised the divisional vice presidents, and we managed the inventory in the field and the people that were out in the field, the dealer organization, much like we had earlier, except I was not out there—having to be out there every week.

SL: Right.

JY: Myself.

[03:03:23] SL: So was the company—when did the company stop growing? When did it start to decline?

JT: I would say—well, first of all we had a big hiccup in an outfit—financial services company called Baldwin-United Corporation that kinda fell apart in about 1983.

SL: Oh.

JT: And that was a Chapter 11 bankruptcy. They finally got the company. It was sold out to the senior management, and that included me to a certain extent. And then the company went on well until the market itself began to struggle so much that pianos were—home organ sales were poor, piano business is poor. So that's not looking too favorable and—so the company really—when Gibson got it was about 1999 when it was floundering, and they bought the ah—they bought selected assets. They didn't buy the entire company. But they bought things they wanted. So it was not a great situation.

[03:04:35] SL: So you think that it was the advent of cheaper electronics, cheaper instruments, that maybe didn't hold up as long or as well or weren't meant to, weren't as well built?

JT: No, I don't think it was the quality of the instruments, I think all the companies out there that—that had been thinned out from earlier years when the Japanese began to really make tracks and inroads . . .

SL: Right.

JT: . . . this country. And you—companies like Yamaha and Kuwai and others became known and very visible. So I don't think there's a problem with the quality of the product. The quality

was—the problem was that shares of the—or I mean, the piano market was declining. So that's hard to compete with because you're, you know, you're fighting a situation where the sales are dropping off by x percent each year.

[03:05:39] SL: Right. Well, I didn't mean to imply that the Baldwin electronics were manufacturing was declining in quality. I just meant that all of a sudden the market was flooded with electronic keyboard instruments.

JT: Yeah, there was some of that, and that had mostly occurred by the time that Baldwin actually went out of business.

SL: Oh, okay.

JT: It wasn't—I don't think it was the competition that did it, I think it was the decline in the market and then—in general that was the worst factor. And people have written—[*coughs*] excuse me. Have written dissertations on what caused Baldwin to go upside down the way it did. It's criticized that the most recent—well, at that time. We're talkin' in the late 1990s. The management—our chairman retired, selected his own replacement. The replacement did not make it work, did not do well at all. And I think that was the beginning of the end for Baldwin. If I were to sa—put—pin blame in my own mind on somebody, I'd say the lady—it was a woman that was an ex Proctor and Gamble

employee with a great background. When they hired her, I thought, "Well, that sounds real good." 'Cause the concept was we were going to sell more consumer products like the—Karen Hendricks that came to Baldwin from the Dial Corporation was used to—and had spent twenty-something years with Proctor and Gamble, she was used to selling products like soaps and things that were small that you didn't advertise by ser—you didn't go by serial numbers, you went by . . .

SL: The color of the product or . . .

JT: Yeah. [*SL laughs*] And so she did that. I don't think it wo—it just didn't work. And the market—everything kept declining, and there we go.

[03:07:52] SL: So was it just Baldwin that was suffering from that kind of stuff or . . .

JT: No. A lot of other companies had already gone out of business. You know, even well-known ones like Hammond Organ.

SL: Right.

JT: They may have been floundering around some at that point but . . .

SL: Lowrey.

JT: But—Lowrey. Lowrey was probably the one that was still doin' as well as anybody at the time I retired. Conn organs.

Wurlitzer. Baldwin bought the Wurlitzer Company, and our management thought that that was a good thing to do, but in reality it wasn't because Wurlitzer was givin' us less of a product of quality than Baldwin did, and yet it wasn't able to grow market share, either. The—they had kept prices so bad to try to remain competitive that when we hired the—when we bought the company, we wanted to try to make it profitable again. It was very difficult because if we raised the prices a little bit, nobody bought anything 'cause they already had that image of selling these things at a really low price.

SL: For fairly cheap.

JT: Oh, well.

[03:09:02] SL: What about Hammond, now?

JT: I'm tryin' to remember when Hammond kind of vanished from the scene. But they were the home organ of note back in the 1930s to the 1950s.

SL: Well, I remember moving at least Hammond B-3s in my rock-and-roll bands.

JT: Yes.

SL: They were popular in . . .

JT: They were very popular.

SL: And also the Hammond Leslie units.

JT: Yep.

SL: I . . .

JT: Leslie speakers and—gosh, I remember Don Leslie, the man who own—built that company up. When nobody had that sound, the Leslie speaker had it.

SL: Yeah, the twirl.

JT: Twirl that way. Yeah.

SL: Twirling horn.

JT: There was a guy that—his name was Don Leslie. I met him on a few occasions.

[03:09:51] SL: Well, it seemed like every—back when I was playing, all the established rock-and-roll bands were moving Porta-Bs with the Leslie units.

JT: Yeah.

SL: It just elevated the soul side of the genre of music.

JT: Yeah.

SL: It just seemed like the mainstay and . . .

JT: They were good sounds. And they—but they didn't put us—they didn't put Baldwin under. It was, I think more than anything else, the management style of the brou—the woman that our chairman brought in. He said it was the worst mistake he ever made and . . .

SL: Yeah. But you kept with 'em until when?

JT: I retired in 1998 from Baldwin. We moved here earlier in 1998 because I knew I was gonna retire at the end of the year. My boss had come to me. He said, "I don't want you to take this the wrong way." I said, "Please continue." [*Laughs*] 'Cause I thought I knew where he might be going. He wanted to see if I wanted to retire. I didn't have to. I didn't get a cut in pay or anything, but I was ready to go. There comes a time when you . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: . . . when there's just enough—you've fought the battle long enough.

SL: Right.

JT: So I did go, and we came here, and at the end of [19]98 I retired and then in—couple of years later, I went to work for the university.

[03:11:28] SL: Yeah. Now you were in development, right?

JT: Yes.

SL: And that's where you and I crossed paths again.

JT: It is. After all these years of me seeing you occasionally at the Lunsford's house . . .

SL: Right.

JT: . . . when I'd go to visit Gail or something, you know.

SL: Right.

JT: But and I knew when I went to—when I was being interviewed and going to work there, Dave Gearhart said something about being in school with you during the—parochial school, right?

SL: Uh-huh.

JT: Yeah.

SL: Yeah, well, we went to Catholic kindergarten together.

JT: Okay.

SL: But then I was in his—I was his debate partner in high school.

JT: Okay.

SL: So yeah, we spent some time together.

[03:12:09] JT: Yeah. Well, he had that composite of that class over on one of his walls there. And I noticed the name. [*SL laughs*] But anyway, that—I don't know what you wanna talk about about that se—but that was an absolute triumph. That—going to work for the university when they embarked on that campaign. I had no idea it was gonna be so much fun or it'd be so rewarding.

SL: Me either.

JT: Golly. That was—Dave and John White both did a fantastic job.

SL: They did.

JT: And they just brought this place to life. I mean, you look at the beauty on this campus now, it's that campaign that did it.

SL: Well, for me, David pulled me out of media services and put me in university relations. And he and John had absolute faith in my decisions about how to do a show and what elements to use and what would work and what wouldn't work and lighting and design of the layout and all that stuff. It was really thrilling for me to see all that come to fruition and it be successful that they managed to raise a billion dollars.

JT: I know. A billion forty-six million. And in Arkansas.

SL: Yeah.

JT: That's amazing.

[03:13:33] SL: I remember when we first got started, I think the goal was maybe \$300 million. Something like—it was . . .

JT: It was too much, what it—right [*laughs*] . . .

SL: It was. And—or maybe it was \$500 million. And I remember some of the deans tellin' me, never happen.

JT: I know.

SL: Never get that . . .

JT: Right. Right.

SL: . . . much money.

JT: That's right.

SL: And then the Waltons pitched in the 330 or whatever it was. I forget.

JT: Yeah, \$300 million for the—at that—the huge gift, and they had already given \$50 million to get the name of the . . .

SL: Business school.

JT: . . . Walton College . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: . . . the business school.

SL: Yeah.

JT: It was just—but I have often, when I used to—when we were still doing it, I'd say, "Well, that means there was still \$700 million that was raised by people that aren't the Waltons."

SL: That's right.

[03:14:29] JT: Or the, you know—three hundred and—'cause that was \$330 million came—\$350 million came from the Waltons, which means \$700 million, roughly, didn't come from the Waltons. It's pretty astounding.

SL: It's very astounding. And still—I'm still very proud of everyone's effort on that. So you and I—so I came to you. You were going to—you were, of course, always tapped to play piano and sing.

JT: Yes.

SL: And you were going to be a part of one of my shows.

JT: It was the—what the heck is that. The Towers of Old Main event of nine—of 2001. And I was goin' to be going to work for the university, and maybe was already started. And that's right. That's when we went out to that recording studio, and I sang the alma mater.

SL: That's right.

JT: And I sang it at the banquet.

SL: Yes. Yes. That's right. That's right, and at that time, I met with you in your house up on Mount Sequoyah, and I think you gave me some records.

JT: Oh yeah.

SL: A few 45s. And I may still have those. I don't know if I ever got them back to you or not, but keep after me on that [*JT laughs*] because . . .

JT: Okay.

SL: . . . I have a feeling they might be in my drawer in my office.

JT: Okay.

SL: Because they're pretty prized. And I think they were pretty prized to you, too. I think you only had a few copies of whatever it was you gave me, so . . .

JT: All right. We'll . . .

SL: I may have given you back some of them.

JT: I will hunt you down.

[03:16:16] SL: You know where I live. [*Laughter*] But I was thrilled to learn that you were gonna be a part of that . . .

JT: Thank you.

SL: . . . and that I got to come visit with you and . . .

JT: Well, I was—this—we both were fortunate to be able to be a part of that effort. That was . . .

SL: Now I didn't do an interview with you back then, did I?

JT: No.

SL: I think it was just a casual conversation that . . .

JT: Yeah, you . . .

SL: . . . came over to talk about . . .

[03:16:42] JT: You were over at the house—I tell you what, you were over there—I think it's not related to the university. I think it was when we were—I'd written a little song for Ellen Smith's 100th birthday.

SL: Oh.

JT: And . . .

SL: That sounds right.

JT: And you came over to help me get it on some recording of it.

SL: I think that's right.

JT: 'Cause I wrote this little song for her, and she's a person of a lot

of longevity.

SL: Yeah.

JT: And [*SL laughs*] I think that's what it is.

SL: Boy. It's funny how all that stuff—when you look back all that stuff racks up the way it does.

JT: It is. It does.

SL: The way we come and go and faded in and out of each other's lives . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: . . . like that. [03:17:29] Well, so you retire from Baldwin, and you work—you come in and work for David Gearhart and John White. And so how long were you with development?

JT: Well, I started in March of 2001 and retired the—at the end of 2011. So it was . . .

SL: So another ten years.

JT: . . . about ten and a half years, something like that.

SL: Well, so you had fun with that.

JT: Oh yeah. I did. I did. Gail told me, though, when I retired at the end of 2011, 'cause I was still out, and I was spending a lot of my time on this Greek housing program . . .

SL: That's right.

JT: . . . the university has created, which is a great program. And

we'd gotten some good gifts and helped some of them with their renovations or new construction.

SL: Right.

JT: But then—what . . .

SL: Gail was saying something about that in 2011?

JT: Oh yeah. Oh, I n—yes. My—the reason I probably couldn't answer promptly right then, 'cause I lose my train of thought a little more easily than I used to 'cause I—about five or six years ago, I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease.

SL: Right.

[03:18:51] JT: And Parkinson's disease is not necessarily a cognitive thing, but I think it makes me have to think on things a little bit sometimes when I didn't always have to. So Gail told me when I was gonna retire at the end of 2011—she said, "You need to retire because there's something wrong with you." I said, "Well, what do you mean?" She said, "I don't know, but I know there's something wrong with you." And that's what it is or was, is.

SL: So she suspected a diagnosis before you were diagnosed.

JT: Yes.

SL: Wow. So well, it takes a lifelong partner to notice those kind of changes.

JT: Well, right, or . . .

SL: As subtle as it may have been.

JT: . . . notice 'em sooner. And I get around pretty well, but you know, I—if I sit too long, that's when I sometimes need my cane, and when I wanna get around under normal circumstances it's—I'm a little slower and a little less—certainly a little less sure footed. My balance is my biggest issue. I've got a tremor which'll probably be showing on this recording, but I can't do much about that.

[03:20:02] SL: Nah, you're doing fine. So yeah, I—we talked about talking about Parkinson's.

JT: Yes.

SL: So when did you become aware that something was different with you?

JT: I think probably about—a little later than Gail said, but probably in 2012 or 2013.

SL: And . . .

JT: I was about to become president of the Rotary Club here in Fayetteville. I be—I was a Rotarian. And I noticed that I had trouble in—my balance, again, was the main thing. If I stood around too long I—you know, it was hard to get up straight and stand tall without limping or hobbling. So . . .

SL: So balance was the first thing that . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: . . . that you noticed.

JT: Yeah.

SL: And you've mentioned the trembling.

JT: Yeah.

SL: And this is mostly with your hands? It's . . .

JT: Yeah, my left hand.

SL: Your left hand.

JT: Yes.

[03:21:12] SL: And so does it progress beyond that? Will it affect your other hand, or will it—or have more impact on your balance as it grows? Does it grow? Does Parkinson's grow?

JT: I'm not the best guy to ask 'cause I'm—it's a funny philosophy, but I don't read a lot—you know, I know there are people that read everything they can get their hands on on Parkinson's. And my neurologist who I see once a year, and I take some medication, you know. I try to take my medicine when I'm supposed to. I probably don't read as much about Parkinson's as I could. It does progress, though, and I think it'll probably do that somewhat with me, but I've—I exercise a lot. Exercise is—most people consider the biggest assist to help you do well. I work out four mornings a week over at the HPER building, and

then I will go to—I've got this boxing class.

SL: Boxing.

JT: [*Laughs*] Two days a week. Yeah, we don't hit each other, but we hit the big bags, and we work on [*SL laughs*] our—not only our boxing technique, but we do that for strength. It's a pretty strenuous workout. And but and then I do that. So I do that two days. And then there's this evening I'll go to a boxing thing over at the HealthSouth Rehabilitation Center.

SL: Yeah.

[03:22:41] JT: And so I stay pretty busy workin' out. And that helps.

SL: Well, just looking at you, you look very fit.

JT: Well, I am.

SL: You know.

JT: I am fit, I think. I . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: And I try to work hard at staying that way. And if your strength is good, it helps you in every way, I think.

SL: Right.

JT: So whether it'll progress some, I guess it will, but I'm gonna kind of try to . . .

SL: Stay ahead of it.

JT: . . . hold it back as best I can.

SL: Yeah. Well, and I will say, I think there is some kind of breakthrough stuff with treatment now on this.

JT: There may be. There's . . .

SL: It's kinda severe.

JT: There's the one thing where they drill the little holes in your head.

SL: Yes.

JT: Yeah.

SL: Yeah, I've read . . .

JT: And . . .

SL: . . . some—I've heard something about that.

JT: Yeah. I'd have to have a little more encouragement from my doctor before I'd want—much wanna do that, I think. I'm not saying I wouldn't do it, but if I thought it was gonna help on a more permanent basis be . . .

[03:23:45] SL: Yeah, I mean, I think some of the results are it's gone. But so they drill a little hole, and do they put something in your brain?

JT: Yeah, I guess they do. They must put a little battery on you somewhere 'cause there're little wires into your brain, maybe. You know, that's the idea, it dampens something or creates

something that . . .

SL: Causes some kind of bridge to . . .

JT: . . . causes you to—causes your—causes that disconnect to go away for a while. But I think it comes back, too, after a while.

SL: Oh, it does?

JT: Yeah, and when it comes back, I think it tends to be a little . . .

SL: With a vengeance?

JT: Yeah, a little more so. But I am the worst person to be talkin' to, probably [*laughter*], about—I'll say about my exercise program. I do it diligently, and I believe in it, but I don't worry too much about some of the other things that may be going on. 'Cause I think that if a good cure that comes along, they're gonna have a lot of people pushing for it, and I'll hear of it.

SL: That's right. And you will have kept yourself in shape.

JT: Yeah.

SL: To face that if it's really viable. I think—I do think that you're doing an excellent job.

JT: Well.

SL: Of managing that.

[03:24:58] JT: I appreciate your inviting me in to do this recording.

Gosh, I never expected such a thing and—but sometimes if I have a pause between words, you may know why.

SL: Oh, well, listen, my memory's not what it used to be, either. I mean, I'm constantly having . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: . . . asking the folks that I work with here, "Now, what was it we were talking about?" or "What is it I'm doing?" [*Laughs*] Or you know, it's just—I think I—over age—I don't know, maybe your focus becomes somewhere else or what, but I, too, have some memory loss that . . .

JT: Yeah, I think we all do some by memory, but I'm a lot older than you, Scott.

SL: Well, yeah. I'm sixty-five.

JT: Yeah, well I'm eighty. So.

SL: Yeah. Yeah. I would be a miracle if I'm in as good of shape as you are [*laughter*] at eighty.

JT: Well, gosh, I appreciate that.

SL: Well, listen, why don't we take a break now, and then we'll come back and talk about your kids.

[Recording stopped]

[03:26:04] SL: Here we are, John. I—this is our—what, our fifth hour. You've spent all day and survived here at the Pryor Center. [*JT laughs*] Your better half has survived here at the Pryor Center, so this is gonna be our victory lap here. I think we

can wind this up here in this next hour. And this is when I like to turn toward family. Your family, your children, your grandchildren, anyone that you want to talk about. I'll try and direct you to each name as I know them.

JT: Okay.

SL: And also, it's a time when if there's anything else that you want to say at all—I mean, and of course if you think of something that we didn't cover that we should've covered, why, this is the time to kind of bring that up, and it's okay to have pregnant pauses here to think about all the stuff we've talked about.

[03:27:15] So having said that, I think we should start talking about your kids and maybe some other things will come up in the process, and that's totally fine. We're—there are no restrictions here. So your firstborn was Jennifer, is that right?

JT: Yes.

SL: And she was born in Fayetteville?

JT: Correct.

SL: And y'all were living—where were y'all living at that time?

JT: At the time Jennifer was born, we were living in a rock house that was on North College. It is still there. It's just north of North—you know where North Street and . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: . . . College Avenue converge where the old hospital is.

SL: Across the street from you.

JT: Well, she was born—that's where she was actually born, but we were living right east on College and go left on college and then look to your right. It's right by—there's a restaurant and kind of a motel . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: . . . lookin' thing. Well, there's a rock house . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: And that was a duplex, and we were in one half of that.

[03:28:21] SL: So, like all young families . . .

JT: Yes.

SL: . . . you weren't living—most all young families, you weren't living in a big house, but you were just tryin' to get by, tryin' to start your lives together and your family together, and so you were in kind of a duplex half house . . .

JT: Right. We were . . .

SL: . . . at the time of birth.

JT: We were doing those things. We didn't have a—we didn't own a home yet.

SL: I think when we started out, I think our rent was \$85 a month.

JT: That's remarkable, isn't it?

SL: It is.

JT: Our—I don't remember what our rate—our rent was at any of the places we rented 'cause there were only a couple, but our house payment on our first house was [*laughs*] \$89 a month.

SL: Yeah.

JT: Bout like yours.

SL: Yeah.

JT: Rental.

SL: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Yeah, we—yeah, ended up buying one from my parents so . . .

JT: Oh, okay.

SL: . . . very similar rate. Anyway. So Jennifer. And she's healthy and well and has her own family now?

JT: She is. She's healthy, and she lives in Chicago. And she has a little girl who's nine, I guess. I should've checked with Gail on these ages.

SL: That's all right.

[03:29:47] JT: I'll probably foul these [*laughs*] . . .

SL: That's all right.

JT: But she came from China.

SL: Oh.

JT: So Jennifer—she's been in our family since she was a tiny baby,

though, so she— I think she's eight at this present time.

SL: And what is her name?

JT: Jennifer.

SL: Her—the child's name is Jennifer. I mean, the . . .

JT: Yes.

SL: The Chinese . . .

JT: Oh, the Chin—oh, yeah, of course. Clare. *C-L-A* . . .

SL: Clare.

JT: . . . *R-E*. Yeah.

[03:30:18] SL: And she's doing well?

JT: She—oh, she's doing great. I don't want to sound like I'm . . .

SL: It's okay.

JT: . . . giving it too much, [*SL laughs*] but she's really a smart kid, you know, and just does great in school. Plays the violin, and I'd like to claim it's a family inheritance, but I can't quite do it since she came from China but . . .

SL: That's a difficult instrument.

JT: Yeah, it is difficult instrument. Although it's funny. My mother played the violin. I forgot to mention that when we . . .

SL: Oh. Okay.

JT: . . . talked earlier. Yeah. So it's doubly great to have Clare in the family playing the violin. She is doing well at it for a little

one. They got a little bitty violin.

SL: So, gosh, we—now we have to go back to your mom just for a minute. The violin she played, was it—what kind of music did she play?

JT: She played hymns, and she played the things that I—we talked about this morning on our old upright piano, you know, "Get out your old grey bonnet" . . .

SL: Yeah, yeah.

JT: . . . "with the blue ribbon on it."

SL: The popular tunes.

[03:31:27] JT: "Put on your old grey bonnet." I—so all those kind of the same things. The thing that's—my mother's violin had. She—well, she had a violin that she bought at the store, but growing up I paid very little attention to things that were sitting around in the house. But some—one day I was out in this building where I had some antique cars and stuff.

SL: Yeah.

JT: My dad would throw it back when—in Greenwood. And he had—I opened this old trunk, and there was a violin in it, a homemade violin. And it was—my mother said, "Oh, that's my dad's old fiddle." My granddad was a fiddler and this things got—the tuning pegs are homemade. You can tell they're whittled out.

SL: Right.

JT: And everything and the part where the . . .

SL: The bridge.

JT: . . . the tail—the bridge—well, behind the bridge where the tail piece goes, it's a piece of baling wire bent [*SL laughs*], and this stob in the bottom of this thing. And then it goes up, and it had rattlesnake rattles inside like the old-time fiddlers . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: . . . used to do. So much of—I'm not talkin' about Clare much, but the violin element ties together, I guess. But Clare is doin' well here in America.

[03:32:52] SL: Well, and they're in Chicago.

JT: Yes.

SL: And so that's kind of a cold place in the winter.

JT: It is. But Jennifer has always loved Chicago. And she got her master's there at Loyola of Chicago. She got her bachelor's at Arizona State, and after her bachelor's then she got her master's at Loyola and then got to her Ph.D. at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts.

SL: Those are all good schools.

JT: Yeah. And she's a clinical social worker and has a practice and a therapist.

[03:33:33] SL: So is there anyone else in her household? Is there—  
does she have any other . . .

JT: She has a partner named bre—who's a professor at University of  
Vermont. 'Cause je—they lived in—she—it—what's the name—  
the main city in Vermont. The beautiful city of XYZ. From what  
I told you, every once in a while, I can't pull something up.

SL: I can't think of it either, is it . . .

JT: But . . .

SL: It's where the canoes are made, isn't it?

JT: I don't know. [*SL laughs*] It's . . .

SL: Okay.

JT: I'll probably think of it in . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: . . . later, but the—they moved because Jennifer wanted to  
rebuild her therapy practice in Chicago 'cause she had another  
job. She was being dean of a clinical—school for clinical social  
work. It's a Ph.D. program there. That's what led them there,  
but she and Brenda—Brenda's gonna retire one of these days,  
and so they went ahead and moved to Chicago, and Brenda has  
to travel back and forth to Vermont.

[03:34:34] SL: But eventually . . .

JT: Yeah.

SL: . . . they'll all be in Chicago . . .

JT: Right. Yes.

SL: . . . all the time. Unless, of course, the grandparents can convince 'em to move to Fayetteville.

JT: Yeah, that's unlikely, I think. I think—you never know. But that'd be great.

SL: Well, tell Jennifer she can run her business from her home.

[03:34:53] JT: Yeah, she [*SL laughs*] could. Yeah.

SL: Okay, so now, and then your next daughter was . . .

JT: The next daughter was one of twins, and Leslie is seven minutes older, so I guess I'll proceed with her but . . .

SL: Okay.

JT: Leslie has a son named Harrison—named for our side of the family 'cause that's my middle name and my mother's maiden name.

SL: Right.

JT: And Leslie graduated from ma—Oxford—I mean, Miami University of Ohio, which is in Oxford, Ohio. And she is fortunately able to be a stay-at-home mom. And she worked for quite a few years for the big department store in—gah. I'll think of that, too. And but she and Randy, her husband, he is with Burlington Coat Factory. And has a job, good job with them.

And—oh, and they adopted a little boy from—where was it Halie Selassie's from? Ethiopia.

SL: Wow.

JT: And he's about eight years old, from Ethiopia. His name's Tagesse, *G-A—T-A-G-E-S-S-E*. Everyone calls him Tag. [*SL laughs*] And he kinda likes Tag, I think.

SL: Yeah.

JT: 'Cause he does—he's very much Americanized and seems like he likes that, so . . .

SL: They're doing well.

JT: They're do . . .

SL: He does well in school . . .

JT: Yeah. Yeah, he's doing well in school.

SL: That's so beautiful that you've got a couple of daughters that adopted kids.

[03:36:38] JT: Yeah, and let's see. So that takes care of, let's see, Clare and Tagesse and Harrison.

SL: And then the other twin.

JT: And then Julie has no children. She—Julie is also a lesbian, and she has a partner, Pam, and they are—they're just terrific, but I don't anticipate they will adopt or have children. Julie just recently went through an—what some people kinda cringe when

they hear it. But she's a—she had a bad bicycle accident in 1998.

SL: Wow.

JT: And took her a long time to recoup, and she never did really recoup. They did four more—four surgeries.

SL: Oh my gosh.

JT: And she still was pain—not pain free, and finally—once she said, "I think I'm gonna consider amputation." And that sounded so far out I couldn't believe it. But as we've learned a little more about it, it's a viable option. Anyway, about six months ago, she had one of her legs amputated to just below the knee. And she's—it's been a big success. She's had very little phantom pain, and she hikes and does things she wasn't able to do with that . . .

SL: Prosthetic.

JT: . . . foot the way it was before. [03:38:02] So I gotta say it looks like she made the right decision. Still makes me kinda hurt to see it . . .

SL: Yeah.

JT: . . . or think about it, but her . . .

SL: So the pain must have been . . .

JT: . . . leg's doing well.

SL: . . . really bad.

JT: Yeah. Must've been. But she's doin' well and—she and Pam.

[03:38:18] And then our daughter Susannah in Libertyville, Illinois—Suz lives up where—it's on—it's sort of off on the north shore back a little bit northwest, but mostly north, of Chicago.

SL: And she has how many kids?

JT: She has three.

SL: Three kids.

JT: Yes.

SL: Now I know Rory is one name I've heard.

JT: Rory. *R-O-R-Y*, yeah. She is a twin. Rory and David are twins. They're about eight years old. I'm—boy I'm—on the ages, I may be off a year or so, but [*SL laughs*] or maybe they're nine years old now. But David, Rory, and the oldest of the grandchildren in that family of Susannah and Doug is Spencer.

SL: Spencer.

JT: Yeah.

SL: That's a great name.

JT: Yeah. It is a good name. So that's the six grandkids.

SL: And what—tell me a little bit about Spencer.

JT: Spencer is a couple years older than the twins, so I think she is probably about eleven. And she is pretty involved, and she likes

to sing and kinda perform.

SL: Oh [*JT laughs*] no. [*Laughs*] She's got the Tolleson curse, then.

JT: She—I probably so. But she does a good job at that, and she's—  
anyway. They live in Libertyville, which is a suburb of Chicago  
and—to the north.

SL: So they're close.

JT: Yeah.

SL: To the other daughter.

JT: Yes.

SL: Well, that's good news.

JT: Yeah.

[03:39:52] SL: Well, my gosh, John, what a great day we've had, I  
think.

JT: Well, thank you, Scott, for . . .

SL: I think that . . .

JT: . . . doin' this. This . . .

SL: Well . . .

JT: . . . I think this is—I'm a lucky guy to have you do this . . .

SL: Well . . .

JT: . . . recording.

SL: . . . believe me, the honor is mine to sit across from you. I—you  
have been an icon in my life, really for as—from that moment—

well, actually before I saw you perform. Even in the neighborhood. [JT laughs] Just the families, you know. But when I saw you perform that day at Fayetteville High School, and it was just you and me and Gary in that cafeteria. There was no one else. I think maybe the door where you had just moved in from was still open, but it was a stunning, stunning moment in my life. And so I've been wantin' to do this interview with you for a long, long time.

[03:40:48] JT: Well, I appreciate that. It was great to see you. You know, your family and Gail's family just got so, so many wonderful occasions together and have been friends for so long.

SL: I know.

JT: Your parents and Gail's parents, Barbara and David and Gary and your brother David, everyone.

SL: Her parents and brother were wonderful to me, and I have many, many fond memories of that house. Those were back in the days when nobody locked their doors, and they left the keys in the car.

JT: That's right, and you had your own set of supplies over at the Cooper house, right?

SL: That's right. [Laughter] That's right. My own blocks.

JT: Yeah.

SL: Yeah. It was wonderful. I remember playing with those on the living room floor in the front room. So yeah. It's a wonderful life in Fayetteville, and it's so great to be sittin' across from you to get this stuff. It's down memory lane for me, too.

JT: Well, certainly for me.

SL: Okay, well, listen, thank you.

JT: Thank you, David.

SL: All right. All right.

JT: Scott.

SL: Scott. *[JT laughs]* That's okay. *[Laughs]*

[Recording stopped]

[03:41:58] SL: John Tolleson. It's good to see you again. This is our second gathering.

JT: It's good to see you, Scott.

SL: *[Laughs]* Well, you gave us some great stories last time, and you know, toward the end of the interview, I usually got back to family, your family, your and Gail's family. And today is November 20, 2018. So I really can't remember how long ago we were together earlier, but it's been maybe a month or so since we talked.

JT: It think it's been a little longer even than that.

SL: Really?

JT: Mh-hmm.

SL: I'm the worst on time [*laughter*] and dates and all that. And names, too. But in the first part of our interview, we were going through your children and—let's see, I think we got Jennifer, Leslie, and Julie pretty much covered. But then we ended up not getting to Susannah. And I think if we can just start with Susannah, we can kinda finish up with your children and your grandchildren.

JT: Sure.

SL: And who they are and where they are and how they're doing. So tell me about Susannah. And she has a husband named Doug as well. Is that right?

JT: That's right. Doug Shreiber.

SL: Shreiber, that's right.

JT: *S-H-R-E-I-B-E-R*. And . . .

SL: Okay.

[03:43:29] JT: . . . Susannah and Doug have been married I guess around ten years. Oh yeah, longer than that because their oldest child is I think maybe ten or eleven now, and then they have twins, a boy and a girl. And they are probably eight. And when we got a lot of grandkids, it's hard to remember the ages.

SL: Oh, gosh.

JT: I can hardly . . .

SL: I can't do it.

JT: . . . remember the names, but anyway, Spencer Shreiber is the oldest daughter, and then David is the middle—well, he's the older of the two twins, and David is—he's, I think, eight. And his twin sister, Rory, *R-O-R-Y*, would be the same age. And they're a great group. So I'm glad we didn't permanently leave them out of this conversation.

SL: Well, it—now is Rory a family name?

JT: No, it's not. It's a name in—I don't know where **Suz** got that because there was a movie star named Rory Calhoun when I was young. And he was a western movie actor. And but Rory Shreiber's name is not for Rory Calhoun. It's—I don't know whether she even was aware of that at the time. Maybe she was and just liked the sound of the name.

SL: It is a good name. In fact, your kids and their grand—and your grandkids all have great names, I think.

JT: Yeah, I think they do, too.

[03:44:59] SL: Yeah. Yeah. So now where are—where do Susannah and Doug live?

JT: Oh, well, they live in Libertyville, Illinois, which is a Chicago suburb. It's north of—close to the lake but a little bit west of

Lake Michigan. So that's where Doug was raised. It's his hometown, and they both graduated from the University of Kentucky, but they found their way back to Chicago.

[03:45:34] SL: And what do they do in Chicago?

JT: Well, **Suz**, fortunately, doesn't have to work, and that's great 'cause with three little kids, she can be home with 'em a lot. And Doug is with one of the pharmaceutical companies, and he's changed two or—a couple of times. People seem to do that in that occupation some, so I can't remember the name of the company he's with now, but it's a name that we would know, I think, if I may—if I remembered it.

SL: Well, now is there anything else that we should talk about? I mean, are there any more kids or grandkids we should talk about?

JT: No more kids.

SL: I think we got 'em all.

JT: I think we did, too.

[03:46:14] SL: So, well, I think that they will all love this interview and hearing from their dad and their granddad and the stories that you've told. Is there anything else that you want to talk about? What about—I'm sure we talked a little bit about Gail, but Gail's like one of the greatest persons on the planet as far as

I'm concerned.

JT: Well, you would know. You grew up across the street from her.

SL: I did. [*JT laughs*] I did. Yeah. I used to hang with her and Barbara and all of her girlfriends and . . .

JT: Oh, I . . .

SL: So.

JT: And Gail and Barbara, I hear the stories that they tell about raking out the trails on Mount Sequoyah, and they had these imaginary horses when they were kids that they rode around on.

[*Laughs*]

SL: It was a great neighborhood.

JT: Yeah, it was.

[03:47:05] SL: It was really good. Well, is there anything else that you'd like to say or talk about that I've kind of missed or . . .

JT: Well . . .

SL: . . . not got us through? I think we were pretty good.

JT: Well, I appreciate the opportunity to be interviewed for this august organization, and I mean that. I'm not being sarcastic. The—and the I think you covered so much when we were together at the beginning that I don't wanna prolong it.

[End of interview 03:47:54]

[Transcribed by edited by Pryor Center staff]