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# Oral History of Student Life at the UK College of Law with Thomas Givhan (Class of 1951) | Part 1

Thomas Givhan

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Interviewee: Thomas Givhan (Class of 1951)  
Interviewer: Franklin L. Runge  
Date: June 23, 2015  
Location: Thomas Givhan's Personal Residence in Shepherdsville, Kentucky

*This transcription is non-strict verbatim, meaning that it does not include all utterances (e.g., Mm-hmm, uh-huh, umm, uh, etc.). The audio timestamp will be added before each paragraph. New paragraphs are started at every change of speaker or at every three minutes, whichever is earlier.*

*This interview lasted approximately three hours. The recording was broken into three sections. Part one of this interview occurred over a meal. The listener will hear noises like ice tea being stirred or silverware against a plate.*

0:00:00 Franklin L. Runge: Alright. I'm going turn on this recording device and just so you know, it's going. Of course, you don't have to do anything different or act any different. But I know you wouldn't, anyway. So this is an interview with Thomas Givhan, who is a graduate of the College of Law in the Class of 1951. And we are at his home in Shepherdsville, Kentucky. And for the first part of the interview, we're just gonna be talking, before we start the formal interview, which will be back in the library. But for now, we're just having lunch and I thought we would just turn on the recording device. So we can just carry on as normal, but I just wanted to at least be capturing some of them. So a minute ago you were talking about the Scott Street area over in... If you would like this dressing, I don't know what the difference is between the two.

0:01:00 Thomas Givhan: Well, that's a poppy seed, I don't know what that is.

0:01:01 FR: That looks like it could be...

0:01:02 TG: It might be blue cheese.

0:01:02 FR: Blue cheese dressing there. So a minute ago you were talking about the Scott Street area. Let me put the spoon in there.

0:01:10 TG: Don't you want any dressing?

0:01:11 FR: Oh I will in a second. I'll probably try the blue cheese dressing. So you were talking about the Scott Street area that is across the street, basically across Nicholasville Road from the current Law building, and you'd mentioned that you'd hunt and sell rabbits there. Would you tell that again, what you would do you?

[chuckle]

0:01:34 TG: Well, we had to buy ammunition. So when we went hunting, and so we sold these rabbits as kids to buy ammunition, shotgun and a rifle ammunition.

0:01:46 FR: So how old were you when you were doing this?

0:01:49 TG: Well, it was over a period of years, we did that several years. I was probably... Oh, eight or nine, on up to maybe junior high school.



0:02:00 FR: Okay. So this when you were a kid living in Lexington, not when you were in law school.

0:02:04 TG: Oh no.

0:02:05 FR: Okay. So when you were a kid you would hunt rabbits and then go over to the University of Kentucky area and sell your rabbits to the local... And you said it was the black community that lived across the street from there.

0:02:21 TG: Yes, and the market was 25 cents a rabbit. In Lexington at that time, they still had, down there on the railroad...

0:02:31 FR: Yeah, the railroad's still there.

0:02:33 TG: They had a market in there, open market selling everything, and they also sold rabbits, and hung 'em up by the leg, not skinned but gutted. And people would come by there you'd see 'em, looking at 'em and they'd buy 'em. I think they got more than a quarter maybe, but that was our market.

0:02:55 FR: That's how much you'd charge. Now would you go hunting with your siblings or did you just have friends?

0:03:00 TG: I didn't have any. It was usually my father. And when I came back from war, he had a beautiful Winchester skeet grade, 20-gauge shotgun with two barrels, one full-choke and one silver bore. It was a pump gun. And we went hunting with that thing, and I shot a rabbit. And when you wounded one and he's down there wiggling around on the ground, well you'd pick him up by the back legs and just knock his head on the post, kinda putting him out of his misery. Well, when I did that, that rabbit squalled and I didn't enjoy hunting anymore.

0:03:57 FR: After that.

0:03:58 TG: Yeah. I quit hunting. I like guns. I bought a lot of guns after that.

0:04:09 FR: So, you grew up an only child in the Lexington area, is that right?

0:04:15 TG: In the Depression.

0:04:16 FR: So tell me, if you wouldn't mind telling me when you were born and what your family was like as a childhood in Lexington?

0:04:27 TG: Well, my father had... In our family there'd been doctors and dentists and lawyers scattered back through 'em, and my father had an uncle in Texas named Freeman. He was unmarried and he wanted to send my father to medical school. My grandmother was divorced and so this uncle was gonna send him to medical school. And he met my mother and they got married before they got... They dropped out of high school, they didn't graduate from high school. And he got a job as a special delivery boy at the post office when he was 17 years old, delivering letters on a bicycle. He had to fib about his age. You're supposed to be 18. And he worked in that post office, the only job that he actually had, although he had a lot of side jobs...



0:05:34 FR: Farm work.

0:05:34 TG: Like Keeneland would hire people at the post office to sell admission tickets, or handle the Tote machines. And they also hired law students. They thought they were honest. And they tried to hire people. Mr. Bishop was the head guy at Keeneland at that time, and that's his son or grandson might be still runnin' it.

0:06:02 FR: Yeah. They still hire some law students to do things, like there're some law students who bar tend out there and do that sort of stuff. We have one student who was... He was more involved with Churchill Downs and working at... Instead of at Keeneland he worked at Churchill doing some media relations stuff. So we still have ties to the horse industry at the Law School, which is nice.

0:06:28 TG: Well, they paid \$15 a day, which was really a half a day.

0:06:33 FR: \$15?

0:06:34 TG: \$15 a day, which was a lot of money in 1949, '50. So when Keeneland... When the Derby was run, they took all these workers and let them work Derby day, and they'd paid you for three days. But you just had to work one real long day, from about 8:00, almost a 12-hour day. And sell... I worked out there in that infield, selling \$2 tote tickets all day long. And they were out there tossing dwarves. Really, they were girls, but you know, that old-fashioned, with a blanket, and they... I'd see a girl goin' up in the air, comin' down, and going up in the air, and drinkin'. And all kinds of rowdy and wild stuff goin' on.

0:07:31 FR: So, this was the infield at Churchill Downs.

0:07:33 TG: Yeah.

0:07:34 FR: That you were working the Derby day in the early 1950s.

0:07:40 TG: Well, probably '49 too.

0:07:47 FR: And you were selling... You said you were selling tote tickets. Was that...

0:07:49 TG: That's a \$2 bet.

0:07:52 FR: Just the \$2 bet tickets.

0:07:53 TG: Yeah. And a bunch of law students were doin' it. And we'd go out in the same car. Several of my classmates are probably mentioned in this thing that you're bringing. We'd ride in the same car.

0:08:08 FR: And they would pay you for three days of work for just one day of work, working out there in the Derby?

0:08:14 TG: For the derby, yeah. Yeah. \$45, man. Of course I had the GI Bill, and then I worked. I worked for the Central Kentucky Mortgage Company while I was in law school. It was a mistake. Took too much time away from my studies.



0:08:35 FR: Studies.

0:08:41 TG: But my wife and I didn't wanna live in some dump, and so we...

0:08:48 FR: Now where was the Central Kentucky Mortgage offices?

0:08:53 TG: It was in a bank building. It had two men. William Ezell and a fellow named Guy, G-U-Y. And I was the third man. I was hired to go out to Frankfort, and Winchester, Danville, those towns around Lexington, and solicit GI loans and farm loans. And they had a deal with lawyers. They were gonna do the title that would let me be in their office to interview prospective clients and stuff. So I met lawyers in each of those towns and saw kinda what they were doin'. All these country lawyers were general practitioners, and we kinda saw what they were doin'. And I didn't realize it, but I had a very good learning process there. Jim Clay over at Danville. Kind of a warhorse kinda guy. Pretty good lawyer, I'd say a good lawyer. And I'm trying to think of the names of some of these other lawyers in those towns. But lots in Frankfort sold for \$600, building lots. And these GI loans, the maximum loan was \$10,000, 4%, 20 years. And you had to pay 1/12 of your tax and 1/12 of your insurance into a escrow fund so they could take you by the hand and pay your bills, and also protect their interest. So when I got down here, I bought a old house and was workin' on it. So, I went and applied for a maximum GI loan and got it, and finished that house. And my payments were \$60.60 a month on the principal, plus 1/12 of tax and insurance. So they added that to the \$60.60, and that kept going up. And I kept that loan for the full 20 years.

0:12:00 TG: I built this house out here while I still owned that one and I had about two or three payments to make. For some reason I wanted to run that loan out. The last payment I made, the last month, was \$89 and something. So, I had the advantage of having a big house with hot water, heat, and stuff in it, and lived there 20 years, had three children there, walked to work, and I don't see people having that advantage now. They got all kinds of loans they get and then they can't pay 'em when they get out of school. But that really... And that's the story of probably hundreds of thousands of people. I've been threatening to do some research on that GI Bill. I think that's one of the most brilliant legislative acts that's ever come across.

0:13:07 FR: Really allowed people... America to build a middle class.

0:13:15 TG: Yes.

0:13:17 FR: And now, we see situations where it is gonna be hard for America to continue having a middle class because of the stratification of income in our country.

0:13:34 TG: It's unbelievable. I can't imagine that. When I went in the Marine Corps on January the 5th, since I'd had this one...

0:13:49 FR: Was that '44?

0:13:51 TG: 1945.

0:13:52 FR: 1945.

0:13:53 TG: When... After I got just one quarter at UK in that football scholarship. They put us on a bus.

There were eight of us. And because of my ROTC and my college, they put me in charge of the group papers. I don't know if I was in charge of the group, but I was in charge of the papers. And when we got down to Parris Island, got off the bus, there was a sergeant standing there. And then I said, "My name's Tommy Givhan. I'm from Lexington, and I'm in charge of these papers and here they are." He just looked at me, he said, "Did I ask you your damn name?" I said, "No." He said, "Uh-uh. 'No' is not the answer. It's 'no, sir.' Who put you in charge of anything? You're nothing." Oh? I'm sitting there listening. Man, he tears me down.

0:15:14 TG: So, of these eight guys, three of 'em were illiterate. Coming out of the mountains and cities or something. And we got there, they put them with another group of illiterates for training. And they tried to teach them to read a map and to do a few things on their own, but then they scattered them. I think they had a... I don't know if there's 64 men in a platoon. I know we had two squads, and they had three or four people scattered through there, and the ones that could read kinda took care of them on things where reading became... They read the maps. And those guys that couldn't read, they were not dumb. Some of them were, but they were not necessarily just dumb. They could really be smart, really, some of them. But they just didn't ever get to go to school.

0:16:18 FR: Yeah, they had a different set of skills.

0:16:21 TG: Definitely. Those guys from the mountains could take care of themselves. [chuckle] The city guys could, too, some of them. But you had guys there, small children coming from home, and everything in between. [plate clatter] A whole bunch. They were lettin' you... If you get caught in a crime and if you wanted to go to war instead of going to jail, if it wasn't really a serious crime, or it could be a serious crime but you were able to do better or something, but that was a way out. You go in there and plead military if you want to.

0:17:12 FR: At that time, in 1945, so you had gone to a semester of college...

0:17:21 TG: Quarter.

0:17:22 FR: Quarter. A quarter of college.

0:17:24 TG: About 90 days, I think. September to December.

0:17:27 FR: December. And then you were, at that point, was it pretty much all of your friends were gonna go, were enlisting anyway, or was there something that made you enlist specifically?

0:17:42 TG: My 90-day greetings. [chuckle] You got a letter from the President when you turned 18 that you had 90 days to get your affairs in order and report to... You were drafted.

0:17:56 FR: So you were...

0:17:57 TG: So I was drafted but I volunteered for the Marine Corps.

0:18:01 FR: Okay, so was it... Were you drafted or did you go into the Marine Corps before they could draft?

0:18:06 TG: No, no, I was drafted. I didn't get out of school till December. And I went on January the 5th. And a fella went with me named John Gorman, who I went all the way through school together, whose birthday was in September. And we rode that bus down. Man, when we went down there to get on that bus, his mother and his sister...

0:18:40 FR: Do you need to get the phone?

0:18:41 TG: Yeah, I'll get it. And all that bunch and then my grandmother and grandfather, and aunts and uncles, cousins.

[background conversation]

0:19:13 TG: So man, they're all crying and wailing. There's a Greyhound bus right there at the post office on the corner of Limestone and whatever that street... Bar Street or whatever that is.

0:19:28 FR: Would that have been downtown then?

0:19:29 TG: Yeah.

0:19:30 FR: Yeah, the downtown post office, which isn't that now the courthouse area?

0:19:34 TG: No, I think it's still on the corner. It's right near all that court stuff. I don't guess it's over there, my father worked there. He worked in that old post office on Main Street. And he held every...

0:19:48 FR: Well, I guess they must have torn... I'm tryin' to... I'll look into it. They... Because it was on Main and Limestone.

0:19:55 TG: No, this was on Bar and Limestone. It was North Bar... It was north...

0:20:02 FR: On North Limestone and Bar. I'll look at a map.

0:20:05 TG: They had a bar down there in Lexington called Fisher's. On the door it was painted: "A little place for big men. No women allowed." Bam! Right on the door. So my father, just a day or two before I left, he took me down to that bar and we were gonna have a drink. So we ordered a drink and this bartender said, "Well, how old's that boy?" And my father said, "Well, he's old enough to join the Marine Corps and risk his life." He said "What do you want?"

[chuckle]

0:20:51 FR: Yep, wow, so you got on the bus, went down there, and then your service was right...

0:21:00 TG: Well, let me tell you about that bus ride.

0:21:02 FR: Yeah?

0:21:02 TG: John Gorman wanted to be in the Navy. I wanted to be in the Marine Corps. I was intent on killing Japs, now. Jimmy Sharpe, my neighbor, killed on Saipan, Billy Fugaze, my best friend was young growing up was shot through the leg. Both of them are Henry Clay High School people, by the way. Not in my class, one of them was ahead of me, Fugaze... I guess both of them were ahead of me half a semester and then I ended up losing six classmates, not schoolmates, they were in school at some point or other when I was. So I had this thing that that's what I was gonna do to kill Japs to get even, I mean it was just a mean streak. So I went down to try to buy a rebel flag, a Confederate flag. I had envisioned myself taking these islands and when I did, I was gonna run up an American flag and then I was gonna run up a Confederate flag. Well, I bought a small American flag and took it with me, but I couldn't find a rebel flag.

0:22:18 TG: And that had no connotation about blacks or prejudice or anything. My family were Southern and Civil War and all that kind of stuff, but my father and mother were not racist of any sort. And it had no... I never related that flag to that. Now I'm looking at what's going on and it's just a change in morals I guess is all it is, but I'm just amazed at what I thought I was gonna do. But when I found out what was going on, the chances of me of ever getting to a point where I would be able to run up a flag... Anybody's flag if you'd wanna take a beach. It was kinda... It wasn't much chance that was ever gonna happen.

0:23:15 FR: Very Romantic idea of what you... Yeah, very Romantic idea.

0:23:19 TG: Yeah, I guess it was Romantic, I don't know what you'd call it, but it didn't...

0:23:26 FR: Never got the opportunity.

0:23:27 TG: No, but that's the attitude. Now I had a neighbor boy and he lived up there on Columbia and I lived on the corner of Woodland and Clifton Avenue.

0:23:40 FR: Woodland and what?

0:23:41 TG: Woodland and Clifton.

0:23:42 FR: Clifton.

0:23:43 TG: If you know where that library is in Lexington, that big library. Well, they came in there and built that on Clifton Pond. That was a pond. Last week I called a guy named Squat Allen. Really his name was Ed Allen, but they called him Squat. And he had a tick, he'd jerk, but he was a good athlete. And his father had a store down there on Clifton Avenue and the corner of some street, right in front of that pond. And it was a neighborhood store where you walked to buy stuff, meat and everything else. And I was up there in Lexington and saw where he had been in the hospital but he was still living, so I spent a lot of time, looked up, finally found his name, and I called and got no answer.

0:24:41 TG: But just the next week, I accidentally ran up on his name again, and I just dialed it. And his wife answered the phone. They'd been married 63 years. And he and I talked for an hour. He was bigger and older than I was, and he used to absolutely kick my butt in his football out on the sandlots. We played football there in Clifton Park. And he didn't go in the military because of that disability, but he got a basketball scholarship with Rupp, and he played ball for the University of Kentucky during that war and I noticed that he played a lot when he first got on the team and the war was going on, but when these guys started coming back, the competition got him, and he didn't get much time or as much scoring as he had gotten in the past. But that's not anything to do with the law school, but...

0:25:47 FR: [chuckle] Yeah, but it's a good... I don't mind.

0:25:49 TG: It's just incidental. If I went down, I walked from that corner, Woodland and Clifton... Now, to the east, right across the street on Woodland Avenue was the sheep farm. That's the University of Kentucky experiment station. That's that same farm on the other side that you saw in this picture with me and my father. And that sheep field was mine. [chuckle] They'd run us off and we'd be over there in the barns. And there was a pond over there with crawfish and turtles in it and all kinds of stuff, and Ken Thompson and I were just, we owned that place, man.

0:26:39 FR: So...

0:26:40 TG: And that's where they built the Cooperstown in World War II, RTM done it for all these veterans to live when they came home. They had married veterans. They had two bedrooms and three bedrooms, plywood houses, and that's where they lived. I bought eight of 'em when they tore it down and brought 'em down here to make rental property and created a slum and I couldn't stand it, I tore it down. But...

0:27:16 FR: But so, you were gonna tell me about the bus ride from Lexington down.

0:27:18 TG: I...

0:27:20 FR: So you'd mentioned that you'd had the drink with your father at that bar...

0:27:24 TG: And so, John Gormer had to have the Navy and he was preaching to me about that, well, you get to sleep in a dry place and three meals a day, and clean and all, and those damn Marines are gonna get shot on this assault stuff. And I was telling him about Jimmy Sharp and Fugaze and what I was gonna do. Well, we left each other when we got down there, they separated us, and we got back together that night, and he was selected for the Navy and I was selected for the Marine Corps. And he was happy as a lark, and I was happy as a lark. So we go off to boot camp in... He goes to Great Lakes, I go to Parris Island. Then I go to Camp Lejeune for this advanced infantry assault training. And he goes to California and they make a corpsman out of him. So, when I got through at Camp Lejeune, they send you in and let you select what you was gonna do, which was a crock. So I asked to be a sea-going Marine and we went out and they was...

0:28:50 TG: Then when they called it all out, I think it was 54 men in this platoon. And they had one guy they took as a truck driver, a mechanic. He was a truck mechanic. And took me for sea school. And the other 50...

0:29:03 FR: Sea school?

0:29:05 TG: Yeah, sea school. That's where Marines on a ship.

0:29:08 FR: Oh, okay, okay. I thought it was letter C, no it's S-E-A, sea school, like where you're out on... Okay.

0:29:14 TG: Yeah.

0:29:14 FR: Like amphibious assaults and that sort of thing.

0:29:17 TG: No, no. This is duty aboard a capital ship, battleships, heavy cruisers, and aircraft carriers. They have a Marine detachment. Historically, it was to protect the officers from mutinies by the crew. And our berth is always between the officers' quarters and the crew's quarters, from history. And that's the way it was on the USS Fall River, which was a new ship I took, was a plank. What they call, I became a plank owner when you go on a Navy ship the first crew, you have the honor of being what they call plank owner. So I got out there to go to that sea school and he's out there going to this corpsman's school, so we got together. And boy, he saw me, he said, "You dirty SOB." And I said, "What?" He said, "You don't know what they've done to me, and look what they've done to you." Said, "They made a damn corpsman out of me, and I'm with the Marine Corps doctoring you bastards. I go ashore on assaults with nothing but a bottle of iodine. I don't even get a pistol. And you, you no-good bastard, you are on a Navy ship. Three meals a day, in the dry."

[laughter]

0:30:42 FR: Yeah.

0:30:43 TG: There ain't no justice in his books, you know? We laughed about that all the time, just the flip, you know?

0:30:51 FR: Yeah.

0:30:52 TG: But if they hadn't put me in sea school, I would've been a replacement at Okinawa, and these guys I would've trained with got shot all to pieces there. And I'm really lucky to... That I've had luck riding on me. I've beat this game, I think, the game of life, altogether. It hasn't been all good, it was up and down, but altogether I've been on top pretty much all the way through. I don't know why. It's luck. Of course a lot of times you make your own luck, some.

0:31:27 FR: Yeah, you make, yeah, you make your own, yeah.

0:31:30 TG: But still.

0:31:32 FR: I'm going to refill my iced tea.

0:31:35 TG: Okay.

0:31:36 FR: Now, is there anything... As you can tell, with you doing the talking, I did all the eating here. I was able to clean my plate really well, because it was very good. But I'm gonna go get some more iced tea. Is there anything that you would like me to get you while I'm up?

0:31:49 TG: I don't think so. I'm in good shape.

0:31:52 FR: Alright, I'll be back in a minute. I'm gonna try and pour this in the sink and see if that works a little bit better, so we don't...

0:32:01 TG: Okay.

[pause]

0:32:12 FR: Alright.

0:32:17 TG: I think you gotta take the stopper out. I told you, when I was walking to school, to decide what I was gonna study. I lived up there on... Within walking distance of UK.

0:32:47 FR: So what street did you live on over there? Do you remember?

0:32:51 TG: Yeah. My first memories are on West High Street, about a block from Broadway... East of Broadway, or two. I lived in one of the oldest houses in Lexington, but nobody paid much attention to it. It was a log cabin that was covered with siding, on a very steep lot, and it had like a walk-out kitchen, and the basement might be a half-basement or something. And I can remember we had a [inaudible] we had a Model T Ford, and it was called Wheezer, and it was a coupe. And I rode around with them in that.

0:33:53 FR: Would that have been 1948, then?

0:33:56 TG: No, that would have been about 19... I was born in 1926.

0:34:00 FR: Oh, okay, so you're talk... I was thinking about when you went back to go to law school.

0:34:05 TG: Oh, I thought you... I was gonna tell you where I lived, but that's not it.

0:34:08 FR: Oh, where you lived growing up? Okay, so let's start with that, then. Where you lived growing up was this place on East High...

0:34:13 TG: On West.

0:34:13 FR: On West High Street.

0:34:15 TG: There's a big church across the street kinda, and they've all... Of course, a lot of that stuff's been torn down, and this house I lived in was torn down. But, matter of...

0:34:24 FR: And it was a log cabin with siding, a little... Yeah.

0:34:29 TG: My great-grandfather was named Richardson, and his daughter, my grandmother, always told me that he served in the Civil War. I think it was the thing, somehow, that at that time there were still quite a few Civil War veterans around. So people are... There weren't very many enlisted men, they was all colonels or something. [chuckle] But he was supposed to have been in that war, and I can remember talking to him and he'd sit in the rocking chair and look at me and say, "Sonny boy," he says, "I wonder what you're gonna amount to." Just rocking in that chair, looking at me. He was my babysitter, kinda, like they have. And I got the first dog, his name was Bobo, and he was around there. I got measles and scarlet fever at the same time, I can remember, and diphtheria was running around. And we'd go to a store... If my mother heard somebody whoop that whooping cough in a store, man, she'd grab me and took me home right now. It was, children were getting that and dying. This health thing was a different deal all the way around. People don't think about it really.

0:36:00 TG: But a lot of people didn't even... Never went to the doctor in those days. So we moved then to Woodland Avenue and Clifton and I lived over there in that house several years and played in that sheep field owned by the University of Kentucky and I ran them crazy. I told you we owned it or we acted like we owned it.

0:36:32 FR: And that was with a couple of the neighborhood boys.

0:36:34 TG: Yeah, especially Ken Thompson. He lived up on Dixie Court. You probably don't know where that is but it's on Columbia Avenue, about one, two blocks from Clifton. And there was an alley that ran from Woodland down to that street to that corner that that store was on and Billy Fugaze lived in a little house off that alley. And we were up and down that alley a lot. And they built the sewer system there, and our point of entry to it was at Woodland Avenue right down there at the bottom before you get to Euclid. There's a... You go down there, you'll see a big sewer intake which is big enough that you can stand up and run in, and they built that. I don't know how far east it goes. We didn't go east, we went west. And it came out over there at the university where the student union building is. And it has bars across there now but that's where we got out. We didn't go west. Over there west of Limestone was a kind of tough neighborhood and we didn't go over there. But man, we'd run through that sewer.

0:37:56 TG: You couldn't walk, 'cause there was water running down the middle of it. But if you ran, you could run on one side and when you started to slip in you'd jump over, run on the other side. It was a snake-type movement to get though there, and there was a lot of kids populated that sewer. I think it maybe was a sanitary sewer and a stormwater sewer, and it's probably now all stormwater. But that went down there right under Stoll Field, in high school where we played football was on Stoll Field. During the war we practiced out at Cassidy Field, or whatever the name of it was, out there behind... Was on Rose Street.

0:38:45 FR: So you were living there then at that point near Woodland and... It was Columbia, was it?

0:38:52 TG: It was Woodland Avenue and Clifton.

0:38:55 FR: Woodland and Clifton. Clifton.

0:38:57 TG: Okay. And the first time that anybody died that I knew, my age, was this kid that lived down there where that library is now and got up there and had a fire...



0:39:12 FR: Where the main library is?

0:39:13 TG: Yeah.

0:39:14 FR: Okay so right there...

0:39:15 TG: It's where he lived, on a... See that was a pond, so this road circled and people lived on both sides around this pond. And he got in there and got on fire and killed him in that, so...

0:39:30 FR: Was a house on fire?

0:39:32 TG: No, he was down there in Clifton Park and they had a fire built down there, over...

0:39:36 FR: Like a bonfire?

0:39:37 TG: Yeah. And he got in it or flashed out or some way and before they could get it out he got burned and then died. So they had his funeral and he was in that house. They had it in his home, and I went down there to that, and all that wailing and sadness and stuff, but that's the first death experience that I can remember in life, besides elderly people, maybe, dying relatives or something.

0:40:09 FR: Well, geez. I'm trying to think of... As a kid I didn't really know... I don't know if I knew anyone growing up that I knew who had died at about my age. Wasn't until I was in my 20s when I had a friend pass away from brain cancer.

0:40:29 TG: Well, I had another acquaintance in junior high school, a girl. Eighth grade, and we went out for the summer, and we went back to the ninth grade, why, she was deadly ill with what I think now was a brain cancer, and she died. I used to know her name, I don't remember it now. But I lived there and went to Jefferson Davis school, and then they changed it, and it went to...

0:41:00 FR: Was that middle school?

0:41:00 TG: No that was grade school.

0:41:01 FR: Grade school.

0:41:02 TG: Grade school. And I met this Don Russell, who was my life long friend and he's still living in South Carolina.

0:41:11 FR: What's his name again?

0:41:13 TG: Russell.

0:41:13 FR: Russell.

0:41:14 TG: Donald R. Russell.

0:41:16 FR: And so that was at the Jefferson Davis Elementary School. And you say, did they change the name then?

0:41:23 TG: No, they changed the district, and then I went to Maxwell, which was about two or three blocks north. The other school was two or three blocks west, I guess. It was over on Limestone. And then we went, when... The junior high school out there on Tates Creek Pike was built. I can't think of the name of it right now. Cassidy School was out there, kindergarten.

0:42:11 FR: Yeah. I can picture it. I can't...

0:42:11 TG: It was Morton Junior High School. And I was in the class of... In the seventh grade, and that was the first class that completed that grade school. I could look out the window and watch 'em build those subdivisions starting to go out Tates Creek Pike. They were that close to the school and digging basements with a mule and a scraper. And the teacher told me to quit looking out the window and pay attention and I was more interested in that construction so she punished me, put me in the closet, closed the door, [chuckle] and it had a window in there, [chuckle] and I just could look at it completely. I said I was lucky. [laughter]

[chuckle]

0:43:03 FR: That's funny.

0:43:03 TG: The proof was in the pudding. [chuckle]

0:43:06 FR: So I have a question that's off... Yeah.

0:43:08 TG: Oh, and this is interesting.

0:43:09 FR: Yeah.

0:43:17 TG: Frank Dickie, was a teacher at Morton Junior High School when it opened. He wasn't much older than we were, and when we came back from the war he was going to university at the same time, but he became President of the University of Kentucky. My Social Science teacher in Junior High School.

0:43:43 FR: That is interesting.

0:43:43 TG: That had a twist on it. And we'd go up there and see him. And his wife died not long ago.

0:43:53 FR: I have a question about... And you might not have known much about this or have heard, just because it might have been a little bit earlier than your time. Is I just finished reading a book, and talking to an author, her name is Maryjean Wall. And she was the horse... The columnist for race horsing at the Herald-Leader for a long time, and she also was affiliated with the history department. She wrote a book about a woman named Belle Breezy.

0:44:29 TG: Ah, the old prostitute?

0:44:30 FR: Yeah, the old prostitute. Who had her brothel, and I guess it was really also a gentlemen's club in the sense that she sold alcohol, and it was in essence a bar, the lobby of her... And that was over in that part of town that would have been...

0:44:51 TG: That was on the north of Main Street.

0:44:54 FR: North side, yeah, north of Main Street.

0:44:55 TG: It was about one block north of Main Street where Rose Street made a T intersection in those days.

0:45:04 FR: And so it was that...

0:45:05 TG: I think it was east of that but still north of Main Street.

0:45:10 FR: Now, officially, her brothel was closed down in World War I, I think. Or was it World War II? I can't remember. I'd have to look at that again.

0:45:20 TG: Well, it was going when I was going to school.

0:45:23 FR: When you were going to school? So did people...

0:45:25 TG: Yeah. We used to go over and ride by and see if it had a red light in it. We'd go by there, I don't know how many times we've driven by that place. Ken Thompson's brother...

0:45:36 FR: Now wait, when you were in school, when, what...

0:45:41 TG: I graduated from Henry Clay in 1944.

0:45:42 FR: So in high school?

0:45:44 TG: Well, maybe before that. [chuckle] We never did stop or go in or anything, but it was kind of a... You got riding around at night, you know, we'd go by there and see what was going on.

0:46:00 FR: So did you ever see her out in the community?

0:46:03 TG: No.

0:46:03 FR: No?

0:46:04 TG: But I had an algebra teacher at Henry Clay, named Netty B. Foster. She was a old-time teacher, she was... Boys sat on one side and then the girls sat on the other, and if they crossed their legs wrong she had a stick or a ruler or yardstick, and wham! She'd lay it on you. So, she owned rental property. And she, after we got out of high school, she got... Was charging too much to maintain it, and so she got up on the roof and fixing the roof. And the whores lived in this house that she rented to those prostitutes and they were still dealing with Belle Breezing. And she fell off the roof and broke her hip. [chuckle]

0:47:00 FR: Oh gosh.

0:47:02 TG: I think it was after she retired from Henry Clay. But, she was really a good teacher.

0:47:12 FR: And so she also allowed these women to make their money and do their livelihood in her rental property?

0:47:17 TG: No, I think they went to Breezing's. They went to work at Breezing's.

0:47:23 FR: Oh, they would but then they came home to live where she had...

0:47:27 TG: I didn't see that, but that's what I presume was happening. I don't think she was running any... Letting any commercial business go on there. [chuckle] Can you imagine a schoolteacher now getting caught running a thing like that? [chuckle] Oh God, you'd never heard the end of it. Henry Clay had a good school.

0:48:01 TG: It's funny. Just before I came down here at Shepherdsville, they had a principal, but he couldn't make it down here. He didn't know what the heck he was doing, so they fired him. And he ended up up at Lexington in Fayette County as the principal of Henry Clay High School. So while this was going on, the school board in Indiana, or Illinois, decided they wanted to build a high school. And as it progressed, they decided they wanted to build the best high school in America. Maybe for civic pride. Well, they looked around and nobody knew what the best high school in the United States was. So Northwestern and some other college undertook a study to discover the best high school in the United States. And they finally figured out the best way to do it was to contact all the colleges and have them review their records and see which schools consistently provided them with the best students. I think that was the core plan.

0:49:22 TG: Well, they got 50 schools in America on this list of the best high schools in the United States. Two of them were in Kentucky. One of them was Eastern in Louisville and the other one was Henry Clay. So this guy we ran out of Bullitt County just before I got here as a no good, [chuckle] he was able to maintain a high school at one of the best 50 in America. And then, Joe Hall was basketball coach down here where he started. Well, what did he know about basketball? He sure didn't know whose son ought to play. And they ended up running him off before it was over. I don't think he likes to tell the tale about being run off, but it's really rich to me. So he knocks around a little bit and he went to school at Sewanee with John and, not only was with them, but John and Lisa are graduates of Sewanee and they had a connection with him some way that way.

0:50:29 TG: So he coaches here and coaches there and all at once he's Rupp's assistant and I think he played for Rupp ahead of time. And he played also at Sewanee. But so Rupp picks him as his successor and so all at once he's basketball coach at UK and he can field a national champion, but he wasn't good enough for Bullitt County. [laughter] And he brought his team down here when Casey was playing. I don't know if you remember Kyle Casey. He was a championship basketball player.

0:51:11 FR: Probably a little bit before my time.

0:51:13 TG: In that era. When they came...

0:51:15 FR: I was born in '78, so I would've been... And he was coach in that time period. So it would've been when I was a little kid.

0:51:25 TG: But he brought this team down here to play in a gym at Shepherdsville. They were doing that to kinda... Trying to integrate more with the Kentucky population as a whole.

0:51:39 FR: Well, it worked.

0:51:40 TG: I don't if the economic... I don't know if the educational side of it was in on that. I think they tried to reach out but they hadn't done much with that. Maybe lately they're doing something, but they weren't reaching out too good to all these country places, rural counties. So we decided that we'd have the basketball team up here for a dinner when they got through. Which they did, they filled this place up. They had to add seats and, hell, they was all over the place. And so I said, "Well, who do you wanna invite?" He thought a while and so he... This one fella, he said, "Well, that's who I want," he and his wife, just one couple. Of course he had a lot of bad feelings about this. And this guy was his... He fished with him. His name was Shaw, he and his wife. She was a schoolteacher. And she sat right there and he sat there, and I think Joe was sitting here.

0:52:51 TG: But Shaw's wife was there in that chair and Shaw was sitting at that one. And they had a wonderful time. And we even had that team out there in the garage. We had tables and all set up everywhere. Well, we had to get the sheriffs out here. I could've sold tickets, easy \$100 a plate, and that never dawned on me to come in here. All these people were crazy. They wanted in here bad. So he came back in that with a total triumph in overcoming this group that kinda shunned him and treated him badly. Very good thing in what goes around comes around, to me. That was a perfect example of that working. And the mayor down here turns out to be a scalawag, but he did name a street Joe B. Hall, it's downtown here. It's on 2nd Street. Running right in front of the local library. The local library is now on Joe B. Hall Street [chuckle] and the railroad.

[laughter]

0:54:09 FR: That is funny. My goodness.

0:54:13 TG: Well, I'm ruining you. I'm sitting here talking and enjoying you listening to me.

0:54:18 FR: No, I'm... This is what I'm here to do. This is the project, so...

[laughter]

0:54:24 TG: Well, you don't want anything else to eat? We've got that dessert coming.

0:54:27 FR: Well, I'm fine for right now.

0:54:29 TG: Okay.

0:54:30 FR: I'm good on... This was a very nice little salad that was put together. A lot of different stuff on it. You said your... Is it your daughter that made it?



0:54:40 TG: Yeah.

0:54:40 FR: And it's Lisa?

0:54:41 TG: No, Lisa's the judge.

0:54:43 FR: Oh, Lisa's the judge?

0:54:44 TG: Yeah. She's down there working.

0:54:46 FR: So, who is your other daughter?

0:54:47 TG: It's Ellen.

0:54:48 FR: Ellen?

0:54:49 TG: Yeah, Ellen Foster Givhan.

0:54:53 FR: And does she live here, too?

0:54:54 TG: Yeah. She's never been married. She's been asked a number of times, but she was telling me she can't find one that measures up to me. [chuckle] It's screwing everything up. But I think that happens sometimes. But these kids are probably overestimating Daddy.

0:55:20 FR: So, Ellen has lived here and then...

0:55:25 TG: Yeah, Ellen...

0:55:27 FR: Is that... So it's you and Ellen that live in this home now?

0:55:29 TG: In this house, and then John and Lisa are over there.

0:55:34 FR: Over where?

0:55:35 TG: On the other side of that library.

0:55:37 FR: Oh, so there's... See, that's what I thought, there was an attached home.

0:55:39 TG: They live in... Their apartment's over there, if you wanna call it that.

0:55:42 FR: So it's an apartment?

0:55:43 TG: And Christian, their son's room is upstairs.

0:55:47 FR: So, this is quite the family compound then.

0:55:51 TG: Yeah.

0:55:51 FR: So it's you and Ellen in this part of the house, and then over on the other side of the library, Lisa and her husband is...

0:56:00 TG: They're there and then John... Christian Givhan Spainhour, their son, my grandson, has a room up there.

0:56:06 FR: Up there?

0:56:06 TG: He's married, and he got his doctorate at the University of South Carolina Medical School, Charleston, in Micro Bioinformatics. He married a lawyer and he's living down in Atlanta but he's got his room here with stuff in it. And my son's got his room here with stuff in it. Lisa's room over here's still got stuff in it. We've got an entry guest room, and Ellen's got her room, and then I got my room, and over there their bedroom joins the library, my bedroom upstairs joins the library, and they got one... And the upstairs, Christian's bedroom, joins the library upstairs, two of those can get out on the balcony area, come down and of course there's a lot books.

0:57:06 FR: Now that looks like that portion was built more recently?

0:57:09 TG: It was. It was back...

0:57:11 FR: So this was built in the 1970s...

0:57:13 TG: It was in '70.

0:57:14 FR: 1970 is when you put this home in?

0:57:18 TG: And then this one was built...

0:57:20 FR: And then the extension?

0:57:20 TG: And it took a long time, I made a lot of mistakes over there.

0:57:23 FR: What would you think your biggest mistake was?

0:57:25 TG: Building it myself.

0:57:27 FR: Oh, the extension was built yourself? Okay, so that was your big mistake, is...

0:57:31 TG: Yeah. I needed more supervision, that could better coordinate the trades and finish something. I thought I was saving money. And then I liked it, I did a lot of work on it myself, labor work, I didn't have much skill, mixing concrete and...

0:57:57 FR: And so when was that? When did that start, when did the extension start?



0:58:03 TG: I don't know when it started but it ended about 10 years ago. It probably took me four or five years to finish it.

0:58:11 FR: So it ended in around 2005, is when it was sort of finished? Well.

0:58:19 TG: Yeah, maybe.

0:58:20 FR: It looks wonderful. I mean it looks...

0:58:23 TG: Well, it is, I think.

0:58:24 FR: Yeah, I think it looks great over there. The library connection is a great... Looks really good.

0:58:33 TG: But John Dumas's son designed that library. Dumas designed the house but I think he designed that library. I've never seen one like it so I don't know if they copied it somewhere or not, but I like it.

0:58:51 FR: Yeah.

0:58:54 TG: But I used to, in high school, I'd go in the library and on the table they had a big dictionary, Webster's Dictionary about a foot thick or 8 inches thick...

0:59:10 FR: Unabridged, yeah.

0:59:11 TG: And it had all those pictures in it. And I'd just read that dictionary. I don't know why but I was interested in the dictionary. I can remember, Maxwell Grade School in the 5th grade, they had one of those classrooms, made a library out of it. I'd go over there and peruse that library. And the first book that I can remember reading was "The Swiss Family Robinson." I'm goin' around there perusin' that and I saw that and they had a jungle scene or something that made me take it out and look at it, and I read that when I was very young over there in that home on Clifton Avenue. And my father was always... They were trying to teach me to read. And he'd read Tarzan books, and I'd listen. And so he'd skip a paragraph and I'd catch it. Tickled him to death. [chuckle] I almost knew what was coming when he was readin' it over and over and over again, and he'd laugh about that.

1:00:35 FR: Yeah. So you grew up in a home that had books?

1:00:39 TG: Yeah.

1:00:42 FR: And your father was a postman?

1:00:44 TG: Well, he was, but he held every job in that post office from special delivery boy on a bicycle to General Foreman. And when he died, he died at age 54, cigarette smoking and cancer and all that, man, it was bad. But he had held every job in that post office, and he had about 60 or 70 men working under him, and five of 'em were college graduates. And he said the five caused him more trouble than all the rest of 'em put together, that the college graduates thought they had something coming because their degrees, and that they were better than other people because of their degrees. And they were looking down on people and trying to tell him what to do, and difficult to take orders. And it caused him a lot of trouble when he was 45 to 54, dealing with these.

1:01:40 FR: Yeah. So you...

1:01:41 TG: Now, a lot of people came to work down there after World War II, and he had a lot of veterans working for him. Then on Christmas, when the mails were heavy, all that stuff came shipped by rail when you sent packages in those days, wasn't much trucking business doing it. And they'd go down there and unload these mailbags that were full of parcel post. And he would hire all my friends from high school to work, and we'd work at night mostly. And you'd work 12 or 15 hours a day on the clock. They got on us cause nobody checked out for lunch. But we would work when the train came in. They'd be come in at all times, and of course they were coal-fired trains, and the soot and stuff was on these mailbags. And you had to wear a handkerchief over your nose, and by the end of the night it was just black, where you were breathing this dust coming off of those bags. And it...

1:02:50 FR: So that would have been in... Your high school friends? So high school then...

1:02:53 TG: Yeah, we were in high school and then we came back in college too, yeah.

1:02:56 FR: Now when did you come back from the war, or from service?

1:02:58 TG: I got discharged August of 25th of 1946, and just barely got back in time to get into UK that first semester. And of course it was full of veterans coming home.

1:03:13 FR: So it was from January of 1945 to August of 1946 was your service?

1:03:19 TG: Yeah. And my ship turned out to be the flagship for the target fleet at Bikini, those atom bomb tests. And you see this stuff on the screen with the atom bombs going off and these ships all in a circle. That was the pattern of this target fleet that was anchored as targets for those two atom bombs, tests. They had goats on the outside, dogs, horses, everything, pigs, on these ships, and all kinds of military equipment. And dropped one bomb under... It went off underwater. And then one went off overhead. And we were the closest ship to those explosions, as the flagship. And they'd turned a ship into the target area. And you couldn't see it because it was over the horizon. Now, if you got way up high, you might've been able to see some of the mast or something on those ships.

1:04:27 TG: But the marine detachment, they had us come out and get on that deck in formation. And we were at ease and then they gonna... Ready for countdown. And so they made us sit down, turn our backs on the target, cover our eyes, and they had this countdown, ten, nine, eight, and doing that. And when he got down, zero's all clear. Well, we jumped up to look. Well, then you could hear the... Then you heard it. It took that sound a little while to come, it was ten miles or whatever it was. And then you see that plume coming up out of there, that mushroom. And when they were lining up, I looked up, and these officers are up on the bridge, well, they all started to get ready for this thing, and all at once the bridge is cleared. And all this armor that comes down over the windows, when you're in a fight, they cover all the windows and everything, they let all that down. And here's these officers going in this covered thing, and here we are out on the deck. And I'm saying, "What's going on here?" [chuckle] But it all worked out. Some of those guys on that ship... The ship became radioactive. That happened in July and August, those...

1:05:57 FR: What was the name of the ship again?

1:06:00 TG: USS Fall River.

1:06:00 FR: Fall River.

1:06:01 TG: CA...

1:06:02 FR: Which I guess was out of Fall River, Massachusetts? Yeah.

1:06:04 TG: Yeah. CA 131. The bow of that ship is up there now in that park, or that ship museum area. The Marines were battle stationed, some of 'em, on twin 20-millimeter anti-aircraft cannons, we had two of 'em right there on the bow. But they didn't get them, they cut the bow too short. But right 10 feet from where those anchors are was these two pods where these marines were, but my station was a midship. 'Cause I was a gunner on a twin 20-millimeter cannon. The Marines manned the 20-millimeters as their battle stations. On the ship, on I went ashore, I had a... Carried a BAR, Browning Automatic Rifle.

1:06:56 FR: So, when you were in this sort of this target grouping that kind of watched the atomic tests, or were in charge of the atomic tests...

1:07:06 TG: Yeah, we were the flagship.

1:07:08 FR: You were the flagship of the atomic test group.

1:07:09 TG: The admiral that was on our ship that was in charge of it.

1:07:14 FR: And so then, when the bombs were actually dropped, were you all the closest US ships at that time?

1:07:22 TG: Yeah.

1:07:23 FR: Yeah. So, how close to Japan were you all?

1:07:29 TG: Well, I don't know. We were on the Bikini Atoll.

1:07:32 FR: Bikini... That's... Yes, the atoll. Yeah, yeah. Alright.

1:07:38 TG: You know, we went ashore...

1:07:40 FR: Now when you. Wait, did you all... Was your ship engaged in naval battles while you were in the service?

1:07:44 TG: No.

1:07:44 FR: No.

1:07:46 TG: No.

1:07:48 FR: Well that's...

1:07:49 TG: Really lucky.

1:07:50 FR: Fortunate. Yeah, you were just saying earlier that you sort of have ridden luck for a long time.

1:08:04 TG: Well, I think I got more good out of that than they got out of me. When I got off that bus and gave that sergeant those papers, and he got all over me, we went to a warehouse. Cussin' us and everything, getting over there, and they issue a sea bag, and in it's some clothes. And everything they gave you, they'd hit you in the belly with it. Boom! Not that way but just, boom. Just a rough touch. And you put that all in this sea bag. Well, some of these guys, they really weren't very strong. It turned out there was about 54 or 60 or something altogether. Said, "Now we're gonna go to our barracks. Follow me." And this guy starts off at a dead run. Well, I just took that sea bag and threw it over my shoulder and I'm right behind him. He says, "Follow me and keep up." That's what he said. Well, I was right there on his heels. And 'bout halfway across... This was a huge parade ground. 'Bout halfway across, I looked back and my God, these guys were straggling everywhere. Some of them dragging the sea bags trying to get across there. Well, I was right on his butt because I was in such good shape from that football at UK. And he couldn't outrun me in distance, he probably could've outrun me in speed, I wasn't that fast, but stamina, I'm right on his case.

1:10:00 TG: So, when he gets over there, turns around, right there I am, there's nobody within 150 yards of us. Well, that ticked him off and it marked me. And so later on, just a few days, it's the... We were falling out and he said, "Anybody here had any military training? How 'bout ROTC?" And I put my hand up. "Oh, an educated eight-ball. You're just what we need. Now, come up here, I'm gonna show you where you are." So they put me on the corner of the Second Platoon. They lined you up by height, kinda. And he said, "Now, you're to keep two paces behind this platoon. Wherever we march, whatever we do, we're counting off of you and you better be two paces. And I'm gonna be watching it and it's gonna be your ass if you're two paces are one inch off." So, it was my job to keep up, but not ahead, just right there. And boy, every day they found that I wasn't doing it and I was right there on that corner, easy to get to. These other guys on the left and in the back, they didn't get anything. They weren't there in the front, no, damn, they dumped that on me all the time. But it turned out, I think that might've been good. I had to learn to take that pressure and keep your mouth shut.

1:11:41 FR: Yeah.

1:11:44 TG: But that training was pretty good. They had a 55-gallon hot water heater for us to take a shower with in January. And about three guys got a hot shower, maybe three got lukewarm, and the rest of us got the ice cold.

1:12:06 FR: Yeah.

1:12:06 TG: And I got this bronchitis or something. I used to get lung congestion with... And cough up phlegm, green stuff. And they didn't have penicillin and stuff at that time.

1:12:21 FR: Yeah, so it was like you were infected or had... Yeah.

1:12:23 TG: And I spent three days with a real sore throat in their hospital and almost got thrown into another platoon 'cause I was losing it, and you don't want to do that if you can keep from it. But I got through all that. My grandmother came down there to visit me. She had a daughter in Florida, and so she gets on a Greyhound bus. She must have been sixty. She gets on a Greyhound bus by herself with a bag in her hand going down to Florida. Well, she detours over to Parris Island. That bus comes up there, I think Amnesty or something is this little town there at the gate, and so she's starting to get off and the driver, she said he's... The bus driver said, "Madam, you can't get off here." She says "Oh, I come to see my grandson. Sonny Givhan, he's from up at Lexington, he's down here gonna be a Marine!" And he says, "But that's a marine base, Madam. You can't get in there!" "Oh, but my grandson's in there" "Well, they won't let you in." "Well, I'm gonna see." He said, "Well, the next bus comes back in about five hours and you haven't got a very good place to be. I just thought I'd tell you." And she said, "Oh, I'll be alright." So she goes over there... And it's what they're telling me later, I wasn't there. But she goes over and it starts off with this guard. "You can't come in here." "Oh, my grandson, Sonny Givhan, he's from Lexington, he's down here gonna be a Marine."

1:14:02 TG: She said, "I come down here to see!" "Well, you can't get in here." "Well, I gotta get in here, I'm here to see my grandson." They call the corporal of the guard, same thing. Sergeant of the guard, same thing. Finally they get a major down there, and so finally he puts her in a jeep and brings her in there to a bench at a bus stop near a PX. I'm out in a bivouac under pup tents. Somebody comes over there, snarls, "Sir, this is Givhan." Or Given or something, they didn't call it right. And they, "Come with me." And I said, "Well, where are we going?" He says, "By God, I said, 'Come with me.' You'll find out when you get there." So I got in the jeep and went over there and there's Granny sitting on a damn bench at the PX. "Well, hello, sonny boy!" And so we sat down there and talked about a half hour. And she said, "I'd like an ice cream." Said, "How about going and getting us an ice cream cone? Here's a dime." I think it was a nickel a piece or something. So I took the dime and went up there and got two ice creams and when I came back she was gone. She got on a bus 'cause she didn't want to say goodbye to me. I just... What's that got to do with UK, nothing. I was just... It's...

1:15:29 FR: But I... No, it doesn't. Yeah. She just couldn't say goodbye to her grandson, yeah...

1:15:34 TG: No. Of course that war was raging then in the Pacific. My mother and father went to the Kentucky Theater in Lexington in February of 1945. Iwo Jima, by marine assault had occurred. That Pathé News had photographs of stuff. And they were at that invasion and taking pictures of these marines in the surf that were dead, and the surf was rolling their bodies up on the beach, and that water went out and it rolled them. And she saw that and my dad said she jumped up in that theater and squalled, "My baby, my baby!" And he had to pick her up kicking and carried her out of that theater back to the car. She was really shocked by that. That's just some of the civilian side to all that stuff. During that Depression...

1:16:43 FR: When the war started, you were in high school, right? Or middle...

1:16:47 TG: No. No. I was early on maybe in junior high school.

1:16:52 FR: Junior high school.

1:16:54 TG: My father and I had been rabbit hunting, Sunday, December the 7th, down Tates Creek Pike, at Clays... That's not Clays Ferry, it's... But they didn't have a bridge down there. Now I guess they still don't have one, I don't know. But we were down there on this side of the river, hunting. Colder than blue blazes. We got in this old... He had this '37 Dodge...

1:17:19 FR: Yeah.

1:17:20 TG: We got in that and were coming home when we turned the radio on and that's when we found out Pearl Harbor. And of course he never even thought that I would be in it. And he was in his late 30s or... I guess a little bit too old. He had to register for the draft but he was married with a child, and he was in a classification that they didn't take him yet. And he missed World War II just a little bit. He was born in 1901 and so that war got over before he was ready to get in it.

1:18:06 FR: And so he missed World War I. And then he was a little too old for World War II.

1:18:12 TG: But he said to me when in 1931, Roosevelt was running against Hoover, I think, for president. And this Depression was really bringing down. And he had this job. He got paid every week. We had a car, had a ice... Didn't have a fridge, had a ice box. We had a ice box, we didn't have a refrigerator yet. And he said, "I wanna show you something and I don't want you to forget it." And he took me down on Short Street where the jail, the old jail in Lexington was. And that building had a vestibule that was open. It had a circular arch, and it was open and a door to the inside door to the jail was about 15 or 20 feet inside this vestibule. And they'd set up a soup kitchen. Inside... It was kinda drizzling and wet and cold, and they set this soup kitchen up. And they were serving a cup of coffee, and bean soup, and cornbread. And there was a line of guys, I didn't see a woman in it, that went from that jail two blocks down into Belle Breezing territory and turned left. I don't know how far it was to the left. And there was not a smile on that face. It was the most depressed. Their body language was total depression and hopelessness. And they were smoking these roll-your-own cigarettes. And some of 'em had on these caps, not that baseball caps, but those old caps.

1:20:01 FR: Yeah.

1:20:01 TG: Some of 'em had on hombergs and good suits that were threadbare all of... Heels run down. Some of 'em in overalls. But all the clothes was all wore out. They were wore out. But not a woman in it. And so, he told me that he had never seen the times like that in this country. And he didn't know what was gonna happen. But that we were gonna be... He said, " We, we're gonna be for Roosevelt. Because we think he's for the working man. And Hoover has not been favorable to the working class. So we're gonna be for Roosevelt and hope he wins. But don't you forget this." Well, I never did forget it. And Roosevelt won. And so I watched that thing develop from a time when he started putting the NRA and the CCC and trying to pack the Supreme Court. All that was going on while I was growing up. Little, but I was kinda growing up. And my father kinda followed that stuff. And then this war started in '39. And I was born in '26.

1:21:32 TG: So I don't know, I guess I was in junior high school that's what I can remember 'bout these Germans dive-bombing Poland, and these Russians... All at once, Germany turning on Russia, knife in the back deal. But still, never thought that I'd be in it. And then we got along there. But most people wanted in it. They wanted it. The country was really unified. They knew that really our back was to the wall if they ever got over here and took it over. But when I look at it now, I didn't realize how small Europe is. My gosh, you get over there and you could go from Holland to Germany. And all that fighting was slowing it down. But my gosh, in a day's time you could drive all over that place. They get over here, think they gonna take his country. How many men is it gonna take to occupy this country? You couldn't do it unless you had a bunch of Quislings. I saw this thing on the television here last week where these Japanese were sending these bombs with balloons.

1:22:54 FR: Saw that too.

1:22:55 TG: Did you see that?

1:22:56 FR: Well, I didn't see the television, I heard a radio report about it. About how one of 'em actually landed in Washington state. It hurt some school children.

1:23:09 TG: It killed 'em.

1:23:09 FR: Yeah. Killed 'em. Yeah. But the geography of the United States allows us certain geopolitical advantages such as really impossible to invade pretty much.

1:23:25 TG: After I was... This group that I grew up with, there were five guys, two of 'em are dead now, and their wives, our wives, and we, they get, set up a place, and every year we go have a long weekend. Every year. And we went to Pikes Peak one time. And I got on that train, that little... That train is leveled but it went it with a gear on it or a cable or something. It was too steep for the wheels to turn. It had... Pulled it up. Got up on top of Pikes Peak and found out that that song was... "America the Beautiful," that was written by a schoolteacher, the words. And she had been up on Pikes Peak and seen that view and she wrote those words. I don't know if it was put to a song already written or somebody wrote the music to that later. But I went out on that open space up there and, boy, it was cold. That wind was blowing and it was ice and snow and stuff around there but it was really cold. The sun was out, bright, and I looked out over that area that they were looking when she wrote that song, and thought about that waving grain and all that, and that's the most patriotic-inducing thing that you could do. That really got to me.

1:25:08 FR: Yeah. Well, do you want to take a break for a minute? I would like to use the gentleman's room.

1:25:13 TG: Oh, we can't have... I don't have time.

[laughter]

1:25:16 FR: Then I'm gonna clear our plates and then maybe we can move to the library. Does that...

1:25:19 TG: Well, you want your ice cream?

1:25:21 FR: Well, if you're having some I'll have a little cup.



1:25:23 TG: Well, if you're not ready for it, maybe we'll eat it later.

1:25:26 FR: Well, maybe let's do it later then. Is that okay?

1:25:28 TG: Okay, she's got some cookies and stuff.

1:25:30 FR: Yeah. I'm gonna just run to the gentleman's room and then...

1:25:32 TG: Go do it.

1:25:33 FR: We'll move to the library. I'm gonna...

1:25:34 TG: Well, you've been a kind person to...