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ALAN BROWN

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Oral History Transcript of Alan Brown

Interviewer: Aubrey Jaap, Clark Grant

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Transcribed: May 21st, 2019 by Shawn McDermott

AUBREY JAAP: So Alan, it's August 3rd, 2018. We're here with Alan Brown. Alan, do you want to tell me -- what are your parents' names?

ALAN BROWN: My parents' names were Alma and Lyle Brown. My mother was born in St. Paul, Minnesota of Norwegian heritage and my father was born in Davis, Illinois of German heritage. I don't know exactly how they met, but they did meet. Well, I do actually know. It's a long story and isn't real apropos for this interview, I don't think. But anyhow, they married in St. Paul Minnesota in 1922. My father had been in Europe during WWI. After he came back from service in WWI, he and my mother were married. I was born then in January of 1923 so I'm 95 years old at the present time. To get to my story, that's my parents. My father was in the laundry business in Minneapolis during the Depression. Like many other businesses, he went broke in the laundry business, lost everything, then went back to his previous occupation as a railway mail clerk. The two of them then lived in Minneapolis. I grew up in Minneapolis. They retired to St. Petersburg, Florida. Both of them were healthy all their lives and they lived long lives. Both of them died in Florida at the ages of 87, 88 -- they were mid-80s. They were buried in Florida, then. I was born in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, as I said, in 1923, and my parents then had moved to Minneapolis when I was about four or five years old.

So, I grew up in Minneapolis. Attended Roosevelt High School. Graduated from high school in 1940 and started in at the University of Minnesota School of Mines in October of 1940. Everything was going along fine. I enjoyed school, was doing well, and of course everyone knows that Pearl Harbor came along then in December of 1941. That was the middle of my sophomore year at school. I had joined the ROTC when I entered college and had a decision to make. I could have stayed in the ROTC and completed another two years in ROTC and gotten an army commission. In the meantime, I'd been in school and I didn't want to do that. I wanted to do something, you know, so I quit school. I enlisted in the Navy then, in early 1942, and I went through the aviation cadet program and became a fighter pilot during WWII.

Anyways, after the war, I went back to school and graduated in 1948 as a mining engineer and got a job at the Anaconda Company in Butte, Montana. My [inaudible] a fellow that I had gone to high school with and had also gone in the navy had gone back to school before I did and graduated and he had gone to Butte to work for the Anaconda Company. He would write back and tell me what a great place Butte was and how good a town it was. There were lots of girls here and everything like that. So, I was 25 years old at the time and single, but anyhow, I came to Butte then in June of 1948. This friend of mine that had come here previously had lined up a blind date for me. So, after I got situated in a room at the YMCA, I met him at the Heidelberg Bar at North Main Street.

At that time, the Heidelberg Bar was the home away from home for the young engineers who were going to work for the Anaconda Company. There were quite a few of them, then. Anaconda was the king of the hill here in Butte at that time. There were probably 50, 55 engineers in the engineering department working in the old Hennessy building downtown. As I said, their home away from home was the Heidelberg Bar. So, I went to the Heidelberg Bar that first evening that I was in town and they had lined up a date for me with a young Butte girl named Marion Boyle. Marion had graduated in high school in 1942, gone into nursing training at Sacred Heart Hospital in Spokane, and she herself had gone into the Army then during the latter part of the war as a nursing cadet or a nurses aid or something. So, she had military service, also. Anyhow, at the time, she was back home, living with her parents, and working at the old Murray Hospital in downtown Butte.

So, we started going together. Sort of hit it off a little bit. About two weeks after we met, she informed me that she was going to be leaving town in about another week. She had taken a job up in Conrad, Montana working with a hospital up there. So, about two weeks after we met, she took off and went to Conrad for a while. Well, we wrote back and forth. I was working here in Butte, and she was working up there, but I had a car and I would drive up to Conrad on some weekends. She would take the bus down to Butte on other weekends. So, things were going along pretty good, anyhow. The upside was that we finally became engaged.

I asked -- did the formal thing. I asked her father for her hand in marriage on New Years Eve of 1949. He was delighted. It worked out well. Marion were married then in May 1949. We lived in Butte, then, for the next 32 years. We lived on West Granite Street. Raised a family, had seven kids, and married and worked off and on at the hospital. She was pretty busy raising kids, and I was busy working. I decided to take a job as a young engineer with Anaconda. At that time, they had what they called an Operational Training Program for young engineers. I don't know if you've ever heard of this or not.

JAAP: Tell me a little bit about it.

BROWN: What it was, for young engineers, and incidentally the pay at the time was \$300 a month for young engineers, which was pretty good money in those days. The idea of the training program was that you spent a fair amount of time. Actually, I spent a year working underground in the mines as an underground miner. Then, the program called for after a year of experience gained working as a miner underground, you were assigned to different operational departments. I spent some time in the mining research department. I spent some time in the geological department, sampling underground. I spent some time then in the ventilation department. Different support departments for the underground operations. At that the end of that time, you were a shift boss. Got a job as a shift boss at one of the operating mines. From that point on, you were on your own, so to speak [inaudible]. So, I went through that training program, and there were quite a few guys that started that program, but not too many finished it. Mostly, a lot of guys would come to Butte that were already married, and their wives didn't like Butte at all, for some reason or another. It was too rough of a town for some of the young, married ladies that

didn't -- it was too tough a place for them. I kind of outsmarted them by marrying a local girl.

[00:10:28]

She was used to Butte. Anyhow, the first job I got then was as a shift boss at the Badger Mine. During the succeeding years, I worked as a shift boss for a lot of the different mines. Leonard Mine, the Anselmo Mine, I'm trying to think of all of them. Proceeded from mine to another because some of the mines would close down and other mines would open. Eventually, the Badger shut down and I went to the Lexington Mine. Then the Lexington shut down for a while and I wound up at the Anselmo. Anyhow, I spent about almost five years as a shift boss, working underground at practically every mine on the hill at that time. One time or another.

Then, in about 1956 or so, I was promoted to assistant mine foreman and your duties changed somewhat. Instead of direct supervision of the miners themselves, as an assistant foreman, had a section of the mine and six or eight shift bosses working for you, then. You were responsible for the total operation. You weren't actually the hands-on, with the miners, but you were responsible for that section of the mine as the assistant foreman. Most of the large mine would have four or five assistant foremen. There would be maybe 20 shift bosses or so, something like that. Then, I worked as an assistant foreman at different mines. Different things came up that were of interesting.

It might be of interest. For example, I was the nightshift assistant foreman at the Anselmo Mine. I believe it was 1957 when the strike came along. The Anselmo was shut down and never reopened. I was the guy that shut the mine down. Not me personally, but I was the assistant foreman on shift this particular night, and [inaudible] Larry was the General Superintendent of mines at that time. I was working nightshift, of course, nightshift assistant foreman responsible for the mine. I got a call at just about 9:00 that night, just as I was coming up for lunch, this gentleman on the phone knew who I was, he says, "This is [inaudible] Larry. And I want you to listen very closely to what I tell you. I want you to shut down the operations there. There will be no more blasting. There will be no more mining. When those miners go back to work after their lunch period, I want them to start stripping all of the equipment out that they can get ahold of. I want all the [inaudible] machines out on the surface. Whatever you can do, start stripping all of the equipment out of the mine. No more mining. No more blasting. No more drilling. Get as much as you can accomplish in what's left of the shift, here, get it to the surface. The mine is shut down."

Well, that was a big, big deal for the middle of the night, the middle of a shift. A guy on the telephone telling me to shut the mine down. I got to thinking, well, I better check this out a little bit. There might be somebody pulling some kind of a gag from a barstool some place. So, I asked Vic, "Where are you calling me from?" He said, "I'm at my office." I said, "Okay. I'm going to hang up and I'm going to call back to your office, just to verify that we are on the same page here." "Okay, that's a good idea."

So, I called back, and it was [inaudible] Larry, at his office, that was giving me these orders. I asked him, "Does Sam know about this?"

Sam Heatherly was the mine Superintendent. He was an old-time Butte miner around here. Kind of a crusty, cranky individual. He said, "No, I can't get ahold of Sam."

Bob Cox was the foreman at that time. He says, "I haven't been able to get ahold of Bob Cox, either. So that's why I've called you. It's up to you to shut the mine down."

So, that was what we did. When went back down to the mine, the shift bosses and the assistant foreman all came up to the surface for the nightshift. The miners all ate underground, of course, all the time. When we went back down, the shift bosses went back down in the mine, that was the order of business. Everybody stopped mining. Everybody started to strip the mine. Get all of the machinery they could -- mucking machines, drills, everything. Start getting everything to the surface. That was what we were doing. Along about 11:00 or near midnight, Sam Heatherly showed up, on the sheets by the headframe, on the line. Here's all this equipment coming out of the mine. Sam: "What the hell are you doing, Brown? What's going on here? What's going on here?"

He was really upset. Anyhow, that was what was done. Shut the Anselmo down that night, and never reopened after that.

JAAP: How did you feel making that call? Was it just something you had to do, and did it?

BROWN: Well, I didn't make the call.

JAAP: But having to be the guy who...

BROWN: Well, yeah. I had to do what I was told. That was the General Superintendent telling me. I remember one time when I first when to work for Sam Heatherly, at the mine -- as I said, he was a crusty old guy -- as an assistant foreman, the first time I was nightshift for Sam Heatherly there. I came to the mine ready to go to work at 4:30 or whatever it is. I go in to see Sam to get my orders for the night. One of the things he told me, "Brown," he says, "As the assistant nightshift here, you're in charge of this mine. I don't want to hear anything. I don't want you to call me. I don't want you to ask me for advice. I don't want my telephone to ring. If you can't handle whatever happens here, you're in the wrong job."

[00:18:37]

That was the advice I got from Sam. So, when I got the order from [inaudible] Larry to shut the mine down, and he couldn't get ahold of Sam, I wasn't going to try to get ahold of Sam, either. So that was the story about shutting the mine down. I was assistant foreman of several different mines. There were some other incidents that came along that

I happened to be the nightshift assistant foreman at the Leonard Mine. I've forgotten exactly what the dates or when this was, but I knew there was something going on because when I drove into the mine yard, there were a lot of official cars there. There was an ambulance there. A lot of the top officials of the company were there. I walked into the office. Bud Powell and Roy Garrett were the superintendent, the foreman at the Leonard Mine at that the time. Well, the minute I walked in, Bud Powell called me in and Roy Garrett and they says "We've got a real problem. There are three men that went into the mine." This was Ernie Brisbane, Ray Leif, and Joe Shugert. Joe Shugert was a ventilation engineer. Ernie Brisbane was a chief safety engineer. And Ray Leif was foreman [inaudible].

But anyhow, what had happened, was these three gentleman had come to the mine and gone underground as a group to size up or investigate some remote area off of the Leonard Mine to see about -- there was something that they were looking at, either ventilation-wise. That's maybe why Shugert was there. Or operational-wise, why Leif was there. I don't know exactly why they were at the mine at that time. They had gone down underground sometime after noon, and nobody had heard from them since then. They started a search party for them, and they couldn't locate them exactly in the normal parts of the mine any place. There was only part of the mine they had not looked at. This area of the mine was behind bulkheads. It was all dead air inside there, because it wasn't ventilated, there was bulkheads. The thinking was that someday or another they had gotten into this area by mistake, didn't realize where they were, and not having breathing apparatus and all that, they went down.

As I said, Powell and Roy Garrett called me as the nightshift assistant, they said, "We've had some handpicked men that we want you to take them down to this particular bulkhead" that they had pointed out and showed me on the maps, and they said "we want you to take these men and go into that area and break that bulkhead so that we can get some fresh air going in there so we can continue looking in this area for these lost men."

So, that was what my assignment was there, to go in with these men, break the bulkhead, and permit the other people to go in and search this area for the men. As a result, they did find them. They were all dead, of course.

Mining is a dangerous operation. You don't what's really going to happen at any particular time, but there was a couple of incidents that stood out where I was kind of involved in them, not knowing when I went in shift that I was going to be involved in it. Anyhow, I worked as an assistant foreman then until, well I started about 1950. About '55, I became an assistant foreman. And then, in 1960, I was transferred to the Berkeley Pit as a shift foreman.

You probably know the Pit started in 1955. The setup over there was they worked three shifts. And each shift had a shift foreman and several shift bosses, pit bosses, there, and I was a shift foreman at the Berkeley Pit then for the beginning of 1960, I guess it was. Is that right? I got transferred to the Berkeley about 1960, I guess it was.

And then I worked at the Berkeley Pit as a shift foreman for quite some time. Eventually I became the general foreman at the Berkeley Pit, where I worked until I got fired in 1968.

This was at the time where -- I don't know, there was a lot of different things going on with the Anaconda Company, different ownership deals and a lot of things. I don't know really why it was that I got fired, but I was the general foreman. John Cloyd was the superintendent of the Pit at that time. Emmett Murphy, he had been the general foreman. I've forgotten some names. I look at it this way. The company owned big mines down in Chile, Chuquicamata and that other big underground mine in Chile. Then, when Chile nationalized their mines, a lot of the top employees of Anaconda that worked in Chile all of a sudden showed up in Butte. A lot of these guys came up here at that time were pushed into jobs that were being held by local Butte people. A lot of local Butte people were forced aside. It was kind of a tough period, I might say. I was at the Pit from 1960 until '68, and was working the last year or so, as the general foreman at the Berkeley Pit and John Cloyd was the Pit superintendent.

[00:27:12]

After that, I worked at a number of different jobs. I was with the surplus sales division for a while. Ever hear of Jack Harvey? Have you run across the name of Jack Harvey? Jack Harvey was one of the young engineers around here and worked in the warehouse division, purchasing division, he was scheduled to be the purchasing manager. I'm pretty sure there was a fellow named Kelly Davis who had been the purchasing manager in Butte for a long, long time. Kelly was about ready for retirement. I don't know if I should be talking about this or not, but...

JAAP: Yes, continue, it's wonderful.

BROWN: Kelly Davis had been a purchasing manager for a long time and he was getting ready for retirement. The heir apparent in everybody's estimation was going to be Jack Harvey. Jack Harvey was going to be the new purchasing manager. But it didn't happen that way. All of a sudden, a guy named Fred Tong who had been the warehouse superintendent or supervisor here was named the purchasing manager. Now, Fred Tong was a good guy. There was nothing wrong with Fred. He could do a nice job. A good guy, everybody liked Fred and everything. I think it was a big blow to Jack Harvey. And that was kind of the way it was with the Anaconda Company before a lot of this influx of these guys from Chuquicamata and the turnover of management started to occur. The change of ownership with ARCO and all that.

Anyhow, Jack Harvey didn't get the job as purchasing manager. I wasn't pit general foreman anymore. Jack was still involved with the purchasing department and warehousing, and he set up a surplus sales division. At that time, there was a lot of talk about curtailing a lot of the Butte operations. Jack did a lot of work in inventory and cataloguing a lot of the surplus equipment around. Over in Anaconda, all of the milling equipment. All over Butte, here, all of the mining equipment, especially the older pieces

of equipment that had been idle for a long time. Ostensibly, it was sort of a forerunner of really getting rid of everything. Jack set up this surplus sales division, and I went with Jack Harvey into that deal and worked selling surplus equipment for a year or more. We sold a lot of stuff. We sold a lot, a lot of stuff. Actually, there was one month -- you're looking at the profit and loss statements -- we made more money selling surplus equipment than the mining operations did mining copper! It was true. There was just a couple of us. We had a couple of guys helping us. We sold a bunch of stuff over the years, there.

Then there was a lot of turnovers. I don't know how many different guys wound up working in the Pit. But there was Rush [inaudible], some people came out of New York office, Rush [inaudible] was one. Rit Hughes became the pit foreman. A guy named Pablo Valentine -- have you ever heard these names?

JAAP: No.

BROWN: Never heard these names?

JAAP: I'm not sure if I have.

BROWN: Well, these are guys that they all kind of came in out of the blue. Some came from the Chuquicamata, some came from New York offices, and they displaced all the older hands that had all been working for Anaconda for years. For years, the system was, it was just all local guys. You worked at the job and eventually you were promoted through attrition, [inaudible], but there was more or less a routine sort of a thing. Advancements and all that were generally based on longevity, you might say. The job, I would say, most all of the jobs were competent, they knew what they were doing, and all that, they would undoubtedly in the mines. Some of the outsiders thinking, oh there's too much fraternization, that sort of thing here, it's all inbred, all these guys, so we're going to put some new blood in there and shake things up.

That's what was done. It was left a lot of hard feelings. It was hard times. It was hard times. But anyhow, I worked with Harvey selling surplus equipment and then I got transferred down to -- well, also, I wound up as a purchasing manager for Butte. After ARCO kind of took over, and the reorganization, I wound up as a general purchasing manager for the Butte operations, the company's headquarters were in Denver. But I was the purchasing manager for the Butte operations. I did that for a while. Then, I got transferred to Denver and I was a special purchasing job there.

What I did mostly was we were organizing or setting up auctions where we auctioned off all the equipment from Anaconda, from Butte, from [inaudible], Nevada, Carr Fork, Utah. All these places were -- a lot of stuff was auctioned off. I was the guy who was setting up most of that stuff. Selling off the stuff through auctions. So, that was kind of my history of working for Anaconda. As I said, I was transferred to Butte to Denver in 1980. Through a lot of transfers, different jobs, from purchasing here to surplus sales here. Setting up auctions and just a lot of miscellaneous stuff. I wasn't doing any mining operations or anything. Then, I was transferred to Denver in 1980, and I worked mostly

on these auctions until I retired in 1983. At that time, I was 65 years old -- No, I was 60 years old, and I had my 35 years of service in. That was it, for me. So, I was out. I was in Denver, and we'd just been there three years, but actually it all worked out pretty good for me.

My life loved living in Denver. Although she was Butte girl, she liked being in the big city, too. Like I said, I was transferred in 1980, and I retired in 1983. Then I went to work for an outfit called C-Tran, that was a Chinese-owned trading company. We'd done a lot of business selling surplus equipment to the Chinese people through different American companies. By being a purchasing manager, and being familiar, and handling a lot of transactions for mining equipment here, I knew a lot of these manufacturers and a lot of their salespeople.

Then, I hooked up with this Chinese company, and they were sending delegations over from Mainland China here to buy equipment for some of their big mines in China. Most of their mines had been equipped with Russian-made equipment. They were interested in getting into the American equipment, getting some sort of source in America to buy equipment from, which I could provide them with.

So, for four years I worked with this outfit, selling used equipment, not only from Anaconda, but a lot from other companies, too. And some new equipment to the Chinese for their operations. This was pretty interesting because Chinese communists were still in control in China at the time. They would send these delegations over here that I would escort around to different places and introduce them to different manufacturers, like Unit Rig Trucks or [inaudible] Shovels. Then, they would negotiate and buy stuff from these different manufacturers.

But the Chinese, like I said, it was still the Chinese government and the delegations that they sent over, they would have a couple of engineers looking at the equipment and all of that, but they'd also have one of their party guys. You could tell who the Communist Party guy was because he was disinterested in anything else -- he didn't care about the equipment or anything, but he had a big satchel, or what do you call them, not a backpack, but a --

JAAP: Like a briefcase or something?

BROWN: Yeah, it was a big, black, handheld deal. He had all the money. He was in control of the finances. So, you could always tell who the Communist leader was by the guy who had the big black satchel with all the money in it.

[00:39:48]

That was a pretty good deal for four years. It was interesting. It was a good deal for me, because I was kind of on a retainer with this C-Tran outfit. Then, I was getting a commission on sales of the equipment from people who were selling the equipment. But anyhow, that lasted about four years, and then my wife and I, we came... We were in

New York all that time, and then we came back to Denver for the rest of the time. But it was an interesting time working with Anaconda here in Butte. A lot of turmoil, a lot shaking things up. A lot of things went on that you wondered about.

Actually, during that time I was at the Pit, I wrote a paper that was about truck haulage. The company was one of the leaders in developing these electric drive trucks, electric wheel trucks. So, we had a lot of people from the mining industry coming into Butte to check out our truck and all that. There was a lot of interest in this. I wrote a paper that was presented at the Canadian Mining Institute up in British Columbia, one time. I got copies during one of their annual meetings. That resulted in, I wrote a magazine article for the publication *Diesel & Gas Turbine Progress*, an industry publication. And then through those two deals having to deal with the electric haulage trucks, I got a letter from the U.S. Army research group in Washington. They were interested in developing electric wheeled units for their military operations. They wanted me to go to work in Washington for them. They were using my experience in the research department. I forgot what it was. It's all in a book, here. But anyways, that was it.

During my time at the Berkeley Pit, I had been asked a couple of times by different civic groups. Just like the Pit has the viewing stand where they tell people about the Pit and that, I'd been asked, or somebody had been asked who in turn asked me, if I'd be willing to give little talks to civic groups around about the Pit operations. This was all new, it just started in '55, nobody had seen a big open pit mine. So I wrote up a brief presentation that I gave, then, to a number of different civic groups. I went to Missoula one time to talk to a Missoula group. So I was fairly active in the public relations type of things. Also, it was one thing that I don't know when I was in the mining research department, after getting fired at the Berkeley Pit, I wound up at mining research for a little while. Have you ever heard of F&S Contracting? Finlen & Sheridan?

JAAP: Yes. I think so.

BROWN: Well Finlen & Sheridan, that was Les Sheridan and Finlen, Jim Finlen. I never met him, but I knew Les Sheridan quite well. He was killed in a plane crash out west of town here. F&S had a contract to do the stripping of the waste material at the Berkeley Pit. So, they had a contract to strip all the waste material and haul it out to the waste dumps. The Anaconda Company, then, would be hauling the ore to the crusher, and that sort of thing. Take a look at the price that the Anaconda Company was paying F&S to do this waste hauling compared to what the [inaudible] costs to do the ore hauling, there was a big discrepancy there that I wrote a paper about that I take ruffles and feathers. That might have been why I got fired, I don't know.

There's a lot of difference if you get a truck load of material, and you're hauling it up a 7% grade, or if you've got that same load of material, and you're hauling it straight out level, or maybe even a little bit downhill, there's a lot of difference in the cost in fuel and maintenance and everything. But F&S was getting a certain amount of money to haul all the waste out to the waste dumps, which was all a level haul, no uphill hauls at all. All level or even sometimes downhill, a little bit. All of the Anaconda haulage was up the 7%

grade. Well, then I gathered a whole bunch of numbers together and fixed them all up and came out with the findings that predicted what our costs would be hauling the waste on a level compared to what Finlen was charging to haul the waste on a level. We were getting screwed. It was not too long after that paper got published -- I got a copy of that here -- that word got around somehow or another that F&S reduced their costs. Just out of the blue, they cut their costs for hauling the waste quite a bit. Eventually, after this was out of the Pit, I think there might have been some people that I might have ruffled some feathers there. I don't know.

It was an interesting time. I'm not complaining. I came out pretty good on most everything. It was a real break for me when I got fired at the Pit to wind up with Jack Harvey and that surplus sales operation. That was a pretty good deal. Then, the other things that happened after that. Anyhow, that's kind of my history of working with Anaconda. If you have any questions, or anything, I'd be happy to...

JAAP: Did you see the decline in the company, did you see it coming, you know? The shutdown? Did you think that would happen?

BROWN: Well, no. Everything was going along pretty good. Morale at the company was always good. It was like a big happy family and everybody was getting along, but I mentioned that I believe and as I recall things, when the Chile nationalized the mining industry in Chile, and then all the people that Anaconda had down there, a lot of them were coming up to Butte and taking jobs that Butte people were traditionally doing themselves. I can't say like a family affair or anything, but it was more or less like a family affair, because you know the guys working at the mines, they'd work there, and then their kids would be working there, then, knew they had jobs and they'd be working.

Then, all of a sudden, after that nationalization, the influx of people from Chile. There's just a general turnover of the new people taking jobs that Butte people thought that they should have. I'd been fired and gone before the real harm came. Before they shot everything down. In 1980, they shut all the mines down. That was just when I left to go to Denver. So, I could see it coming, but I wasn't here to absorb any of it.

But it was kind of a tough time for everybody that left. There was a big difference between people that had transferred to the ARCO payroll and sent to Denver and the people that stayed on the Anaconda payroll and stayed in Denver. The benefits and everything was much, much better for the ARCO, for the people that got off of the Anaconda payroll and went onto the ARCO payroll. Those were the people that were transferred to Denver. The people that stayed here, working in Butte, it was a tough deal for them until they finally shut it all down.

But that's all I know about. I don't really know too much about what happened in Butte after 1980.

JAAP: Yeah. Do you recall the displacement of Meaderville and McQueen? The Pit taking over that area?

BROWN: Oh when the Pit took over McQueen? I think I was gone before they were actually mining the McQueen area.

JAAP: Okay.

BROWN: I was trying to think of the last... I was still at the Pit when we through East Butte. A couple of saloons out there, east of Butte, but anything beyond that, into McQueen or Meaderville, of course McQueen is further east than Meaderville, I was trying to think of that we did anything in Meaderville while I was there. I don't think we got into Meaderville.

JAAP: Yeah, you kind of left right at that time.

BROWN: But I did shovel out East Butte, I know that.

JAAP: What was the attitude towards that? Was it just, this is the job that needs done, or?

BROWN: Taking out East Butte?

JAAP: Yeah.

BROWN: I don't know that there was any real antagonism about that. There wasn't really much out there in East Butte, by then. I know there's a couple of bars that we got shoveled out. East Butte had been pretty much evacuated before it was shoveled out.

[00:53:00]

Like I said, while I was still at the Pit, there wasn't any real hardships going on yet, at that time. Like I said, I got fired in '68, and everything was still on a pretty even keel, there yet, in 1968. The real damage started in the '70s, I guess.

JAAP: Were you a member of the union?

BROWN: No. No. Never. No, I was a salaried employee, right from the first day on the job. This was one thing about strikes that came along. If you were a salaried employee, you were expected to be with the company, and if they went behind the fence, you went behind the fence. If you didn't, you were fired. That's all there was to it. I remember we had a strike. I was at the Berkeley Pit at this time, I know. I think we were down 12 or 14 days. I can't remember what it was, but there was a lot of controversy or talk about a lot of the shift bosses at the Berkeley Pit were salaried. They'd been truck drivers and drill operators and all of that, so their sympathies were probably with the miners rather than with the company, although they were salaried employees. They'd been old-time hourly employees.

A lot of them would talk to me at the time, "Gee, I don't know what to do. Do you have any... I hate to go behind the fence because all my neighbors would be mad at me, but at the same time, I don't want to lose my job." So, that was a decision that a lot of guys had to make, whether they would stick with their salaried jobs or stick with their neighbors and friends that they'd worked with all their lives. Did you ever know a [inaudible]?

JAAP: The name is familiar.

BROWN: [Inaudible.] Yeah, he was a young. He had been a truck driver, a long-time truck driver. He was real conscientious. Nice guy, you know. Worked hard, wanted to do the right thing all the time. He was finally made a boss at the Berkeley Pit, then. Then along came this strike and Leonard [inaudible], his name was, I know he talked to me. He didn't know what to do because all of his friends and neighbors were miners or workers. Stay with the company, and maybe lose all his friends and neighbors/

JAAP: Do you think people were understanding if you were on salary and had to go to work? Because, was it the 1955 strike that there was the one home that, you know, was totally almost just destroyed?

BROWN: Yeah, the biggest strike was in 1946, I believe.

JAAP: '46, okay.

BROWN: Where they were throwing pianos out the windows.

JAAP: I know there was one home where the glass was all broken out of it. I was just wondering if --

BROWN: Yeah, that was in 1946, that was a big strike. That was just a couple years before I came to Butte.

JAAP: Sure.

BROWN: But I remember my father-in-law talking about that, but he was a salaried timekeeper, worked at the Emma Mine. Of course, he stayed behind the fence, he was salaried. But he was a long-time Butte guy, born and raised in Butte. I wasn't there to see it, but he said he was really in knots over that. Whether he should stay with the company or stay out and lose his job. So, the result was that he did stay with the company, because he kept the job, but he was really upset about the whole thing.

JAAP: I do have one more thing to ask you, and then maybe Clark has some questions. So, you mentioned the sheets.

BROWN: The sheets.

JAAP: The sheets. Can you explain some mining terminology?

BROWN: Yeah, that's the area in front of the shaft. That was just the big open area in front of the shaft. In fact, there was a little article in the paper here a while ago where they recalled the cages, what we called cages. That's the part that goes up and down. Calling that the hoist. Well, the hoist is the engine that's in the engine room that's operating the cages. It wasn't the hoist that these guys were talking about. The hoist itself is the engine in the engine room that operates the part that goes up and down. That's the cages. They call them cages if they have men or materials on board. If they're hauling ore, skips. They're skips, then.

JAAP: So is that the difference, what they're hauling? Whether it's a skip or a cage?

BROWN: Yeah. Well, they're built for that. Most of the mines would have a three-compartment shaft. Well, four compartment because there'd be a service compartment with pipes and that stuff in it. But there'd be two main hoisting compartments and those would be where the skips were. And the skips would operate on balance, you know, hoisting. Their main function was to hoist the ore. They would work in balance. Then, there'd be the chippy hoist, or the chippy skip, chippy cages. That was strictly a service type of deal. They'd handle the men, between shifts, and materials. Timber and all that stuff would go down on the chippy.

But at shift time, if you had three or four hundred men working underground, you didn't want them standing around the sheets half of their shifts, so you'd get them down the line as fast as you can. So, they'd switch. Take the main hoist, take the skips off, and put the four-deck cage on the main hoist as well as the four-deck cage on the chippy. To lower or hoist the shift, the men. But then once the men are down in the mine, then the cages would come off the main hoist, and the skips would go on, so they could hoist ore, which was their main function. But there were no skips for the chippy hoist. The four-men cage was always on for the chippy. But it was the chippy cage, not the chippy hoist. The chippy hoist is in the engine room. And what goes up and down the shaft was the cages.

That was always a rough and tumble deal. You'd send your shift down in the morning, and you wouldn't go down with the men. The bosses would go down separately, or were hoisted separately, on the cages. It's pitch dark, going down the shaft, and you got seven guys crowded into one little deck on the chippy or whatever cage. And there would be a lot of stuff going on in the dark on those cages. Guys would be grabbing and pinching and poking and everything else. A guy'd be looking straight at you and he'd be just going after you, full blast, kicking, then they'd finally get off and oh, everything is fine and dandy. The skips were what hauled the ore to surface. They would dump it in the ore bins on surface.

[01:02:52]

Then, there was a question of sampling, because theoretically, all of the ore being hoisted went through a sampling process, so that you knew what you were shipping over to Anaconda, because Anaconda wanted to know what the grade is, what the grade of the

ore is. Has it buried on the chemicals they use and the amounts and all that? And their milling deal, so. So, every line foreman or superintendent had a system that salted the sample. You could get a little edge on something. There was no honor on mining at all. If you could get an edge on something or another, you did it. There were quite a few different ways of salting these samples. In fact, most of the mines, the main duty of the nightshift assistant foreman was to get the sample. Get the sample.

That shift would be important because you did all your blasting at the end of day shift, so when the assistant foreman would come on shift, he would get with the engineers at that mine and they would review what places had blasted that night. Which raises had blasted, which drifts had blasted in high-grade ore. Any place that had been high grade, according to the [inaudible] reports that you looked at, if you found a high grade face that had blasted that going off shift that day, that was number one deal. You had to get that ore through the sample, as much of it as you could get through the sample. That would eliminate all the other crap that was going through.

What they would do is, they would make arrangements with the bosses involved in this. Like, say, a particular raise on the 3400-foot level, had blasted that night. It was a big raise. All of that good, high-grade ore was in the chute at that raise. And so the boss on that beat, his first job was to go in with the motor crews and get all of that ore out of that chute, into one of the pockets at the station where the ore was dumped. No other ore was going in there. The station tenders on the skids had to get to that level and empty that pocket. Then, the shift boss on that level would pull all of that high-grade ore out of the place and dump that into that pocket.

Then, the station tenders would come down with the skips. They would go just on one side, because only would side would go through the sampler. So, he would hoist single files and empty that pocket and [inaudible] to get as much of that high-grade ore as possible in through the sampler. As little as that low-grade ore as possible. That was the assistant foreman's main job on nightshift was to get those samples salted right. There was a lot of skullduggery, you might call it, here or there.

CLARK GRANT: Could you tell us more about how ventilation works?

BROWN: How ventilation?

GRANT: Yeah, how does that work underground? Generally speaking?

BROWN: Well, generally speaking, there's big fans on surface on most of the mines. You pump air down into the mines. All the working areas and all that are in ventilated areas, but each individual working place would have a fan out in the fresh air going through these main air channels, through the drifts or like a raise going up. There'd be fresh air in the drift below them, and there'd be a little fan sitting there, that would take that air from the drift and pump it up into the raise. So, every working place would have its own individual fan that would be taking air from a fresh air source and pumping it directly into that working face. If an area is not being mined or worked, in order to

conserve the air, they would bulkhead it off, so that more of the good air would be going to areas that they wanted it. They didn't waste any air from the big fans on surface pumping air down into the mine. All the areas where they didn't require any air would be bulkheaded off, so that the good air would be going into where it was used, or useful. They didn't waste any air ventilating areas that weren't being worked at all. So, this is what happened with these guys at the Leonard.

They got into an area that had been bulkheaded off and so there had been no fresh air pumped into for, I don't know, many years. Who knows? I don't know. But any working area would be in an active area where fresh air from surface was coming into it. Then individual fans were taking that air, the fresh air, into the individual working faces. So that the miners would have good, fresh air.

GRANT: The fans on surface, did they go just down the main shaft? Is that how the air came in?

BROWN: Most of it would go down the shafts, but there were different shafts around the Butte hill that were just strictly airshafts. There'd be a big fan on top, and that shaft was for nothing but drawing air in the mine. The East Colusa was one. Different shafts around that were strictly airshafts. Some of the mines were, like, at the Leonard Mine. The East Colusa was a kind of a service shaft for the Leonard Mine. They didn't hoist any ore or anything from the East Colusa shaft, but it was connected to the Leonard Mine, so that part of the shift would go down and up the East Colusa Mine to expedite getting all the men down the mine at the Leonard. Of course, to get the men up and down, there was a chippy, so they would lower some supplies and that through the East Colusa. But primarily, it was an airshaft, and an exit and entrance for miners to expedite getting the shifts up and down at the Leonard.

And that was an interesting deal. The East Colusa was about 100 yards away from the main Leonard working area, or where the miners dry and everything was at the Leonard, right near the Leonard shaft, the offices and all that. The miners dry would be right there. There were locker rooms, so to speak. But the guys would come to work, and they'd have to change their clothes and everything at the Leonard. Then, they'd have to walk that 100 yards up the hill to the East Colusa to go down in the mine.

Well, that wasn't too bad, you know. But in the wintertime, when the temperature would be below zero or something, after working a shift underground, you're soaking wet, usually, either from drilling water or the high temperatures. Your clothes are wet. You come up the East Colusa shaft, walk out into that 20-degree temperature, or that zero temperature. By the time you walked down the Leonard, you looked like the Tin Man. Everything was frozen on you. Your overalls and your jacket and everything was -- whew! There was something I was going to say. I can't think of it.

GRANT: You know, I never went underground, obviously, so I'm trying to think of how things were mapped out. Underground, are there main roads? Like, there's an interstate, then you have a state highway, then you have a dirt road, you know?

BROWN: Yeah, well that's the development of the ore body. It depends on the shape of the ore body, how you develop it. Like most of the mines on the Butte Hill, it's a massive ore body. Like in narrow vein mining, like gold mines and different areas, they drift. Drift is a horizontal heading in ore. You would follow the ore wherever it went in a drift, at a certain elevation. And then, you'd develop it with raises from one level up to the next level. From this drift, down here, through the raise, up to the next level. Then, you would mine off of the raise, then. Take slivers or take layers off of the raise between this raise and this raise over here, and between this drift up here and this drift down there. That would be the vein mining; you'd mine out that whole vein.

[01:14:38]

In the case of the Leonard of the Mountain Con mines -- most of the Butte mines weren't vein mines. The ore body was massive. The engineers could almost lay out a geometrical pattern. They didn't have to follow the ore. The ore was all over. They could drive their drift in. Although it was in ore, so it was called a drift. They would drive it in straight, and then drive a raise up to the next level and connect with the level above. They would have, instead of between the two raises, they would take slices off from the top down, between the level above and the level below. Or, take slices from the bottom up, and timber it. It depends on the mining deal. In most cases, with a massive ore body, you had to timber or support the ground some way.

After you mine it out, you'd have big holes in the ground, subject to cave-ins and everything else, so you'd have to support the ground with timber to hold it, until you could do what they called back-filling. That was a hydraulic process, where you'd pump a lot of sand with water into an area that had been blocked off with burlap walls, and pumped the sand, moist hydraulic filling into it, and the water would gradually drain off. That hole would be filled, essentially, with hard sand, then, which was good filling, back-fill. Sometimes you would use mine waste to fill old stopes rather than hoist it. If you did hit a section of waste, instead of spending money hoisting it and all that, you'd dump it into an old stope some place.

It was interesting. You remember the '59 strike? Or, not strike, but earthquake? Around here? Did all that damage down there? You know, the mines were working then, and there was a crew underground when that strike hit. It's interesting what was done. I was not working that night, underground. But I talked to a lot of guys, of course, that were. It was interesting what some of the experiences were. Like, one of the bosses was telling me then that he was sitting on the station, waiting for the shift to be hoisted. The locomotives that had been back working in the mines would all come out of the station and be put on charge, then, at the end of the shift.

The batteries charged. I don't what time that earthquake hit. Around midnight, I guess. Sometime like that. But anyhow, this shift boss was sitting on the station around midnight and filling out his books, you know. He said all of a sudden, one of the locomotives, right next to where he was working, just all by itself, went running down the track. Went about

200 feet down the track. Then, came back. He said, "All by itself, it just ran down the track and came back!"

And he wondered, what the hell's going on here? What's going on? But that was his experience.

JAAP: Really!

BROWN: I mentioned this hydraulic backfilling. So, you'd have a drifter, a face there, where you had a bulkhead, you'd be burlapping with timbers and all that, holding it, and you'd be pumping it with water behind that. So, there'd be a big pool of water on top of that sand back there, and eventually the water would drain out and off and leave nothing but sand. This particular time, the sand was being pumped and the water was going in and this particular stope was being filled. So this one boss went back in towards the end of the drift, there, to check on the bulkhead and see what was going on and how the fill was progressing.

So, he walked into the drift and then got to this big bulkhead with burlap and all that. He climbed up on the bulkhead and looked over the bulkhead to where all the water and sand was being pumped. He said, as he stood up, looking into that water, he said all of a sudden all the water went running away from him. He said it all went down to the far end. I just stood there watching it, and it all disappeared down that way.

He said, "I got to thinking. If it went that way, it's going to come back this way," he says, "I got the hell out of there." He figured if it all ran that way, it was going to come back this way, and then break the bulkhead, maybe, and wash him away someplace. So, he didn't stay around to watch it come back. But that was the thing that happened. So, the earthquake was felt underground, but they didn't know what it was, really.

JAAP: Do you know if there were any cave-ins, because of that earthquake? Was anyone...?

BROWN: Injuries, or anything? Not that I know of, no.

JAAP: Interesting.

BROWN: No, I think it was all -- no, I never heard of any injuries, because of that. But there were these occurrences that were strange for a guy seeing it. It looked like some kind of a mystical deal, I guess.

GRANT: When you go down a drift, and then you go up a raise to another level, is that on ladders? How do you get from one...

BROWN: Ladders. It's all ladders.

GRANT: Ladders.

BROWN: That's right, yeah.

GRANT: And is it tight quarters? Or is it expansive, big room?

BROWN: Well, the raises are all timbered. So the ladder way would be in an area that would be, say, five feet by five feet, or so. The ladders would be on this wall for one level, which would be about seven, eight feet. Then, they'd switch over to another level. They had to stagger the ladders. There were safety rules required. There were never any straight, long, two hundred foot long ladder. They required that the ladders would be broken. You have to have a landing every third landing or so, and switch to another side. That's where you guys got a good workout.

Because if you were working underground or a shift boss underground, you climbed a lot of ladders in that shift. I remember one occasion that I was still shift bossing, and this was at the Leonard Mine. No, I was an assistant foreman, because I was up at lunchtime. Bud Paul was a foreman, and he called me into the office, and there were a couple of gentlemen sitting there with him. Paul said, "Al, these guys are with the FBI. They want to talk to you."

I said, "Huh? Yeah."

So, they talked to me. They mentioned a guy's name, and they said, "Do you know this gentleman?"

I says, "Yeah, I know him by name, yeah."

"Is he working today?"

"Yeah, he's at work."

"Where's he working?"

I said, "He's a raise miner. He's up at the top of a raise."

"Is there any out of there, except to come down?"

I said, "There's no way out. Only way out of that raise is to come right down to the bottom. Climb down."

"Okay, we'll go down with you. And we want you to get him out. Send him down."

So, I went out with these guys. You could bang on a pipe or something to get their attention up on the raise. That means, don't throw anything down, because I'm coming up. I went up, and I hollered at them, "Hey, there's a couple of guys that want to see you down here. Come on down."

The guy says, "Oh, yeah? Who are they?"

I said, "I don't know. But they want to see you."

"Okay."

So, they came down. It turns out they were wanted. The FBI wanted them for something or other that was pretty important because they came all the way to Butte and all the way to the mine to get these guys. When they found out where they were, they wanted them. So that was kind of interesting.

[01:25:05]

GRANT: Are you proud to have mined in Butte?

BROWN: What's that?

GRANT: Does it make you proud to have worked on the Hill?

BROWN: Oh, yeah, it was interesting. It's not as though as I didn't expect what was there. Like, I came from Minnesota. Minnesota has a lot of iron mines, underground iron mines. I had worked underground in the iron mines when I was going to school up in northern Minnesota. So, I knew what mining was all about before I came to Butte, actually.

When I was going to high school, and the first year of college, or so, I worked in northern Minnesota in the iron mines up there. Those mines are quite a bit different in the method of mining and that. But, they're basically the same. It's underground. It's dark. Everyone wears a lantern. The only difference working underground in the iron mines is your skin turns red. From the ochre, they call it. It's red oxide that gets on your skin, real fine grade, and you cannot wash it off. I know one summer, I went up there, in Ely, Minnesota. I was working at the Pioneer Mine. I had a room at some little private house in Ely. A nice old lady and gentleman had this house, this room for rent. So, I rented the room. Then, she started to complain a little bit. She said, "Don't you ever shower?"

I said, "Sure, I shower. Yeah."

"Well, how come the sheets are all so red?"

That ochre gets in the pores of the skin and you can shower but it just doesn't come off that easy. So, I making her sheets all red.

GRANT: Do you have any feelings on the fact that the mines are flooded now? Does that make you feel anything, knowing that all that is flooded?

BROWN: Oh, no, it doesn't affect me personally, anyway, no. I know that I don't have any hard feelings about anything that I... When I worked here, it was a thing to do. I was happy working here. I had a good job. Well-paid. It was what everybody did. It was what they did in Butte. They were miners. It's just like you were working on a farm, were a wheat farmer, or something. It's just what they did. The fact that the mines are all shut down and all that, I mean, I'm not real upset about that. Like I said, I've been out of Butte for 40 years almost. I left here in 1980 and then came back just a couple months ago. So, I was gone for 38 years or so.

I think they've done a tremendous job on rehabbing Butte, here. The stuff they've done with Silver Bow Creek and all the new trails around. Now they're cleaning up the tailings at the Civic Center. They're doing a great job on making Butte a nicer place for everybody to live in. But when you were living here, working here, it was just a normal thing. You accepted it as it was. There wasn't anything you could do about it, yourself.

Leaving in 1980, going to Denver, and then retiring in 1983 was -- I was kind of out of it. I didn't really know what was going on in Butte anymore. It didn't really affect me one way or another. I was retired, had my pension, and that was part of my life that was over. You go on to something else. But for many, many years it was a way of life in Butte. I could just imagine the feelings of a lot of the people that had grown up in Butte. Their fathers had worked in the mines, they worked in the mines, and it was just a way of life for them. Then, all of a sudden, to have all those mines shut down like they were -- that would have been hard to take, I think, because they didn't have anything else to go back on. There was no other industry here. Nothing else.

[01:30:54]

It's a whole different town now than it was then. You know, like the bars were open all night. The Mercury Street line was open all night. It was a tough town. Some of the young guys that were married that came out here to go on that training program, they didn't last long, primarily because their wives didn't like that. If they weren't used to that. You know, during WWII, a lot of people came to work in Butte from the coal mines back east, and they shut down all the coal mines around the country to get miners into the mines here. So there was a lot of guys that actually stayed right on, right after the war, and worked here. Guys from West Virginia.

Actually, when I was working, I had one fatality on my shift when I was a shift boss. One guy was killed while working for me as a shift boss. He was a moulder, a young guy named [inaudible.] Melvin [inaudible.]. I never forget the name. He was 19 years old and he was from West Virginia. He came out here with his father during the War. His father worked in the mines, here. Then, Melvin went to work in the mines when he was old enough. But he was just a young guy. He was a moulder, worked as a moulder. This was on a night shift. He was, they called, a swamper. They worked two guys. A moulder on the moulder and the swamper pulled in the ore out of the chutes. The swamper is the guy on the back end of the training. Opens the chute, gets the ore flowing out of the chute. Then, whistles to the moulder to move it up one, or whatever and

that. So, Melvin was working, he was the swamper this particular night. He was up on the first floor over the sill, above the -- they call them floors. The first, second, third floor. He was on the first floor under a big slide with the ore. It was coming down, go into the car. He was pulling that chute to get the ore into the car. The slide above him collapsed. That kind of buried him then, right there, on the spot. First floor. You worked to dig him out. Of course, he was hurt badly, with all the rock hitting him. He was dead when we got him out. Young guy.

Then, I had a guy killed while working for me as a shift foreman at the Berkeley Pit. There's some fatalities at the Pit. Guys'd get hit by trucks or run over. This was a guy named Henry Heirholzer. He was an older guy. His job was as a dumpman. Guys, as they'd get older, and that, they saved these jobs. His job was to be out on the dump when the trucks would come out to dump their load, the waste load or the leak load or something. The truck drivers can't see behind them too well. His job was to motion the truck driver back until the truck driver got back as far as he should. Then, he'd stop them, and give them the "okay, hoist."

That was Henry's job. The dumpman, they called it. The dumpman. So this night, I didn't see this, but he worked for me and I was the shift foreman. Our usual practice was that we would go in. We had a pit boss working for us, so there were about six bosses working for me, when I was a shift foreman. So I had gone into the office and had changed my clothes, actually, and was starting to fill out the books. The day shift had reported for duty and had gone out to the mine and were distributing their mine around their working places. One of the bosses on dayshift was taking the dumpman out to their places, and they found Henry out on the dump. He'd been run over by a truck. Nobody saw it. The truck driver didn't know. Somehow or another, Henry got in the way of the truck and the truck run over him.

Nobody knew it until they went out to take the day shift dumpman out there, and they found Henry out on the dump, then. I didn't know anything about it until they reported it to me. That was after they found him. So, I had two guys killed while working for me.

But that was a big deal. If you had fatalities, or even guys hurt, working for you, there'd be big investigations as to why and what happened. Every month, there'd be a meeting of probably, at the mine, or maybe if there were a serious accident, even called the people involved into the office downtown.

One of the meetings that I was at, that I had a lost time accident, it wasn't a fatality or something, but several of us were called in to explain. You had to explain to the general superintendent what happened and how did this happen, leak the investigation. So there was an old shift boss, Jess Wheeler, Jess Martin, Jessie Martin, I guess it was... Martin was his last name, anyhow, an old-time shift boss. So one of these general superintendents, I think it was Andy Simmons, at that time, started to ask Jess about how this happened, and what did this happen, and this and that.

Jess finally stood up and he said, "Hey, if I'd have known all that, it wouldn't have happened!" He was tired of being questioned. "If I had known all that was going to happen, it wouldn't have happened."

But they were pretty adamant about safety a lot of the time. A lot of times, safety was hard to preach to miners. They were working two at a time. Partners, usually. They're all by themselves, no one else around, and a boss sees them once or twice a shift, maybe sometimes in a raise you might not go out and see them on a particular day. You might feel lazy and you don't want to climb 16 floors up some raise to see experienced miners. It would amount to, "Hi, how's she going? Okay, take it easy," and go back down. You figure, I don't have to do that for these guys, so you might not do it that day.

But the safety was -- they paid a lot of attention to safety. But like I say, these guys are working by themselves, nobody is really looking over their shoulders, so who knows whether they've got their safety glasses on?

One of the big deal is, over the chutes, up on the stopes, the raises, you had to have -- over each chute, you had to have a timber so that nothing could fall through. That a man couldn't fall through. The ore could go through. You could put the ore through it. But it was a space close enough so that a man could not go through it. It was written and mandatory that all raises that men were working around had to have these safety -- grizzlies, they called them.

If you went up into a working place and the guys didn't have the grizzlies across the chutes, to block the chutes off, you could fire them if you wanted to. That was a firing offense. But, nobody every got fired for the grizzlies. You could kind of chew them out a little bit and make them put the grizzlies across while you watched them, but, maybe after lunch they took them away again and you didn't know.

GRANT: You mentioned it briefly at the beginning, but you were a fighter pilot?

BROWN: Yeah.

GRANT: And could you tell us about your experience? As much as you would like.

BROWN: I got listed as a naval aviation cadet. I went through all of the training. I graduated as a naval aviator at Corpus Christi. I'd gone through all the training. I went to fighter operation training in Florida, at DeLand, Florida. I went to the West Coast then. Several other guys and myself, we graduated, and we went to San Diego and we were sent up to Alameda, and we joined a fighter squadron in Alameda. We were headed for the invasion of Japan. By the time I got enlisted, after the beginning, and then went through all of the training and all that, it took a lot of time to get there. I was doing good. I went through all of the training and never got a down check.

Through all of the training, pilot training, they had a system where you had a check flight after every facet of your flying. The check pilot would check you out. If you got an okay

thumbs up, then fine, proceed. If you got a thumbs down, then you were permitted another check flight, and if you had another check flight and it was also down, then you were washed out and you were gone.

Well, for that kind of training, for fighter training, there was a lot of guys that didn't get through. They were washed out. Anyhow, I went through without ever getting a down check. So, I was doing pretty good. Anyhow, we got assigned to a fighter squadron, VF17 at naval air station at Alameda. We were all scheduled, had had all of our training, and were scheduled for the invasion of Japan. Of course, on August 9th, they fired the bomb. That was essentially mayday.

You turned and went out in the desert of Harrington, Nevada. Where I was, on V-Jay Day, was on Market Street in San Francisco. Because we were -- the whole squadron was there at Alameda, waiting to get on board the carrier and go, when the bomb hit. So, a bunch of us went into town, San Francisco, that evening, V-Jay Day, so I never got to combat. But I did fly a lot.

I did a lot of flying. I flew a lot of different planes. Like, I flew Corsairs. Do you know what a Corsair is? Take a look at that picture on my wall, there. Second door down. Second door, my bedroom.

GRANT: Okay.

BROWN: You know what a Corsair is?

JAAP: No, my grandfather always talked about planes and knew a lot, but I don't know very much about airplanes, no.

GRANT: I don't see it.

BROWN: Did you find the airplane at the wall?

GRANT: Oh, okay. Oh, yeah. Wow. That looks like fun.

BROWN: Huh?

GRANT: That looks like it'd be fun.

BROWN: Be fun?

GRANT: Yeah.

BROWN: Oh, yeah! We thought it would be a lot of fun. Like, a young guy, jeez. That was 21, 22 years old. That's a Corsair. That's most of my time. I got about a thousand airs in Corsairs, I guess. But then I also flew off in carriers during the end of the war. After the end of the war, I flew the Reserves while I was finishing school. Then, when I got to

Butte, here, there was a Navy Reserve outfit here at the Clark Park facility. But nothing for aviators, never aviation. You had to go to Spokane to Geiger Field in Spokane. And that time, this was, you know, I had all the time I was finishing school, I flew out of the reserves in Minneapolis. [Inaudible] Station in Minneapolis. But then when I got to Butte, there was no aviation facility or anything. Then, the Korean War came along in 1950, but I'd gotten married in 1949. 1950, we'd had one child. I was in a so-called "critical industry." Mining. So, that I never got called in the reserves. But I was in the reserves, but they never called me up. That was kind of the end of the flying, the Navy flying. But in the Navy, I did fly. I did a lot of stuff. I was a test pilot for a while.

[01:47:55]

I did a lot of different stuff, like I flew all the carrier-based planes, because I was doing some test piloting. I flew the Hellcat Fighter, the F6F Hellcat, F4F Fighters, Dive-bombers, SBDs, SB2Cs, Torpedo Bombers; I flew all the carrier type planes at different times. I never got to shoot at anybody. Nobody shot at me. I got about, oh, about 1400 hours of flight time, I guess, in the Navy. Have you flown at all?

GRANT: Never. So you've been in the sky, underground...

BROWN: When I first went to school, in 1940, and I had signed up and went into the ROTC. I thought, that's a pretty good deal, I'll go into the ROTC, and I liked ROTC. All through my freshman year, ROTC, I was halfway into my sophomore years and they were taking then applications or commitments to go on into advanced ROTC. That's where you made the commitment to stay in for two more years and get your degree as well as a commission in the Army. Then go on active duty. So there I was. When Pearl Harbor happened, I was sitting there, I'd made sort of a commitment to advanced ROTC, which means that I'd have to stay in school another two years and I would get my commission.

I'd get my schooling paid for, two years. And it all looked good before the War started. Once the War started, I figured, jeez, I'm not going to sit this out while everybody else is enlisting. So, I went down to the Navy recruiters and told them I wanted to sign up, I wanted to go to Naval Aviation. So, they looked at me, and they said, "But you're in ROTC. You're in the Army ROTC. You belong to the Army. We can't do anything for you."

I said, "Jeez! I sure don't want to just hang around in school for two more years." Even though it would be a good deal. And it did sound like a good deal before the War started, it would have been the thing to do. Get free education and an Army commission and all this. But anyhow, the Navy wouldn't talk to me there, then, after Pearl Harbor. So, I said, "Well, what do I have to do to get out of my commitment to ROTC?" The guys at Navy said, "That's up to you. If you get free, come back and talk to us. But as long as you're in ROTC, and committed to the Army, we can't talk to you."

So, I got to thinking. Well, jeez, how am I going to get out of this? This is the only thing I could think of to do. This was all in December, January, and the way that the school was, I had a class. In first place, you had to have two years in college to get into the Naval Aviation program at that time. I hadn't got two years. I still had my sophomore year to finish. In addition to that, then I had a surveying class and all that that was kind of a requirement that was going to take most of the spring quarter and on into the summer. So, I figured, well, I got to finish that, then.

But the only way I can get out of ROTC is I just won't show up, come fall. So, that's what I did. I didn't show up in the fall to go on with the ROTC. In fact, I was AWOL, according to the Army. They made a big issue out of it. But, anyhow, I got out of that, and I then turned around and got enlisted in the Navy, into the Naval Aviation program then. So then I got into the Navy and went to the Navy then, near the end of '42.

It was a lot of hassle with the Army, there, for a while. But the Navy was a good experience. It was a good deal. I had a lot of fun. But I didn't get to fly in combat, which you really wanted to do. The squadron I would up -- have you ever heard of the Jolly Rogers VF17?

GRANT: No.

BROWN: Which was a famous Navy fighter squadron during WWII. They had one of the best records against the Japanese of any squadron. They were all hot pilots. I would up in that squadron. So, I flew with them for a long time. I figured, oh jeez, I'm holding my own with these guys; I'm not too bad. I could handle it.

[01:54:52]

Then, VF17 was finally disbanded but I was out, after I went back to school, I was out of that squadron. I flew the Navy Reserves, then, out of Minneapolis in another squadron, there. But the time I was flying with VF17, that was for a year and a half or so. They were all, veterans, more or less, of the War, all had big decorations and all this and they were all hot pilots. They were all real pilots. I figured, well, jeez, I'm flying with the best of them. I can handle it alright. But I never got a chance to handle it. But it was a good experience. I remember going through flight training.

There was a whole lot of different stops that... when the War started, the government had set up what they called WTS School, War Training Service schools at different colleges all over. As civilians, you could learn to fly. The ole Piper Cubs, you remember the Piper Cubs? Those little yellow things. You'd learn to fly in them. But anyways, the Navy took those over at the start of the War. So, one of the stages of your training was that -- so many guys had enlisted or wanted to get in that they had to kind of fill the program and keep the guys who were waiting to go on real active duty, keep them busy, so they sent me to this War Training, WTS School, up in Minot, North Dakota. Which was good. We learned to fly up there. Flying these little Piper Cubs around, at Minot Teachers College, right at the border in Minot, which was pretty good. There was a program. A Navy pilot

would fly up there once a week and come in and he would test fly or test out the guys who were supposed to graduate at the end of that week. It was kind of guys coming and going every week.

The guys that were supposed to graduate from that WTS School, this guy, Lieutenant Gallagher, I'll never forget his name. Lieutenant Gallagher would come in and give them a test flight, you know. If they were okay, then they were okay to go on down to pre-flight school at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. So, this Lieutenant Gallagher, I guess there would be about 60 or 70 of us aviation cadets at Minot at any one time, but there'd be a certain amount coming and going every week. For Gallagher's weekly visit, they'd have us all line up in the front of the hanger, there, with our uniforms and everything on. Gallagher was a veteran.

He'd been a Navy pilot in the War in the Pacific and had earned his civilian, nice cushy civilian job, I guess. But anyhow, old Gallagher would come flying in. He was flying, at that time, an F4F Wildcat. That was the frontline Navy fighter at that time. Gallagher would come roaring in over the field. He would go down the length of the runway, pulling up into a big old roll, do a roll up there, come back down and make a hot landing right in front of all of us standing out there, waiting for him to come in. Then, he'd jump out of the plane with his flight suit on. Then he would take the guys who was graduating, he'd take them up and do their test flying.

Then, at dinnertime, Gallagher would come in, and he'd come and have his dress uniform on, with all his ribbons, and he had a lot of them. Then, he'd shoot the bull with all the guys. You'd get to thinking, boy, if that isn't incentive, I don't know what is. To go ahead with the program. But that was kind of a fun deal. All us young guys watching Gallagher do his victory rolls and all of that. We were all 20-year-old kids.

Those were different days. My wife was an army nurse. She had graduated from high school in 1942. Are you from Butte?

JAAP: I wasn't born here, no.

BROWN: Oh, yeah. Living here, I've talked to some of the old people that I figured might be at that age, like my wife was 93 when she died several months ago. I've run across one guy who remembered her from high school. They were in the band together.

JAAP: Oh, I love it.

BROWN: He's 92. So my wife was one year older than him. But anyways, she graduated in '42 and stayed working to make some money and entered nurses training at Sacred Heart over in Spokane. Started nursing school there. During the last year of their training, over there in 1945, a certain number of them were picked to go into the Army as nurse cadets, they called them. So, she was one of those who was picked to go and went and worked as an Army nurse, then, at some of the big hospitals in the West Coast. Madigan in Oregon and some big hospital in Washington. Two or three big hospitals that she

worked at. Mostly, they were treating guys that were coming back from the Pacific theater, wounded soldiers and also guys later that had been in Japanese labor camps, and were skin-and-bones and all that, when they came back. So, she was treating a bunch of these people. So, she was in the Army then for about a year or a year and a half, and then she went back to Sacred Heart and graduated in 1946 from nurses training. So she'd seen some wartime service.

[02:02:29]

The guy that was in the band was the only guy I've run across that remembered her. When you get to be that age, there's not too many left. That's kind of a hard thing, you know. It's great to live a long time, I'm happy about that, but at the same time, all the people that you really knew or associated with are all mostly all dead. Like we belonged to a Bridge club. Like I said, we lived in Denver a long time. We belonged to a Bridge club down there, and every one of them died off. So, there's no more Bridge club. Different places, people that you knew, neighbors, and all that, all gone. In fact, I'm the only one in our -- I had eleven first cousins in my family. I just had one brother. He died 20 years ago. He was younger than me. But I had eleven first cousins, and they're all dead. All my aunts and uncles are dead. My parents are dead. My wife and all her family are dead.

But we had a good run, my wife and I. Can't complain. We lived here for 32 years, out on West Granite Street, you ever seen that house that's kind of on the crest of the hill? As you drive out to West Granite Street, after you pass Excelsior, and then you go down a little, you go up a hill, there's a house that sits right on the bluff, that's right on the crest of the hill. That's the house we lived in. Right in front of that big apartment building. We lived there for a long time. Anyways, we lived here for a long time; it was great living in Butte. We liked Butte. Butte was a good town, a good place to live.

We had a lot of friends and everything here, because, like I mentioned, the Heidelberg Bar was the home away from home. A lot of the engineers would hang out. Of course, we'd do a lot of partying. After, we went to Denver, I retired, then I worked with the Chinese for a while, and my wife loved being in Denver. When I worked with the Chinese, we moved to New York, and she loved living in New York. Have you been around New York? Traveled?

JAAP: I've never been. No.

BROWN: Oh, she loved New York, because all those big stores, we lived right in Midtown, New York. We were two blocks from Bloomingdales, the big store; she spent half her time in Bloomingdales, I think. The restaurants and the theater and the opera and all the stuff. I was traveling a lot. She had an aunt that lived in New York and the artists section, belonged to the art club, or something, which was kind of prestigious, because this woman's, the aunt's husband, Hector Chevigny his name was, was Marion's uncle, then. Hector was quite a famous author. He wrote quite a few novels. And then he went blind. He had detached retina. And he wrote a book, then, I don't know if you ever heard

of it. *My Eyes Have a Cold Nose*. It's the story of Hector and his guide dog, Wizard. He was a big bulldog. But anyhow, Marion had a great time in New York, with Claire Chevigny. I remember going to a New Year's Eve party at Claire's house. She was quite a bit older than us two. These were all old folks and Claire lived in a big apartment house in Gramercy Park, kind of a tony area in New York.

They had a private park, and every resident in this area had a key to this park. You had to go through a gate with your key to go into this nice park. Claire was having this New Year's Eve party. We're probably, oh, maybe, eight or ten couples all in their 80s or 90s or even... We were sitting around, talking, and just general conversation and it got to be near midnight or so. One guy looked up and said, "Oh, it's getting near midnight." "Oh, is it?" "Oh, yes!" They looked around like, "Oh! There it is! It's midnight!"

That was a New Year's Eve celebration. Just a little conversation. Nobody even stood up or anything. They couldn't. They were too old. New York was kind of fun. She liked that. But then when we came back to Denver, we were kind of lucky because we were both in pretty good health. She was in good health. In 1987, we were both retired, she had a job. She worked for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Traveled around taking information for the Consumer Price Index. She loved doing that. She could travel all over, talk to people, which she liked to do. We did a lot of traveling. We were essentially... I retired in 1983, I did four years with the Chinese, that's '87, from 1987 on we were just on our own, doing what we wanted to do.

It was all pretty good. Jeez, we traveled. You've heard that song, "I've Been Everywhere, Man"? That's was us. We were everywhere. Jeez. We went to Russia. We went to China. We went all around South America. We made all the countries. We were in every state. We had kids all over. So, up until she suffered a serious accident. A fall. Just before Christmas in 1912. That was five years ago. From that point on, then, it was kind of tough for her. She had brain injury and surgery and all of this stuff. She made a great recovery, back to playing Bridge and stuff like that. But there was still signs that all was not real well, because she had spells where she was off the rocker quite a bit. But for a long time, we just had a good run. Happy about the whole thing. No problem.

JAAP: Well, Alan, thanks for giving us your time today.

BROWN: Well, I don't know if that's what you wanted or not.

JAAP: It's exactly. It was perfect.

BROWN: Yeah?

JAAP: Yeah.

BROWN: I don't know. There's a lot of things that happened, working for the company. Different things that don't generally get known about. Like the salting the samples and all of that, which that got to be quite a science, to how you could do that. They used to have

supervisors parties. Once a year. They'd gather everybody around and have a big party at, oh I forgot where it was, a big restaurant. It wasn't like Lydia's. But it was all men. Well, of course, there weren't many women working. Nobody in the mines, but there were women in the offices, and that. These were parties for the underground, more or less, workers. This was before the Pit was there, even. They would turn out to be big drunken brawls, mostly.

JAAP: Sure.

BROWN: All these bosses would be sitting around. This one guy, I met him, Jess Martin, I got him confused with Wheeler, but Jess Martin was the old-time boss. Jess would get drunk every party. He'd sit there with his face down in the plate that he was eating from. The guy next to him, "Get up, Jess! Get up, Jess!" Grab him by the hair, pick him up. This guy would say obscenities. Down his face would go, into the food again. I finally gave up going to them. I mean, there's no use going there for that. Yeah, Butte was quite a rip-roaring town in the old days.

[02:13:11]

We used to live at 410 West Platinum when we first came to Butte. That's where we rented a rental house. 410 West Platinum. There was a guy that was a mine foreman, what the heck was his name? That I worked for at the Lexington Mine that lived in the house at the corner of Platinum and, what street was it, I don't know. But at the corner, there, there was a duplex, and his mother-in-law lived there. It was actually the mother-in-law's house. This guy and his wife lived in that corner apartment. My wife and I had the house behind. The little house on Platinum Street. That was kind of a touchy deal, here. I was living in the backyard of the guy I was working for. I was shift boss then, at the Lexington. He was... Then, after the second kid was born, we moved, and got the house on 1315 West Granite. I bought it on the GI Bill.

I forgot what I paid for it, but it was like, I don't know, \$45,000, \$40,000, or something like that. I probably paid \$19 a month or something like that. It was really cheap in those days. And the house is still there. I don't know if you ever drive by that house, 1315, but when we moved into it, it had some kind of green tarpaper or siding on it and a beat up old front porch. It was kind of -- it wasn't real attractive, but it was in a nice location. It was great. The basement wasn't dug out. There was just kind of a hole and an old air coal-fired furnace. One of these deals with the -- it wasn't forced air, it was hot water heat with the coal-fired. The upstairs wasn't finished. It had an attic, but it wasn't finished.

Anyhow, we bought that house; I think we paid \$14,500 for it. Anyhow, over the years, I practically rebuilt the place. I put new siding on it. I dug out the basement. One of the reasons was that we had seven kids in ten years. I was busy adding bedrooms and stuff to keep ahead of the population growth. We had four boys to start with and then three girls. Then, there were no extra bedrooms in the place, just the master bedroom, so the first thing I did was I put a couple of bedrooms upstairs. Made bedrooms upstairs. Then I started working on the basement, making the rooms. All the boys finally wound up in the

basement. Each had their own bedroom with a pool table down in the basement. The girls were all upstairs. They had all their own bedroom upstairs, then. So that all worked out pretty good. But the house itself, it looks a lot better than it did. The funny thing is, the house had a terraced front yard. There was a natural stone wall -- that kind of lava rock, rough rock -- it was built up, terrace-like. It went up about six feet high, then a little patch of grass, then another four feet of all, and then out into the front yard to the house. I put a whole new front porch on it, which looks pretty good, even now.

Before we left here in 1980, just a month or so before we left, a big rainstorm left. That front rock wall, the one right next to the sidewalk, collapsed. It went out onto the sidewalk. I started to rebuild it, then. I got halfway done, and so half of that wall is rebuilt, and half of it is just like I left it. It's still there. I drove by there the other day and it's exactly like I left it forty years ago. They haven't done a thing to it! I thought, gee, I got to go ring their doorbell and see who lives there. Tell them to get busy and fix that wall, jeez. That was a good spot.

JAAP: Alan, thank you so much.

BROWN: You're not from Butte, are you?

JAAP: I've lived here most of my life, but I wasn't born here.

BROWN: Oh. You a native of Butte?

GRANT: I'm from Arkansas.

BROWN: Arkansas? Yeah. Yeah, all of our kids were born in Butte but they're all older than you are. Our youngest daughter is 58 years old.

GRANT: Oh, wow.

BROWN: The oldest was born in 1950. Our oldest son died when was just entering his senior year at Boys Central.

JAAP: Oh.

BROWN: That was like 50 years ago, because he was born in 1950. That would have been, what 68 years ago. Or, he was born 68 years ago. He was seventeen years old, just going into his senior year at Central. That was an accidental death.

[02:20:36]

So my wife, a lot of her family is buried at Holy Cross Cemetery. That's where he's buried, too. I've got one daughter. You've ever run across a Brandt Thomas?

GRANT: Definitely.

BROWN: Do you know Brandt?

GRANT: He's on the air at the radio station I work at right now.

BROWN: Yeah. Yeah, that's my son-in-law.

GRANT: Is it really!

BROWN: Yeah, he married my daughter. Yeah. Brandt. Yeah, he's quite a character.

GRANT: Yeah, he is. You're okay with him marrying your daughter?

BROWN: Oh, yeah!

GRANT: Okay.

BROWN: Yeah.

GRANT: Well, that's great. I'm just fixing to go see him, here, at the radio station, yeah. He's on the air, right now.

BROWN: Is he? Yeah. Friday afternoons, yeah. Yeah, that's what he told me. He's been a big help to me. He knows electronic stuff pretty good. He helps set up my stuff here. In fact, this VCR and DVD that I got, there, I didn't have the remote controls for them. Somehow, in the move from Denver up here, they got lost. So Brandt located and found the remote control for both of them. So I got them right here. Yeah, he's done quite a bit. He's the one who hung my pictures and stuff.

GRANT: Yeah, I love Brandt.

BROWN: Yeah, his wife, Janice, is my second daughter. She works in the pharmacy in the hospital. Oh, that's strange, you know Brandt, huh?

GRANT: Oh, yeah. Like I said, I've got to go see him. I've got to meet him at two, actually, so.

BROWN: That's what he told me; he's been real good. I got a car here, and I can drive, and I do drive. But he's says he's happy to drive me any place I need to go. He says, "I'm available any time, except from noon to three o'clock on Friday."

GRANT: Nice.

BROWN: Oh, that's great that you know Brandt!

GRANT: I like him a lot. He's like a musical encyclopedia. He knows so much about music.

BROWN: Oh, yeah. He's got a strange mind, actually.

GRANT: He's pretty different.

BROWN: He's calls himself The Clam.

GRANT: The Clam! And he speaks about himself in the third person. "The Clam doesn't like that." He's pretty goofy.

BROWN: Kind of strange. I've got a son that lives out in Opportunity. My oldest son, now, lives in Opportunity. He's kind of a renegade, too. He worked for MHG, Five Mile, Four Mile, and he retired. He's got a place out at Opportunity. The place is full of junk cars. He works on cars and rebuilds cars. None of them are real fancy or anything, but they all work, I guess. He's building a big 36 by 60 foot garage out there, now, to put more cars in. He hasn't got enough cars. He's quite a character, too. But the two of them are too much for the old man. I can't keep up with them.

CLARK: Well, I guess I'll stop the recording here.

[02:24:57]

[END OF RECORDING]