

**Interview with Buford Brodbeck**  
**December 8, 2009**  
**Conducted in the Brodbeck home, Kinsley, Kansas**  
**Interviewers: Joan Weaver and Rosetta Graff**  
**Also present: Vera Brodbeck, spouse**

December 8, 2009, and we're in his home on Massachusetts Street in Kinsley, Kansas.

Joan: What is your full name?

Buford: Buford Leland Brodbeck.

Joan: Where do you currently reside?

Buford: 500 Massachusetts in Kinsley, Kansas. I was born in Kinsley, Kansas, on May 11, 1925. My parents were Ben and Ruth Brodbeck, and mother's maiden name was Kearns. My grandparents were Ira and Ella Kerns and Charles and Ella Brodbeck.

Joan: How many people were in your family? Did you have brothers and sisters?

Buford: I had three brothers and one sister. My sister was Bernice. My older brother was Melvin and the twins were Earnest and Ermil. I was the youngest.

Joan: Do you know what your parents or grandparents to Kinsley? Why did they come to this area?

Buford: My Brodbeck grandparents come out from around Illinois to this area and went into farming. Then of course, he eventually went into the carnival business. My grandparents Kearns, he was working for the railroad drilling wells along every so often to get water for the engines. He had drilled one here and he just liked it and stayed here.

Joan: Did he ever tell you any stories about building the railroad?

Buford: He never really did build on it, he just drilled the wells.

Joan: So when he stayed here, did he keep drilling wells?

Buford: No, he kind of went into... he lived on the north end of town. He had some horses and cows and milked them and had a great big garden. He rented himself and his horses to the city. They had a grader that he'd pull and grade the streets. That was his main occupation.

Joan: He didn't have a livery stable or anything?

Buford: No, just his own stuff.

Joan: Do you remember anything about your childhood that stands out?

Buford: Well, we always stayed with my grandparent Kearns when the folks went out on the carnival. They'd go out in the spring and stay out late. We stayed with them. I remember having to help in the big garden he had. He had a great big patch of rhubarb we had to keep weeded and tend to that, and cleaning out the barn and helping milk cows. The main thing I hated worse than anything, they had an outside privy, and I didn't like that. But on the other side, I started out helping my mother and another lady run a cook house, which was for meals, hot dogs and hamburgers and stuff. My job was to carry the water in two gallon cans. When I was too little I'd carry them to the cook house to have water for there. I finally got graduated out of that and I started helping my sister run the penny pitch, and then helped my brother run the bingo. I finally got graduated to running the little car ride and eventually got up to the big rides. I got to where I could run any of them.

Joan: The cookhouse was with the carnival?

Buford: Yes, they served regular meals every noon and evening. There were a lot of places we were at, the carnival set up at the fairgrounds, it was easier to eat there. It was amazing, the food. I can always remember, the people from town would come out there and eat with us because they liked the good food. Ten cents a hamburger and 25 cents a meal.

Joan: When did the carnival start then?

Buford: Oh, it was in the early 1900's, 1901 or some time in there. My granddad Brodbeck, there was four or five of them in the family, my dad and a couple uncles and he'd take them all to Hutchinson for an outing at Carrey Park there. Carrey Park was a merry-go-round set up. Grandpa would go, "I looked at that and people were paying a nickel a pop to ride that thing. That looked better than farming." So he sold some of his ground and traded for the merry-go-round, and that's how he got started. They hauled it on a team of horses and hauled it around until they finally started doing it by rail a little bit, then trucks.

Joan: How old was your dad when he made that decision about... Was he a boy still?

Buford: Well, he was a young man. He and my mother were married then.

Joan: So from the time you were born, your family was always...

Buford: Yes, it was just like, when I was a kid it was just like going to a carnival every day. I could ride all the rides when I wasn't working and till I got old enough and had to work. I had to help earn a living.

Joan: Did you go out starting in the spring? Or all summer? Or...

Buford: We'd normally start about the middle of April and stay until maybe the middle of October. There was always somebody having a little celebration or something.

Joan: Was it mainly in western Kansas? I know you were at the state fair some.

Buford: Mostly western Kansas with a few in Colorado and Oklahoma. Quite a few in Oklahoma and a few in Texas in the Panhandle.

Joan: Are there any special memories of the carnival that you'd like to get on the tape?

Buford: There were so many I can't remember all of them. One time I do remember, we were playing Peabody, Kansas. We were sitting in this park there, and the next morning we got up and there was about three foot of water on the carnival ground. They'd had a flash flood up there. When it went down, my dad went and bought a bunch of hay and strung dry straw all over the lot so people would come. People stomped that darned stuff and mud. Oh there's a lot of memories. A lot of good ones. I met a lot of people. We were treated real nice. Carnivals, some of them had a bad reputation, but they always called us what they called a "Sunday School" carnival because we didn't have a bunch of gambling and girlie shows and things like that. People back then that was one thing for entertainment. We'd play there one year and they'd say, "Well, you're coming back next year?" And we'd have to promise them, and we did. We played a lot of places every year.

Joan: Were your workers mainly from Kinsley?

Buford: We had a few.

Joan: Was it mainly family then?

Buford: Well, with all the brothers we had it pretty good. My one uncle went with us some too. One of my aunts went along to sell tickets too. Yes, it was pretty well family.

Joan: In the winter time then, what did you do?

Buford: Well, most of the time we spent all winter repairing and painting things again. Everything had to be repaired and painted before it went out. It took a lot of time.

Joan: What kind of rides did you have?

Buford: Well, we had the merry-go-round, the Ferris wheel, tilt-o-whirl, the Spitfire and the swings.

Joan: What was the Spitfire?

Buford: Well, it was a new ride. My brother and I, after we got out of the service, we'd been wanting to add another ride. It was a plane ride. You don't see it around. You could turn the wings on it and it would flip around. We bought that, and then we had a couple little kiddy rides, car rides and things like that. We always had ten or fifteen concessions, bingo and penny pitch, shooting gallery and things like that, ring toss.

Joan: I guess while we're on the carnival, though it's sort of going ahead, what happened to the carnival during the war years? Did they still go out or was it changed?

Buford: Yes, they went right on running. My dad died at an early age in 1945. My mother and her two brothers took it out and kept it on there because it was a good business. They made more danged money them war years because people wanted something to do you know, to relax. Everybody was working and making money.

Joan: Was there still enough family to run it? Or did they have to find somebody else?

Buford: Well, they had to have some help. But that was one of the biggest problems. There was guys, you know, that were too old to go into the service. I think the draft took them up to 35 or something, but it was tough sledding.

Joan: Did the rationing or anything affect it?

Buford: Yes, it did. Even before I went into the service, we had a lot of problems. You couldn't get tires, that was the worst thing. You had to go to the OPA board, and they would give you a permit. Then if you could find somebody that would sell a tire, then you were alright. They didn't have any tires to sell. And gas. You had coupons.

Joan: Did you get more gas coupons because it was a business?

Buford: They did give us quite a bit of gas because we were entertaining the people to keep the morale up. Which I was surprised they did that to us, but they did.

Joan: Well, it was important. Well, was there any other way the war affected the carnival?

Buford: No, I don't believe so. It was hard sometimes to buy some paint and get something to repair with because everything was going to the military. But we managed.

Joan: At that time, were you using the railroad, or were you hauling on trucks?

Buford: No, we were using trucks.

Joan: Can you think of anything else in that area?

Rosetta: Did the rationing of sugar affect you?

Buford: Well, yes, everybody it did that. You just couldn't get and sugar.

Rosetta: For like the sno-cones and all that stuff.

Buford: Well yes, they had to scrounge around and make something to make syrup for the sno-cones. But I would say gas. And well, I never did drink coffee, but everybody that drank coffee. It was hard to get a drink of coffee sometimes. The one I really remember most, was that I never smoked cigarettes, but at one time Lucky Strikes cigarettes had a green package. All of a sudden they come out with white ones. They said Lucky Strikes green has gone to war. Evidently the dye they were using was helped make ammunition. So they sold more yellow Lucky Strikes than before.

Joan: That's interesting, it would be fun to look up and see what the green was. Well, let's go back a little bit then. What do you remember about the Depression and the Dust Bowl? The carnival was going out then...

Buford: Yes, they did. It was kind of tough, but I don't remember our family ever wanting for anything. We always had money. Dad could always give us a dime every time we wanted to go to the movie. We really weren't that bad. Sometimes, I think we were better off than a lot of them.

Joan: You ran the penny toss then. And people still patronized the thing. Did people still find pennies to toss then?

Buford: It didn't cost much to ride a ride, 10 cents you know. Sno-cone was a nickel and popcorn was a dime or a nickel a bag. But I can remember the dust storms worse than anything.

Joan: Tell us about those.

Buford: When they'd roll in, it would just get dark. I had a cousin that lived out in **Manter**, Kansas. She got dust pneumonia real bad and my dad and mother went out and got her and brought her back here to live for a while. I thought, holy hell, it's worse out there than here! When you got hit, you just get in the house and tried to keep from choking to death. You'd put sheets up in the windows to try to keep it out. Wet them a little, and the next day they'd be just as black as you could see.

Joan: Were you ever out with the carnival when there was a dust storm?

Buford: I don't remember any out there.

Joan: That wouldn't have been good!

Buford: No! The worst thing I ever remember on the carnival, was one year the grasshoppers.... We were playing Guymon, Oklahoma. I wasn't very big, and my dad had me up on the platforms at the merry-go-round sweeping the dead grasshoppers off the steps 'cause if you'd step on them and they'd be slick! No, I got to thinking about it one time even after I was in the cleaning shop after I first bought it. We had a dust storm come up in here. I don't know if you remember that much about it, it must have been about 1950 or '51. No, you wouldn't, you weren't here (*in Kansas*). I thought, holy Toledo, is this going to start over again? But it didn't last long. Well, according to some of the stuff I remember reading now, the dust storm moved clear across out to Washington D.C. And that's when they started passing resolutions to get these shelter belts in and change the farming and everything.

Joan: It's amazing. I've read too about how Washington and New York City couldn't believe it could get that far. So, even with your other grandfather's garden and everything, you don't think there were any hardships for your family? Particularly during the Depression?

Buford: No, I really don't remember.

Joan: We have found that Kinsley in general was sort of protected because of all the farming.

Buford: Well, yes, a little bit. I mean they could raise maybe 15 bushel wheat and think that was pretty good sometime. But things didn't cost that much either.

Joan: So you graduated from high school in what year?

Buford: '43.

Joan: So, how did you meet Vera? She went to school down south in a rural school until she was a freshman. She come up here and we kind of fell in love right quick, I guess. We got married.

Joan: So you met her in high school. We had your marriage as in '42. Was your marriage...

Buford: Yes, we got married before we got out of high school.

Joan: So tell us about that!

Buford: Well, things were...you know the war. Pearl Harbor was bombed in '41, and all of us guys knew we were going to go to service. You were guaranteed you went unless you had some deferment. Vera and I decided we were just going to get married. I didn't know if I would come back or not, so we got married. Some of them people in town said it would never last, but we've lasted for 67 years now.

Rosetta: Why did you get married in Hays?

Buford: That was kind of funny. My folks were up there at a celebration running the carnival and they wanted us to come up there. So dad and mom and we went to the justice of the peace and her folks, and that's the reason we did that.

Joan: So your parents could attend the wedding, you got married up there. Did you have a honeymoon?

Buford: Hell, no. We spent our first night on the farm at Vera's folks. Then we finally got us a nice little apartment in town. All the kids after school would always have to come over and chat with us. They thought we was, "Oh that's great, they're married; they're independent." It was tough going there for awhile.

Joan: Were you the only kids that did that?

Buford: Oh no, there were quite a few different ones.

Joan: Then you graduated the next year and turned 18.

Buford: Yes. I got my high school diploma and the next day I got my draft notice. I was 1A then. That didn't take long. It was August when I went in.

Joan: But you enlisted, right?

Buford: No, I was drafted. We had kids, in fact, I'll never forget, I just thought of it yesterday. I had two good friends and we were driving around that Sunday morning, in this old '38 Ford. I had the radio on, and they interrupted and said Pearl Harbor had been bombed. Boy, right quick, all three of use were going to go enlist. We were still 15 or 16. You had to have your parents' permission. We all went home and the next day we all said we had to stay in school. They wouldn't let us. But we had a few kids, of course when some of them turned 18 before they graduated, and they sometimes just quit and went on in. They were having trouble in school, you know. There were a few of them went in when they were 16 that I know of, but it was kind of a funny deal. I went in to Fort Leavenworth, and the first night there. They put me in charge of the group that went on the train. I had a couple of kids from Lewis that had never been out of the county. Can you imagine that? They cried the whole first night they was in the service. I didn't know what to do for them.

Joan: That's different from you, who had been all over.

Buford: Well, yes. I had kind of traveled around and been on my own a lot.

Joan: Was the train crowded? Was it full of service men?

Buford: Oh, I can't remember.

Joan: Was there any kind of a send off for you?

Buford: No, maybe one of the draft board would stand out there and wave at you.

Joan: Did your parents do anything special when or before you left?

Buford: Well, yes. They had a farewell and all that stuff.

Joan: You got on the train here.

Buford: Yes. They already had three sons in there, so it wasn't nothing new for them.

Joan: Tell us a little bit about your brothers. Did they go into the army?

Buford: My older brother was in the army. He was in the field artillery.

Joan: His name was?

Buford: Melbourne. And the twins, **Earnest** and **Ernel** both were in the Navy, but they split them up. They wouldn't let them serve together.

Joan: Did they go in right after Pearl Harbor?

Buford: Yes, most of them. We were all drafted then. Biggest share of everybody was drafted. You knew it was going to happen, but we were all gung-ho you know. Get in there and we were all going to kill all the God damned Japs. It was stunning to hear that on the radio though.

Joan: Okay, so you left here and went to Leavenworth, which was your basic training.

Buford: Yes, but that was the induction. They took you in there and separated you into what part of the service you wanted to go into. If you wanted to go into the army, you got a 14 day leave before they took you. No, the army gave you 21 days, the marines gave you 14, and the navy seven. Most of us said we wanted the time off; we'd go into the army. But a lot of them went; they didn't take a lot of them.

Joan: So why did you decide on the army and the air force?

Buford: Well, I got chosen for it. Actually, I was going into cadet training to be a pilot. I was taking my basic, and it was kind of one of them deals. We had board review every other day trying to make you mad. There were real strict things. And one time I blew my top, and that's why I got washed out. That's why I volunteered to go to armory school to be a gunner. Then they didn't send me to that. For armory you learn to load bombs and stuff like that. I didn't get that, so they said I was going to be a mechanic. So that's when I went to mechanics school. We went to school a good ten hours every day. They pushed us hard because they needed mechanics out in these fields and stuff.

Joan: Was that when you were in **Shepards**?

Buford: No, that was when I was in Lincoln.

Joan: Then you went to several other places, but you never left the United States. Were you helping with the training?

Buford: We were training crews, yes. I went to the factory school up there and was supposed to be out in the field as a specialist when there was extra trouble on a P-39 fighter. Well, low and behold, the army does things the... I never touched a fighter after that. I went down to Tampa where we had B-17's and B-29's. My main crew chief, when I was crewing them. It was our responsibility to keep them going. They had training flights 24 hours a day down there. I volunteered to go overseas so many damned times I finally got sick of it and went to my C.O. and I said, "Why?" And he said, well, have you got any brothers overseas? And I said, "I got three." He said that's why they just wouldn't send me.

Joan: Where were your brothers deployed?

Buford: My older brother was in Germany. One of the twins was in Alaska and the other was in the Philippines.

Joan: They were spread out all over. What was Vera doing at that time?

Buford: She was setting up and helping her dad run the farm.

Joan: So she stayed home. Did you ever go visit him?

Buford: Oh yes, we lived together for quite a while. Well, that's what really set the thing off. I flunked out of pilot training because they were interviewing me, and they said, "Are you married?" And I said, "Yes and I have a child." And they said, "Where is she living?" And I said with her parents. Right now, she is visiting me. And that major said, "You've only been gone two or three months and you have to have her visit you?" And I said, "Man, is there any regulations against doing that?" They said, no, but I decided to quit. My mother made her come out and try to talk me into staying, but I said no. She came to visit me when I was at Lincoln, and at Amarillo. We never got to Niagara Falls, but after I was stationed at Tampa for a certain length of time, we were called permanent personnel, and we had a permanent pass so you could go to town any time you weren't on duty. She wanted to come down and live with me. We had base housing, but you had to wait for years. We waited and waited. I kept looking for an apartment or something, when I walked the streets 'cause I didn't have a car or anything. So I walked the streets and finally found this one apartment with another couple. That was a disaster. She didn't stay very long. But anyway, she kept...well, her dad kept telling her she ought to get down there with him. She brought a load of wheat in during harvest, the last load, and her dad said, "You take the money for that load and you buy you a car and get your but down there." So she did. We ended up living with another couple later on. They were nice people, from Michigan and had a boy the same age as ours. He would work one shift while I worked the other. We had a lot of fun together. We weathered two hurricanes together, while we were there.

Rosetta: So Vera and Leland drove to Florida?

Buford: With her dad, yes.

Joan: Wow, that was quite a trip! That's a long ways.



Buford: It was a trip. She would tell you that too. One time her cousin, when he came down the first time, her dad and her cousin drove to New Orleans, wasn't it? And your dad come on then. But the roads weren't that good then.

Joan: What kind of a car did she buy?

Buford: She bought a 1940 4-door Plymouth, just a couple years old. She bought it from Homer **Roth ross**? here in the great city of Kinsley.

Joan: And she had tires for it.

Buford: Yes, well. Tires were a problem sometimes. One time we were coming home on furlough. We had another one of my buddies lived in Missouri, and he got a furlough too. Then we decided we'd just drive straight through and have more time at home. We left Tampa and were an hour out when we blew a tire on the car. So we put the spare on and went on to Tallahassee. I went to the old PA office and they said, "Oh yeah, we'll give you a tire if you can find one." Well, I had a certificate and then they said there's a town up there by the name of **Wainright**, Georgia. This guy told me, "He's always got tires." I don't know how they'd get them, probably black market, but anyway. I said, "Well, we'll go that way. We got about half way up there and in the middle of the night, I blew another tire. We slept in the car that night. It was in the swamp lands...next day I took the tire and hitch hiked to this town. A Greyhound bus picked me up and took me there. The guy had a tire and he brought me back and put it on for me and we headed on for Kinsley. It was quite a...

Joan: Were you in the service when Leland was born?

Buford: No, I wasn't in; I was still with them.

Joan: So you were sort of lucky to be able to be around.

Buford: Yes.

Mrs. Brodbeck: ....(tire? Hire?) was his parents. They called and he was home. He never did...

Buford: No, we were all right, Mom. (She gets a little confused.)

Rosetta: So Leland, that's all he knew, was military life, wasn't it, his first six years.

Buford: Yes. In fact, one time down in Tampa, I got **impetigo**; do you know what that is? Drinking out of a **lifter bag** with everybody, and they put me in the hospital and Vera was coming out to see me on day. She had Leland in the back seat, and of course we didn't have car seats then. Didn't even think of it. He opened the door and fell out. Didn't hurt him bad, just skinned him up. When they got out to the hospital, of course they checked him all over and everything, but I'll always remember that. Then one time our squadron had a squadron party at a beach place one night. This good friend of mine, Joe, he decided to take Leland up on the front row. Well, they had a girlie show and Vera about had a fit up there. Hell, he wasn't old enough to know what was going on.

Joan: So your unit, your squadron pretty much stayed together?

Buford: Yes, we really did. Once in a while, one of them would ship out, but they did alert us. We sat in the barracks for a week. The whole outfit was going to **Tinian**, out in the South Pacific. Where the B29 base was, we sat around in the barracks for a week and a half, doing nothing because we couldn't go off the base. You had to stay right there. The next thing we knew, the captain of our outfit came in and said, "You guys get back out on the line and get them plays a flying." Well, the reports going in there was no flying time, they were just flying at our base to train those crews. It didn't take them long; they decided we were going to stay in Tampa. We'd read the papers, like in high school now, American history. We didn't study American history very much. We called it "current events." Every day we were supposed to bring a clipping about the war, and we'd discuss that and things that were going on that I felt, although I was good in American history when we did it, it was real interesting to study that stuff. We followed the paper real close. I did anyway.

Joan: Did they have newsreels in theaters too?

Buford: Oh yes. Paramount newsreel before every show come on. They'd show stuff like that.

Joan: Your three brothers, they were all overseas and everything. Can you tell us a little bit about what they told you when they came back?

Buford: They never really told too much. My older brother was in quite a bit of action, but he wouldn't talk about it. The other two, the one in Alaska, of course, they had a little fighting up there, but not much. He was in the Navy; he was a mechanic also. My older brother in the Philippines. He was a repairman for gyroscopes on ships. He was at a base there most of the time. That was after they took back the Philippines. Only thing that got me was that after the war was over, they took bulldozers and any of the equipment, mostly jeeps, they took them to a cliff and they'd just push them off into the ocean. They didn't want to bring them back.

Joan: And they didn't want to leave them. So your family was pretty lucky.

Buford: Yes.

Joan: Did you have any friends from Kinsley that were affected by the war?

Buford: Well, I guess the record only shows we lost three kids. Which for as many as went in...

Joan: Do you know how many went in? We probably have that at the library, but only three... That is amazing. (*The county actually lost more.*)

Buford: But I've read some places, they, a lot them, they'd take a whole...sometimes these national guards from one time and they'd keep them in a unit. That's why some towns would take a really good hit. We didn't have anything like National Guard or anything. We had ROTC in college. That was one thing. We didn't have people around recruiting us to go to college. If you did go, you got a deferment, and farmers' kids got a deferment. But a lot of those farm kids didn't like the idea of getting to stay and people saying, "Well, you're being a draft dodger." And they'd end up joining. The board was made up, I remember, Jerry Wilson was on the draft board. I don't think...there was a Carlson, but it wasn't Leonard. Maybe it was his dad. I forget all of them.

Joan: Was the draft board, did you feel the draft board was pretty fair?

Buford: Oh yes, I mean, if you had a legitimate excuse. I could have stayed out if I'd wanted to because Dad wanted me to come out and help on the farm and been a farmer. But I didn't want to do that. Then there were people who physically couldn't go. My brother in law got turned down every time. He had stomach ulcers real bad, and he didn't go. But most of the time, you had to have a pretty bad ailment or they'd take you.

Joan: You came back in 1946, right? That's a little after the end of the war.

Buford: Yes. I got discharged after it was over both in Europe and Japan.

Joan: And you said you went to Amarillo for engine school.

Buford: Yes. But...

Joan: And then you went back to McDill?

Buford: Yes, I went back to McDill and by about then it was over. You had to wait until the time of service; you had to wait until you had so many points. Then they'd discharge you. When they started out, the ones overseas had lower points, they could get out quicker. Then they'd never know, they kept us...I wasn't there too long, I was surprised I got out as early as I did.

Joan: Was Vera with you when you got out?

Buford: No. She was home.

Joan: Did you drive home then?

Buford: No, I took the train. Sat in the club car most of the way home. I think the funniest story was, there was another air base there in Tampa. I can't think of the name. That's where I had to go over and get my discharge. I put my uniform on and went over there. They told us we had to have our uniforms on. They looked at me. I wasn't too proud of being PFC because I was doing work that required more rank than what I was doing, so I never put my PFC stripes on. They wouldn't give me the discharge until I went back to the base and sewed them on. Oh we had a lot of good times down in Tampa. They had the beaches down there. We'd work six days a week and had Sunday off. We lived in a trailer park to start with. We had, Vera come down and brought a trailer. That was before we had the apartment. We had a little trailer house, and the couple next to us, he was 4f and they had a boy the same age. Every Sunday we would go to the beach and play in the sand and get in the beach. It was kind of like a vacation. Actually, the air base looked like a resort center. The buildings were all permanent with palm trees all around. It was kind of a pretty camp.

Joan: You worked ten hours a day, did you say?

Buford: Oh, when we was going to school. No, we worked three different shifts. Seven to three, three to eleven, and eleven to seven. It alternated every two weeks; you went to a different shift. That was a little hard to get used to.

Joan: And Vera had a child to take care of. That probably kept her pretty busy.

Buford: That kept her busy. Yes. She washed a lot of diapers on a board and bucket. I guess they did have washing machines when we were in that trailer park, didn't they? Yes. They had a big wash house and shower room. If you wanted to go to the bathroom, cause most of the trailers didn't have bathrooms or anything. You had to go take your shower...

Joan: This trailer was more like a camper.

Buford: Yes, it was like a camp ground. It really was.

Joan: But it doesn't sound like a bad place to spend the war.

Buford: Well, no. It was better than...I look back now and think, "You silly son of a buck, when you volunteer to be a gunner, you'd think, 'Holy Toledo'." Because we'd have guys come back and finish their duty over in Germany and come back and be training the gunners and stuff. You'd get to visiting with them and think, "Holy Toledo, I'm glad I wasn't up there with them shooting at me."

Rosetta: Did your mechanical training that you got in the military, did that help when you were repairing the carnival?

Buford: Oh yes. You know, I used to could work on an engine, even a car engine. Basically the same thing. I never did...I feel now that I maybe should have, when I got out, I could have went and took a little more training in civilian work like that and had a pretty fair job and retirement thing. But when I got back, my dad had died, and my mom was trying to run the carnival. I was the first one out, and I said, "No, I'm going to do that." I was offered a job as a rural post carrier. That was one I really should have took. But I turned that down.

Joan: So for how many years did you do the carnival?

Buford: Well, I quit it. I started from the day of birth in '25. I bought the cleaning shop in '49.

Joan: So between '46 and '49, you worked at the carnival. Did the carnival keep going after you left?

Buford: Oh yes. It went for a few more years. Pretty soon all my brothers decided the pastures looked greener someplace than traveling around.

Rosetta: I remember the carnival as the Brodbeck/Schrader Carnival. So did the Schraders buy into...

Buford: Actually, no. What happened, it was originally when my granddad started it. It was Brodbeck Amusements. And the brothers were there. Then when my dad and Uncle Fred Brodbeck that lived here in town, decided to start their own, they called it Brodbeck Brothers. Then the demand, people were crying and wanting carnivals, so they decided to just split up. My dad bought out my uncle's, and that's when they went back to Brodbeck Brothers and Brodbeck and Schrader's. Schrader was a son-in-law.

Joan: And you used to...you were at the state fair sometimes?

Buford: I never was involved in that. Brodbeck and Schrader was. He had booked that and the Colorado fair. He got to be a pretty good sized show. We stayed just a medium size show. I didn't want any more headaches than that.

Rosetta: So you bought the City Cleaners from Manz and Barnes?

Buford: That's right. Yes.

Rosetta: And he had the shop where Ron Engler has his...

Buford: Yes. I bought that in '49.

Joan: And retired from it in, just a few years ago.

Buford: Well, I put in 55 years. I forget what that would be.

Joan: 2004?

Buford: I think that's was it was.

Joan: That's a long time.

Buford: Yes, and then of course I got involved in the fire department.

Joan: When did you start that?

Buford: Well, I went in on the fire department in 1951. At that time, my uncle was the fire chief and when they alerted you, they blew the siren there by the fire hall. It was down to the old city hall. Half of the people in town would come running to find out what was going on. I did that for a few times and my uncle said, "If you're going to show up, get on here," until I got on. Four years later I was the chief for 50 years.

Rosetta: And what was Mr. Kearns' name?

Buford: Harry.

Joan: When you came back from the war, of course you were coming back two years later, but was there any...did your family have a celebration? Or anything in the town?

Buford: No, you know, we weren't...there were so many of us went in that there wasn't really nothing...we used to have...called an Armistice Day, usually had a bean feed and football game and things like that. Maybe go out and tip a few bears and stuff. But in the bigger cities they had big parades and stuff for them. But I don't remember anything.

Joan: But you joined the VFW or ?

Buford: No, I wasn't covered. Actually, I actually was but I wasn't. When the war over in Europe. They got to taking six B29's to Cuba for R & R. If your plane got chosen to go, you had to go along. But I did get outside, but I didn't claim that. It was quite an experience to see the destitution down there. That was the poorest looking country. Either nothing good or real nice. It really was.

Joan: But the war hadn't done that.

Buford: No. Them people just lived like that.

Joan: So where the tourists went it was beautiful and...

Buford: Yes.

Joan: How do you think being in the military affected your life in any way? What did it do for you?

Buford: Oh, I think it made us grow up; it really did. And I don't know whether, I think military would be good for a lot of kids. I've seen a lot of them go in and come back better kids. I really do.

Rosetta: Now, in your carnival, the people that you hired, as there discrimination? Did you hire anybody that was a good worker or did you hire just whites? Or did you hire Negroes, Hispanics? Or just whoever was a good worker?

Buford: No, you just didn't tend with the colored people too well. We had people that went with us for years, ride operators, that...of course I went to high school with a colored kid and had no trouble at all...Segregation just wasn't out here. But when you got in the military, it was.

Joan: What was that like?

Buford: You just didn't see any. They weren't even at your base. The only one I ever remember when I was down in *Shepard Field*, we had a base band that was all colored. And they could play music like you never heard before. And they'd parade up and down when they had parades every morning. It just happened that my barracks were right next to the parade ground. And we had had to get up at 5:30 or 6:00. About 4:00 every morning, they'd be out there practicing, and all they played was the same song for three months, *Maria Elena*. I got to where I could....

Joan: That was your *Reville*.

Buford: I guess so.

Rosetta: So the Negroes had a separate base? They weren't.

Buford: Oh yeah, they had different everything.

Joan: Well, the troops did get integrated sometime during WWII didn't they?

Buford: Yes, they started to but I never was at any base that was integrated.

Joan: At your carnival, did blacks come to the carnival and patronize it?

Buford: Yes, they did. We didn't...

Joan: It was, like the theater. They had to sit in the balcony.

Buford: They had to sit in the balcony.

Joan: On rides, did they have to sit...

Buford: Oh no, we just didn't have too many. We played Nicodemus once a year.

Joan: What was that like?

Buford: That was something else. They kept after us for years to bring some rides in. That year we decided to take some in. There was no electricity. They had it out kind of a grove of trees they called a picnic area. They had a dance floor out there in that grove. And so we agreed to take a couple of rides there and all we had for lights was we'd run off the battery of the truck or something for the ticket taker and the operator had one. But I'm telling you, those people, they had more damn fun than I've ever seen in my life. You kept wondering how safe you were there, really, that many...but then later on, the years when we'd bought our own generating plant, we took the whole show in. Oh, they thought that was great. We'd really light the place up. I mean, them people came in from all over the United States for that.

Joan: Was August on their **Nicodmus** days?

Buford: Emancipation Day. Yes.

Joan: So there'd be quite a crowd. What year's was that, that you did that?

Buford: That was after the war was over, probably '48 or '49 or someplace in there.

Joan: That's interesting. I might try to contact them to see if they have any pictures of when the fair was there.

Rosetta: Did the carnival...we have a picture of the carnival getting ready to leave in front of Kearns' Garage. Now where did you store the equipment in the winter time?

Buford: That was a funny deal. We did any spare building we could rent, we rented. Until finally my dad bought a building where **Littrel** had the storehouse back behind the extension office, there's a building back in the alley. We bought that for our winter quarters. My folks had a big garage up by the house and stored some in there. But when we'd get in we'd start unloading one ride at a time, and paint it, and repair it, and then stack it in that building and everything. But then one time, we had it there...the folks had winter quarters in a big building in Greensburg. That was the only one they could find.

Rosetta: This is going to sound a little strange. When I was growing up and Leland was growing up, the north side of town was where the poor people lived. Then you built your house here, and it kind of changed the complexion that more people started that weren't poor trash or whatever you want to call them. They started moving over here. Why did you build here? I'm glad you did!

Buford: Well, my father-in-law, when he moved in from the farm, he bought this whole damn block. He decided he was going to do something for the town and build things for everybody. He built quite a few houses in town and moved a lot in. When we got out of service, back behind this one house was an apartment with a garage below it. Well, he decided to remodel that for us. The next thing I knew, he kept saying, "I'm going to build you a house on this lot. You keep it mowed. I'm not going to sell it." I'd be out here mowing with a little electric mower. But one time, he says, "Why don't you get somebody to draw up some plans?" Well, at that time, Ray Gaskell was working at the lumber yard, and he was pretty handy about that kind of stuff. We told him what we'd want, and he drew the plans up.

One morning Vera come in, I was still in bed, and said, “Good God, they’re over there digging something in this lot.” They were digging the foundation. I went over to her dad, and I said, “Ralph, I don’t have the money to do this.”

“Well, don’t worry about it; we’ll take care of it.” And that’s how we got started. I helped him build a lot of it. He had one or two other guys. But when I’d get bored down at the cleaning shop, I’d come work here till dark. I had a good friend that lived down here; he was a janitor at the Lincoln School. He’d always go by and Ralph would wave it him and say, “Hey Keith, come on over here. We need a little help!” Well, he’d work there too for the weekend.

Joan: Keith who?

Buford: Keith **Lippold**.

Joan: And what year was the house built?

Buford: 1961, I think it was.

Rosetta: No...

Buford: No, that’s right, you guys graduated in ‘60.

Rosetta: I graduated in ‘60 and the house was here several years before that.

Buford: ‘55 I think.

Rosetta: I’ll let you have that one.

Buford: This was kind of the hang out for the kids. Do you remember that? I’ll always remember the...

Joan: What was the attraction? Good food?

Buford: I had a rec room downstairs, a little rec room, and ice cream in the refrigerator.

Rosetta: So Holly’s Laundry was right there?

Buford: Yes.

Rosetta: And was there a second hand store right next to...

Buford: Yes, there was a second hand store right next to Vera’s folks.

Rosetta: Vera’s folks lived...

Buford: In that green one on down there. Two houses down.

Rosetta: There used to be a blacksmith shop right down there. Were there any remains of that when you came back from the war?



Buford: Oh yes, it was still operating.

Rosetta: Okay, that was **Bower**. And he still had his blacksmith shop.

Buford: Yes, that's that little building right between the restaurant and the big building down there, Rick's. That was where the blacksmith shop was. **Bacher**, was the way they pronounced it.

Joan: She always has to pick everybody's brains about the town.

Buford: Well, she's been picking my brain for the last ten years. I enjoy it. I mean, I'm glad I can remember some things.

Rosetta: So do you remember what was there before Holly's Laundry?

Buford: There was nothing. Vera's dad built that building especially for the laundry. These people came in here and wanted to start a laundry.

Rosetta: Well, he said he was going to build up, and he did!

Buford: He did. He worked hard as a farmer, but he come to town after he retired and worked harder. Didn't know when to stop.

Rosetta: So he built the laundry, and the second hand store, was it part of that?

Buford: Yes, it was all one building. Then he built this house next to us. And I think three up on Third Street, houses in there. Then he built where Cedar's used to be and the furniture store and there.

Joan: He built The Cedar's?

Buford: He built that, yes. When I bought the cleaning shop from Ansell Barnes, he decided to go into the furniture business. So Ralph built that. And they had a restaurant there on the side and a truck stop there. Remember that?

Rosetta: Vaguely. I remember the Cedar's, but I don't remember anything before.

Buford: Well, you were pretty young then.

Rosetta: I can't lie to him, he know how old I am. My, he was busy then, wasn't he.

Buford: Oh yes. He just couldn't keep down. And he was active in the old Booster Club and the Chamber of Commerce. He was really gung ho for the town. He helped build the sod house out to the museum.

Joan: Where was his property for the farm south of town?

Buford: Do you know where Bethel Cemetery is? Right on the county line? The first house on the right hand side there, where Ernie Davis lives. The Crescent Community, yes. If you went to Crescent Grade School, wasn't it?

Vera: Yes.

Buford: Yes.

Joan: I was wondering. I'm a newcomer, so I've only heard stories. There were Hispanic that had built the railroad, and there was a community...

Buford: Yes, over in what we called the "Y". Just up where that big tower is, in that area there. I don't know, there may be ten or twelve; we called them shacks because that's all they was. Some of them even had a dirt floor, no plumbing. That's where the section crew that worked on the railroad. They were all Hispanic. And I had quite a few when I went to grade school with, and high school. Nice kids. The only thing I...they always made me mad when they didn't want you to know what was going on, they'd speak Spanish. That always burnt me up, I don't know why. Still does.

Joan: Did you ever go visit them in their homes?

Buford: Yes. I was good friends with a couple of them. We'd feel sorry for them and sneak out some canned goods that we had at our house and take it to them because they didn't make much salary.

Rosetta: And they couldn't go swimming?

Buford: Oh no, no.

Joan: And your parents didn't mind your being friends.

Buford: No, we were always called the North Side Bullies and the South Side Sissies. We'd come down and play them in baseball and football and just beat the hell out them in basketball. Do you remember that?

Rosetta: I do. I wasn't there very long, but I remember we always beat the south side.

Joan: You're a little tougher up here.

Rosetta: Well, this was the farm people. They were the city people down there. They didn't have to do hard labor.

Buford: And some of them thought they were high society.

Rosetta: That's right.

Buford: I had to go one year to the South Side (*School*) when I was in the fourth grade, I guess it was. They had something I guess we didn't have at Lincoln School. I thought that was going to be the most miserable year I spent in life. I got to know all the kids and we weren't that much different, but when it comes to sports, it was pretty competitive. We had one Mexican named Jessie **Molina**. He died not too long ago, lived up here. He was our pitcher. And we played hard ball, and the south side played soft ball. They wouldn't play us any more because we beat them so bad, and we agreed to play them at soft ball. They didn't think Jessie could throw that soft ball that hard, but he could throw it just as hard as a hard ball. We just skunked 'em every time we played 'em.

Rosetta: **Kearn's Grocery Store, Schnatterly's**, what was behind the Assembly of God. Do you remember the building that was there? I mean, I know what was there a long, long time ago; there was a hotel there. But was there anything in your memory that was there?

Buford: Hum. I'm not...yes, there was a hotel there.

Rosetta: A long time ago.

Buford: Of course, see, this was originally Main Street, I'm sure you know that. There was a livery stable on this lot, even when I was going to high school, it was still standing here.

Joan: Do you know who owned it?

Buford: Oh God...

Rosetta: He's been asked that.

Buford: I've never come up with that name, and I have it on the tip of my tongue. There was still a sign on the front end of it. Us kids used to play in the thing. We'd get inside and then we would walk the rails out in the back where they had the stock. They had rails on top where you could walk and check your cattle.

Joan: Was that always a park over there?

Buford: Ever since I can remember.

Rosetta: A long, long time ago it was a lumberyard, but that's way before.

Buford: Way before, yes. I played there when I was a kid, that and the courthouse yard were where we all played.

Rosetta: This is a highway question. Right here where Highway 56 is, was that always just a street there? Was it always a street or was there...was it connected?

Buford: You know, that's one I can't...it seemed like that diagonal wasn't there, but it was put in. I remember when they put the diagonal in, but I don't remember how the highway went. I've asked different people about that, and nobody can come up with an answer on it. I remember mainly that where EZ stop is, is where the swimming pool was. When they put it in, they had to cut about a third of the deep end. We thought it just ruined the swimming pool.

Rosetta: That's when they built the overpass and put the road in here.

Buford: Yes.

Rosetta: I just want to know what was here before, but nobody can remember.

Buford: Well, there were elevators over here, I know, and coal sheds. There used to be a...us kids would go in there after school in the coal shed and have some cigarettes. We'd roll our own cigarettes and stuff. That's the only time when I did smoke was when I was in grade school and junior high.

Rosetta: Could you remember a road between...well, the Depot Road. It was on the north side of the tracks. Would that have been how people got to the elevator? I found reference when Bears bought their hatchery down there; it was built on the Depot Road. So, people maybe connected it really close to the railroad tracks to you think? And didn't have this street here?

Buford: I don't remember. She has to pick my brain.

Joan: Well, we would like you to tell us about Ridge Peters. You told us in the library the other day, so we have a record to what you remember about Mr. Peters.

Buford: Well, he lived across the street from us in a stucco house by himself. Us kids always called him Uncle Ridge 'cause we thought he was our uncle because he was real good to us. We found out he wasn't our uncle later on. He had to give kids some things. He give us a Civil War rifle and some maps and stuff he'd brought home from the Civil war. He'd tell us a little. He was pretty young. He didn't get into too much of it. He'd tell a few things, but I can't remember all of what he said.

Joan: He was a Union soldier.

Buford: Yes. He was just kind of a fascinating man, he was really was.

Joan: We have one question that we're just asking everybody. Do you think WWII made changes for the people of Edwards County? How, were the changes positive or negative? Before and after the war, how the city or the county change? Or didn't it?

Buford: Well, the economy was real good after the war. I mean, everybody had money. The one's that weren't working in the airplane factories were. Everybody was making money and times were just good. Not like it is now, even with our economy supposed to be that bad, but I don't think it is here. But I don't know.

Joan: Did most of the young men come back and stay?

Buford: Yes, for a while. A lot of them drifted off to other towns and stuff. Some of them went back to school, to college. I know some of my classmates did. There was a few in my class, it wasn't a lot, the biggest share of them were farm kids. They just came back and went into farming.

Joan: I guess one thing we didn't ask you about was, most people have told us what Saturday Night in Kinsley was like on Main Street and stuff.

Buford: Well, Saturday night in Kinsley was a big night. People would come down at daylight and park their cars so they had a space to park on Main Street, then come back later on and do their shopping and go to the theater. The theater on Saturday Night was always packed. When I was in the cleaning business, I stayed open until 9:00 to accommodate the people. Then after 9:00, we'd all go down to the old drugstore, down where the pool hall is, and Joe and Ralph would mix up some limeade and have a little bourbon. The women would play bridge and us men would play poker. That was a Saturday night deal.

Joan: So the cleaners were open six days a week? And late on Saturday night?

Buford: Yes. Till 9:00 yes.

Joan: The other nights you closed at...

Buford: Well, we closed at 6:00. But then I got that down to 5:00.

Joan: Is there anything else you would like to add to the record here? That you would like posterity to know about your life?

Buford: Well, like I say, I've lived here all my life. We've never ever thought about leaving. I tried my best to be a good citizen and help out with civic things and I just still think it's a nice little town. It's a shame to see all the businesses close, and I understand we have two going to close again. But I just look back and think, God, every building in that town had a business in 1949. But it's just as sign of the times. You go to any other little town and it's the same thing.

Joan: But Kinsley was a good place to live.

Buford: Yes. We had the railroad here and two highways. We had a couple of creameries and elevators, three banks and three lumber yards, 150 filling stations, I think.

Joan: Car dealers, too.

Buford: A lot of churches too, now we have. And, I always thought, good schools. I served on the school board for four or five years. I think a lot of people thought, "What the hell did they put him on the school board for?" But we did have some good basketball and football teams when I got on there, I seen to that. We won a few games then.

Joan: Maybe we should have you...when you first started with the fire department, what was your equipment like, and how did you progress? Tell us a little about the fire department.

Buford: Well, when I first got on, everybody was real old on there. They had rescinded the age limit because all us guys were in service and they didn't have anybody. Well, when all us guys got out of service, they started putting us on there. It made the old guys mad; they didn't want to quit. Finally, they had to fire them. But very little equipment. When I went on in '49, we had one 54 pumper, and the other was a 1931 pumper. Two trucks. We did very little training; had a lot of poker games and drank a lot of beer and booze. I could see right away that this wasn't going to be what we needed. I didn't want to push my uncle too much because he had a temper and I had a temper. I started going to some of the schools they had around the state. Then they had instructors come out to your department and spend a whole week having some kind of instruction every night for a week. And I thought, now that's gonna be great. So I scheduled one to come out, and he got mad at me. I said, "We're going to do it anyway." By then we started...we had a bunch of guys my age, all come out of the service. I felt building a decent fire department. It took a while to get the equipment. I still go down to the station and just look at the stuff that we've acquired since I was on there, and they're still a doin' it. It makes me real proud. I think we had a good department. We may still lose a few foundations, but it happened. We had some tests up town, them business buildings. A couple three was good, but it was just a good bunch of guys to work with. I had a lot of guys, different ones would move in or move out or quit or something.

Joan: This was all volunteer?

Buford: Yes.

Joan: You didn't get paid at all?

Buford: We got paid. We got \$3 a run if you didn't hook onto the hydrant and \$5 if you hooked onto the hydrant. Then it got up to, I think I finally got them up to a straight \$10 a run. Now I think they get \$15. They don't get much. The guys don't do it for a salary. It's something to...

Joan: Did you ever have any injuries?

Buford: I did. I broke my ankle once. I tried to jump a ditch and stepped on a beer can and broke my ankle. I had one guy burnt pretty seriously. We had a rural fire that had barrels of oil that they'd tipped over and they'd flashed up when he was in there. And one death while I was on the fire department.

Joan: Who was that?

Buford: **Bud Draut**. You remember Bud don't you? That was kind of a funny case. The city never did require us to take a physical. Most of us were in pretty good shape, but Bud had had a heart attack. He recovered from it and at that time he was working in the bank. Things changed around, and he went to Kansas City to work in an examiner's office up there for a while. Then he moved back here. He wasn't on the department, but he lived there right across from the library in the big old house there. He wanted back on the fire department because he was secretary. He was a good secretary. So I went to Schnoebelen, and I said, "Rene, I'm having a time with him. He wants back on. He said, "You just as well better let him back on. He has a nervous fit every time that whistle goes off. Well, low and behold, we put him back on. We were at this fire where The Cedars were then, just that truck stop. The grill got on fire and he got in there and had a heart attack. It really wasn't related to the fire, but we've had...I don't know...seven or eight got killed in fires. People that were in the houses. That was tough to do.

Joan: So you went on fire calls more than Kinsley, out in the county.

Buford: We didn't at first. When I first got on, we only had a contract with Kinsley Township. It got to the point where we were spending all our time going out to other townships. We didn't get a nickel out of. I kept saying that wasn't going to work. We needed more rural equipment. So I convinced the trustees of these townships to put a one mill levy on for us and that one mill helped pay for our expenses and helped buy all of our rural trucks. Of course, it's up now a little more. But we were able, you know, to get some pretty good fire protection. Now all of them are; all the fire departments kind of work together. There for a while, our insurance on the guys, when we went to another township, we didn't have any insurance on them. That wasn't very good.

Joan: A lot of changes then. Rosetta, do you want to ask him about any fires in particular or anything?

Rosetta: He's told us some.

Buford: I remember the first business one when I was chief. We had one where, oh, right in there where the Legion Building is. That was a big old two storey building. It got on fire, a pool hall down below. Vera was standing on the porch here looking at me and watching. There was a staircase that went up to the second floor in the back, and she said she could hear me yelling at the guys clear over there. She said, "You don't yell at people like that!" And I said, "Well, they can't hear you with those pumps running."

Rosetta: That was the Keener building.

Buford: Yes, I think it was. George Goodwin had a pool hall in there. It had started from an ash tray container thing and just went right up through the roof. After we got it out up there, the guys were up on the roof and some of them downstairs decided to see how the beer was still cold. We was drinking a little beer and I got me a couple of cigars and was puffing on them. The guys up there wanted to know what we were drinking. I said, "Beer." We found a bucket and got a rope and take it up there. George come in and he just said, "You guys are going to have to pay for that!" And I said, "George, you can't sell this stuff anymore now." All right, he kind of calmed down. I'll always remember that. That and the Chevrolet fire. That was a test.

Rosetta: But you contained both of those, they didn't spread.

Buford: Yes, that's it. That and the **Farlow** one. There were three of them there. That and the old Extension Office got on fire pretty bad there too. We kept it contained.

Joan: Did you ever have any cases of arson?

Buford: Chevrolet garage was definitely arson. But they finally got them on a case out in Colorado. They went from here out there and finally set that on fire, but they got 'em.

Joan: They weren't local people? They were just traveling through catching buildings on fire?

Buford: No, they'd had the dealership there. They were looking for insurance money. Now, they changed the rules. Usually, they burnt your building down, and you got a check in three days. But now the law is, they can't. If arson is suspected, they don't have to pay until they have proved it wasn't. That kind of stopped a lot of that. Plus the fact that I think there's at least a five or ten thousand dollar reward for any information that leads to an arrest for arson. It's helped the arson cases.

Joan: It's good for the safety of the firemen.

Buford: Yes. Oh, that Chevrolet garage. When they called that in, I thought, "Oh, no." I looked out the window and seen all that flame and thought that was going to be something. And it was. It was a mean one. We didn't have near the...we had good equipment, but not like we have now. It didn't take me long to start getting some equipment. I had a guy come in when we had the...he was a salesman. He had this one pumper. He brought it in to let us look at. He knew we were kind of interested. I had some of the guys come down, and we pumped and looked at it. I said, "What are you going to ask for that?" He said \$7,500 which was a lot of money then. I said, "I don't know." Let me go, the commission was meeting that night, and I went in and had a visit with them. They said, "Well, if you can Jew him down a little, we'll authorize it." Because we had no funds, we had to go get a no fund warrant. I don't know if you know what that was; you had to borrow money from the state. Well, I went back and told him, "I got to come down." He said, "I'll tell you what I'll do. We'll just sell you that truck for \$5,000." We kept it.

Joan: He really came down!

Buford: Well, it was what they called a demonstrator. There wasn't nothing wrong with it. He just needed to move it. Then I was sure lucky the last one. We got that \$140,000 on the fire bill that was allotted towns money for equipment and stuff.

Joan: You went off in what year? You retired from the department in 2004?

Buford: Yes. At that time, we always had, when a guy was 55 he was supposed to retire and the chief at 65. When I was getting close to 65, I told the guys I had another year or two; I would stay on. Well, a bunch of them went to the commission trying to get the ordinance changed. Well, I looked the ordinance up and it didn't say that I had to retire at 65. It said the assistant chief did, but not the chief. So, they talked me into staying. I told them I would stay until I put 50 years in. I was still in pretty good shape then, but I could see that they needed some younger people in there. I didn't want to make some decision and somebody get hurt, or something. She was my little chief, weren't you? It was her job on the way to alert on these fire phones. The fire phones would ring, and when they blew the whistle, she after she got the whistle blowing and everything, she'd get on the other phone and start calling guys that maybe couldn't hear the siren and stuff. I had ten different places, three businesses and seven in homes. When the fire phone rang, it rang all of them. Then when there was a fire, we had a button right there we could push. Whoever done that was supposed to stay. Then you could call in. When you called in you could get three calls at a time. The person who took the call then told them where the fire was. Then after that you maybe had to wait a little bit. Then three more could call. But lots of times, that siren, you just couldn't hear it sometimes when the wind was one way or the other. But now, they do it on pagers. It is a much better, faster. Yes, them young kids about drove me nuts. I used to could get to the fire before them, but them last few years. I couldn't.

End of audio.