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ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER

IRENE HICKMAN

Interviewed by Catherine Jones  
14 August 1989  
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## INTRODUCTION

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my oral history interview with Catherine Jones,  
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Irene Hickman 2-22-91  
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INDIANA UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER

INTERVIEWEE: Irene Hickman  
INTERVIEWER: Catherine Jones  
SUBJECT: History of Paoli, Indiana  
DATE: April 14, 1989  
TRANSCRIBER: Norma Olmer

[Second Interview: First interview, June 10, 1988]

Jones: Hi. My name is Cathy Jones. I'm with Irene Hickman at her home in Paoli. Today is April 14th and we're talking together about Paoli.

OK. \_\_\_\_\_ situated.

Hickman: I think it's one thing that most people who live here would say. Certainly, I have had them say to me that there are so many people, new people, in town.

J: Ah hah.

H: They used to say, "Well, I thought I knew everyone in town. And now I look at the phone book and I don't know anyone." But where are those people coming from?

J: I was... when did you first start to notice very many?

H: Well, just in the last few years.

J: Oh, really?

H: And a lot of them, I think, have come from Kentucky.

J: Well, what someone said to me is that there are people who commute, like to Louisville or to Bedford or something. They come out there to raise their kids, you know, 'cause they want their kids to grow up with a good environment, good values; good school and stuff like that. So the impression I've gotten is that people come here with their kids... to raise their kids here, and the parents commute or something. I don't know if that's true or not.

H: I don't know if you would say Paoli could be considered a bedroom community of Louisville or not. But there's an awful lot of people around who work at GE in Louisville.

HICKMAN2

J: Oh really? How far a drive would that be?

H: It's 50 miles from here to Bedford. About the same... I mean from here to Louisville. About the same as from here to Bloomington.

J: Wow. Huh. Is that new, having people commute to \_\_\_\_\_.

H: No, it's something that's been going on for years.

J: See, I didn't hear a thing about that.

H: A lot of people from here work in Jasper.

J: Right.

H: They work at RCA in Bloomington.

J: Really?

H: And so they do commute a lot, but what surprises me is the names in the telephone book that I have never heard of.  
(laughs)

J: So you wonder where they all come from?

H: I'm wondering if... why they have all...

J: Chosen here.

H: ...come here?

J: Well see, that's interesting, 'cause when people talk to me about the community, I guess I was thinking... they talked about community and the newcomers, and I guess I was thinking they'd come from bigger places like Louisville -- wanting to raise their kids in a better environment. But aside from that, I don't know.

H: It is a small town, but we have a fabulous school system.

J: Right.

H: And when it was built, it was supposed to be huge, and they're already straining at the seams.

J: Right. Yes, I've heard a lot about it; I've heard a lot about the school system. Plus my impressions... it seems like the families \_\_\_\_\_ school \_\_\_\_\_.

HICKMAN2

H: Yes, they do.

J: They do. For kids, it seems like it would be a pretty good place; there's lots of stuff going on. So that, when you're... when you're walking around or downtown or whatever, you see... when you see people that you don't know and stuff like that....

H: I hardly know anyone anymore. (laughs)

J: You hardly know anyone. OK. (laughs) And that's been more in the last couple of years?

H: Just the last few years. Of course, for years I worked, and the only time I got to town was going to pay bills and the rest to the grocery store. And it seems this has been going on without my knowledge, or realizing it, for so long, and now that I do have an opportunity to go to town, I just don't know anyone.

J: I see what you're saying. So it's probably been going on... yes, because your work is what... the place that you used to work, the Chair Factory, is like 40 years away or something?

H: Well, it's a 2-minute walk. (laughs)

J: It's a 2-minute walk, OK. Yes, you're right. Right.

H: But now, my husband was a painter and a paperhanger, and he knew everybody in this part of the country. Worked for most of them, and it was no phenomenon to him because he was out with the public at all times. I wasn't.

J: Well, did he ever talk about it, or...?

H: Not really.

J: Together, did you guys ever talk about it?

H: Not really. No. But he knew everyone around.

J: Do you think even the new people coming in?

H: Oh yes. If they were building a home, he worked on a lot of them. He was one of the best paperhangers in this part of the country. So if it was a nice home, he papered it and painted it.

J: Yes. Yes. So chances are then that he would be meeting the new people if they were building \_\_\_\_\_ or redoing homes.

H: Right.



HICKMAN2

J: Yes. That's funny then, 'cause well, what you were saying earlier about, you know, women weren't... women didn't get out as much as men in terms of going into the public...

H: Right.

J: ...the public areas, so it's just interesting that there can be a different perception of Paoli than \_\_\_\_\_ going on. Well, I guess one of the things I've wondered about is: in the interview \_\_\_\_\_, you know, you were talking about how homes have become more self-contained. You said that some people don't visit, and I wondered: do you feel... has there been any loss, you know what I mean? Is there... oh wait, let me ask it this way: does the community seem any different because of that? or...?

H: Well, it might have when I was younger. But at my age, no, it does not bother me.

J: Yes.

H: But I think, when my children were younger and at home...

J: Yes.

H: ...we did visit more with relatives and friends than... I mean, we got out, you know, and saw people.

J: Right.

H: But at that time, we didn't have air conditioning (laughs); we were one of the first ones in this area to have a television.

J: When was that \_\_\_\_\_?

H: It was when our children were little and some of our family - my husband's sister's children would come up to our house every Saturday morning to watch cartoons, because they didn't have TV. (laughs) So it was kind of a family gathering place...

J: Yes. Yes.

H: ...and I guess it still is. To give you an example: a few years ago, at the Alumni Banquet, instead of staying at the Alumni Banquet with her friends, my daughter brought about a dozen of her friends here. And they sat around and talked till way up in the night instead of staying with the whole group. So, it's always been a gathering place as far as the children....

HICKMAN2

J: Oh, that's nice.

H: They always felt welcome to bring any of their friends in they wanted to bring. So, it's more-or-less a gathering place for young people.

J: Well, I guess... some people have said, like, when they think back to the way things used to be, with people just stopping by all the time, and neighbors were neighboring more.... One or two people said, like, that something's really been lost, you know? Now, people have their... have clubs and meetings and activities that they do together, but it's not the same.

H: Well, it isn't. I go to AARP, American Association for Retired Persons, and the only people you see there are other retired people.

J: Yes.

H: You miss the three-generation, you might say, when you go into a family where there's mother, daughter and granddaughter.

J: Right.

H: You just don't get that in a club, because they are people all of the same age.

J: Right. I hadn't thought of that.

H: And usually, we're of the same interest.

J: So, I guess that would have been... that's different. Even though people are still... it's not just like a person lives in a house by themselves, they've got this different stuff going on somewhere else. It's more by your interest and...?

H: Right. I have a friend... you have interviewed her, and she is home now from having major surgery.

J: Oh!

H: And I....

J: \_\_\_\_\_?

H: Yes, Lucille Dillard.

J: Oh, right. Right. Right. \_\_\_\_\_

HICKMAN2

H: I talk to her on the phone quite frequently, and I have visited there about three different times since she's been home. Incidentally, she's doing real well.

J: Good. I was just about to ask you.

H: She's doing....

J: Boy, when I got a letter from her telling me \_\_\_\_\_;  
my God, \_\_\_\_\_

H: Well, it was very serious.

J: Yes.

H: She wasn't expected to be able to stand the surgery. But she's doing real well. I'm surprised.

J: I'm glad to hear that.

H: She get's very tired, but... Typing up a storm, writing her own book.

J: Yes. (laughs)

H: She won't let me read it. (laughs)

J: She wants to wait till it's all finished?

H: Oh, it's finished.

J: Oh, is it?

H: She's retyping it. But she hasn't let me read it yet.  
(laughs) And I'm anxious to.

J: I bet she does.

H: I read... just, you know, turned to one chapter, and I started laughing. And she says, "That's what everyone does."

J: (laughs)

H: But she does make... yes, she makes everything funny.

J: Yes. Yes.

H: The amusing side of it.

J: Is she just being modest, maybe? Thinking \_\_\_\_\_

HICKMAN2

H: No, she just looks at things on the amusing side...

J: Yes. Yes.

H: ...and she can make the dullest conversation into something that you just laugh your head off.

J: Yes. Yes.

H: She's a fabulous lady.

J: She definitely has a talent for that.

H: Yes, she does.

J: I think she found her mark being a writer.

H: Right.

J: You know, she ended up doing what she's supposed to.  
(laughs)

H: I guess so.

J: Yes, she's got a \_\_\_\_\_.

H: Yes, she's a very nice lady. I have a lot of friends. I said one time that all of my friends were friends of my husband. But since he has gone, I've been associating with people on my own, which I didn't do before.

J: Yes. Yes.

H: And I have a lot of friends that I can call on; I can talk to or associate with. I couldn't before you know, I have a home and a husband and children. It makes a difference.

J: So, does it just make a difference just because you don't have to worry about that stuff, and you're on your own, and....

H: I think it's because I'm on my own; I don't get lonesome here. But I enjoy talking to people. I guess you can tell that by \_\_\_\_\_ (both laugh)

J: I kind of peek through now and then. (laughs) (long pause)  
Any other... you mentioned the newcomers. You know, that there are more people here; that you don't know the faces around Paoli very much. Is there anything else strikes you any different about the community?

HICKMAN2

H: The fact that it's growing by leaps and bounds.

J: Well now, didn't you say in the interview that Paoli was dying.

H: The business.

J: The business?

H: Yes. But there are so many... it's just stretching out in all directions. Have you been around the different areas of town and see how it is stretching out into the country? But as far as the business goes, we can go around the square and there just isn't any.

J: Yes. Yes. Yes. So that's not doing as well.

H: No.

J: But the community... but the town itself...?

H: But the people and the town itself is growing. The... people-wise, it's growing; business-wise, they go out of town to shop and things like that.

J: Hmm. So, that's funny then that the business isn't doing as well, but the community seems... fine?

H: Well, maybe that has something to do with what you were saying about it being the bedroom community of larger places?

J: Yes. Yes.

H: It could be.

J: I wondered about that. Yes, I'm not sure; I've just had a couple of people mention it to me.

So, how does Paoli seem to you? Does it seem like it's going places now? or..? Do you have any image of it right now? Or an image of how it's changed? Does it seem... from when you remember it when you were younger? Has it gotten bigger? is it prospering more now? or is it...?

H: We have, and will have, more industries coming to town, now that we have no water problem.

J: Yes. Yes.

H: And probably other people have mentioned the same thing.

HICKMAN2

J: Yes.

H: There, for years, we just run out of water in a dry season.

J: Right.

H: And that discourages industries from coming to town.

J: Right.

H: But, in fact, we thank God for Patoka water. Last summer we would have been out all summer long.

J: Yes, that was \_\_\_\_\_

H: So, I think, with the things that they are doing, like in getting the water, that more industries will come here. But this is an area of woodworking industries.

J: Yes. Yes.

H: Almost every industry around here... in this area, not just in Paoli, but in this area is connected with wood.

J: Yes.

H: Jasper, and Wood Design at French Lick.

J But you know, when you were saying that the businesses aren't doing well, you meant more the businesses on the square.

H: On the square.

J: 'Cause, In terms of like your sons, or your son-in-laws, that's connected with woodworking.

H: Oh yes.

J: It's the mill, and that's doing well.

H: Yes. Yes. The things that are connected with use of wood, in furniture and things like that, are going great guns this side of Indiana.

J: Yes. Yes. Yes, there's... what's that new one? Well, it's probably not new now, but Midwest...? Is that... is that \_\_\_\_\_?

H: Midwest Inn?

HICKMAN2

J: Yes.

H: No, that's a motel that was put in here to take care of skiers.

J Maybe I just saw the sign; it's... all that lumber by....

H: Well, now, that is Bossley(?)... oh, Indiana Handle.

J: Yes.

H: They used to be famous; they've been in business for years. And they used to be famous for their croquet sets. But now they make turned lamp-bases...

J: Yes.

H: ...and a lot of turnings like that, from wood. But they no longer make croquet sets. (laughs)

J: I was about to mention this to you, but one person... I think it was out in Washington when I was there one Christmas; I was there or somewhere else. I was doing this project on Paoli. (I can't remember if it was there or Ohio or where.) Someone said, "Oh, yes. My baseball bat came from there." (laughs) OK.  
So the woodworking industries are all doing fine.

H: Oh yes.

J: It's just the businesses on the square more.  
Is that whining, or is that crickets? Do you hear those?  
No? OK, maybe it's just the crickets. OK; all right.

H: But there's been a lot of new homes built around the... this area in the last few years.

J: Really?

H: And this whole area out by the hospital is new.

J: So, is the population increasing now? I wonder...

H: Yes.

J: It is, it has increased considerable.

H: I don't know the exact population right at the present time.

J: Well, I had heard something like... but this was last year.

HICKMAN2

I mean, this is when I first started. I guess I heard something like 37?

H: Well, I imagine it's over 4-thousand now.

J: OK. Ooh, well, that might be interesting to find out. So, maybe....

H: The area out there out by the hospital is less-expensive homes for people who can't afford to build a custom-built home outright.

J: Yes.

H: And kind of like the mobile homes were for people who can't afford to... couldn't afford to get married and buy a home and furniture and things. You know, it all comes in one unit.

J: Yes. Yes.

H: And that has been good in ways, even though they're not first-quality homes, they have provided housing for a lot of people. And none of them stay in them too long.

J: Yes, I'm sure about that. Well, that's good that there's something like that available.

H: We also have a new convalescent home that is opening. In fact, that was discussed today at our AARP meeting, and we were wondering what kind of the... home it's going to be. Will it be for people who are ambulatory or will it be for people who are bedfast? But the name says "Convalescent", so that must mean people who have to have skilled care when they get out of the hospital, before they can go home.

J: Right. Right. That's exactly the way it sounds. Yes.

H: And it is supposed to open in May.

J: Wow. So, it sounds like things are....

H: Well, businesses are going out away from the square because this is... someone who came in from somewhere else, it is not a local... not locally owned.

J: Right. Right.

H: We have a Bosley Lumber Company that is putting in a place out west of town, and they have had a small lumber company out on 150 East. But they are going up between Brittany and



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Hillcrest, down west of town.

J: Wow. Sounds like the lumber...

H: I mean, anything wood is....

J: ...industry is really doing well.

H: Yes, anything to do with wood is booming.

J: Wow. (pause)

Well, looking back over your 60-plus years, and this is not restricted to Paoli and the immediate community, but just more in general, what are some of the good changes that you've seen happen?

H: The good changes?

J: Yes.

H: Well, I think better schools, a local hospital which was desperately needed,...

J: Yes. Yes.

H: ...and more doctors in the community. At one time we only had two, and now there must be... oh, at least eight, besides there are specialists who come to the local hospital...

J: Yes. Yes.

H: ...in all different areas. And that has kept a lot of people at home that otherwise would have gone to... had to go to Indianapolis or Louisville for treatment. And that's just three of the....

J: The big ones. Are there any things that have changed that maybe aren't so good? I mean, changes that you think aren't... haven't been as good.

H: Well, again, I'll have to say I have not been out in the community and....

J: Yes. Yes. Even in the more general \_\_\_\_\_, just in terms of, you know, what's gone on in American society.

H: I think we said in our interview that there is... too many people who manage to get along without working some way or other.

HICKMAN2

J: Yes.

H: I think there... in fact, this welfare fellow said that --oh, I have it in my notes-- how many million-dollars are spent in Indiana on welfare programs. Well, if there was some way, even locally, of getting those people to work and getting them off welfare, it would be of benefit to everyone. And I see no reason why they couldn't go out, if for no other reason than pick up cans along the sides of the road, or trash people throw out.

J: Yes.

H: Just to have something to do.

J: Do you think there's a lot of people around here are like that? Or, they don't work and are just living off welfare?

H: Too many.

J: Too many.

H: When you go into the grocery store and you see a young couple that are... look like in their late 20s or early 30s buying everything they get with food stamps, and they're healthy, you begin to wonder if they're... if they shouldn't be working somewhere.

J: Yes. Yes. OK.

H: Now, I know there are people who can't be, like this friend we were talking about, who can't do it. But I'm not in favor of an able-bodied person sitting around and expecting someone else to take care of them, and it does happen here.

J: Yes. Yes. (pause) Are there any other things that kind of pop into your mind thinking about, you know, things that have changed like maybe for the better?

H: Well, one thing is that, at the last count I had, there was 17 churches in town and all of them are not very well-attended. None of them are well attended.

J: Oh, really? Oh.

H: And I think, since we all worship one God, I can't see why we should be so spread out, and everybody trying to maintain a building, when we could worship God together.

J: So, you're not saying that it's not that many going to church, you're saying that because there are so many, that...

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H: There's just so many, none of them....

J: Too many....

H: Right.

J: This is too small a community to support 17 churches?

H: That's right. And that is just... well, in fact, in our Friends Society, we have 4 churches locally.

J: Yes. Yes. Right.

H: Why couldn't we all worship together?

J: Well, I guess I could see, you know, before, when transport was more of a problem, of course, we had to have the churches more a...

H: Close, right.

J: ...meeting place more locally-centered, you had....

H: There is no point to it.

J: Maybe, I don't know. Why is it? Why do you think it is? Just because people, you know, are accustomed to go to Ames Chapel or this meeting house or that meeting house, or something?

H: I don't know. I wish I did.

J: Yes. (both laugh)

H: If I could solve that problem, I think a lot of the dominant denominations in town would be very happy.

J: Yes, and throughout the country. (laughs) Right.

H: But it seems such a waste, to me, to go into a meeting house and find two-dozen people in this one and two-dozen people in that one. Why couldn't those two-dozen people in this-one and that-one get together and fill one meeting place?

J: Do you think... are kids, are younger kids going, is that why? Because a number of kids aren't going, or are they going?

H: I think too many of the younger people are not going, but we have had a phenomenon in our church... well, I would call it a

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phenomenon because, for a long time, we didn't have.... Right at the present time, we just have a lot of young --I mean little-- children...

J: Hmm.

H: ...up through the 6th grade, in our meeting, that for years we didn't have.

J: Why do you suppose... what brought them back? Or what... not brought them back, but you know...?

H: I don't know, but I think it's wonderful. (laughs) At one time, we hadn't had any new babies in our meeting for a long time, and at one time we had three all of a sudden. (laughs) We rejoiced.

J: Yes. And so, has it pretty much stayed that way in the last couple of years? More young people...?

H: Yes, more young people are.... Now, when they get up to college age, they don't come back.

J: Yes. From the church or just, they leave altogether?

H: Well, they go away to other places; they go away to college and they just don't come back to Paoli to live.

J: Yes. Yes. Does that worry you at all? about, you know, where the community is going? Or do you just think it's just... some will always go, some will always stay, or.... Do you know what I mean?

H: There will always be some that stays, but the majority of the young people do not find the opportunities here that they want.

J: Yes.

H: And I think if they ever put in the 4-lane highway, that Paoli will be even less of a growing community than it is now, because people will move closer to the cities that are served by that 4-lane \_\_\_\_\_.

J: Oh.

H: And we will be off the main road, even more than we are now.

J: Huh. I hadn't thought of it like that. They said they were to keep on extending, like they've started to extend 37 south

HICKMAN2

right here, but 200 \_\_\_\_\_?

H: 200 feet north, yes, 200 feet north of West... or East Hospital Road...

J: Right. So you're saying if, say, somehow that was extended all the way up where 34... 37 coming south stops being 4-lane around Bedford somewhere. If they just had it 4-lane the whole way, that you think...?

H: People would just keep right on going by. The way it is, 37 comes through town...

J: Yes.

H: ...and while we need to get all that traffic away from the square, it still.... When it goes away from the square...

J: It's just gone.

H: ...it will be even less community than it was.

J: So, you mean... the way I understood, you mean that people will just leave, like the young people of \_\_\_\_\_

H: Yes.

J: OK. That's what I thought.

H: I drove down through Kentucky last summer, and I drove for three hours, and the only way I knew a town was close by was the sign along the road.

J: Yes.

H: I never once saw a town...

J: Yes.

H: ...in three hours time.

J: You have to be careful of gas then, too. I mean, you can't let yourself get too low.

H: Right. (laughs)

J: Yes, I noticed that; I've driven there a couple of times. But like you were saying, the woodworking industries are doing well. I think that's what we were saying before. But so far, the main opportunity for kids so far has just been in the

HICKMAN2

factory?

H: Right.

J In the factories. Yes.

H: Unless you have something like....

END OF TAPE THREE, SIDE ONE

J: (laughing) Not yet. Right. So, it's either the factories or else have a family already in business?

H: Or go away somewhere else.

J: Or go away somewhere else. Does it ever worry you, you know, in terms of Paoli's future? or...? Not too much.

H: Not really. I won't be here that long. (both laugh) I worry more about the country's future than I do Paoli's.

J: What do you think about... what do you worry about when you worry...?

H: Well, I just hope I don't live long enough to see what I think everyone sees coming.

J: What do you see is that?

H: Atomic war. And I don't want to live through it.

J: Yes. (CHIMES IN BACKGROUND) Short of that, are there any other... is that the main...? I mean, that's a big worry too, let's face it. (laughs)

H: Yes, there is another worry, and I think it is bound to worry everyone, is the program we saw on television last night about how AIDS is spreading.

J: Yes. I've been reading about that.

H: When that first surfaced, and they began talking about it, the comment was made: Is this a curse?

J: Yes. Yes.

H: And it begins to look like it is, and it's a curse we

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brought on ourselves.

J: How so?

H: By our moral... lack of moral behavior.

J: Yes.

H: We can't blame it on anyone but ourselves.

J So if it does spread more, you know, into the....

H: It will devastate the country.

J: Yes.

H: Five years at a cycle; sometimes they live for five years.

J: Yes.

H: And once you get it....

J: It's pretty much it.

H: 50 percent of the people who contracted it first have already died.

J: Yes. Yes. Wow.

H: Yes, that worries me. I have young grandchildren all the way from 11 to 20, and I think anything like that is bound to worry a parent.

J: Yes, I was just reading in a \_\_\_\_\_ up in Bloomington --I don't know if this is... I think this was just in Monroe County-- a program starting... either starting in the classes or starting talking about the kind of classes to have about AIDS, whether in the elementary and secondary school.

H: I don't think anything is too early...

J: For that.

H: For that.

J: Yes.

H: I know, I wish... I don't know if my daughters have talked to their children about it, but if they haven't, they should.

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J: Is this anything that's hit Paoli at all, very much?

H: We had a local man die of it just recently. He did not... he was from here, he did not work here. He worked in Louisville, but he died of it just recently.

J: I didn't know that.

H: That's the only case that I know of, of AIDS would kill a person. But one is one too many.

J: Yes. Yes. I know; it's frightening.

H: It is. Very frightening. (long pause) But I think that is the two things that... I'm just not a worrying person...

J: Yes. Yes.

H: ...but I think that is two things that does worry me.

J: Yes.

H: And the two things that I can do absolutely nothing about.

J: Yes. One of them just seems like it's in the hands of the politicians....

H: Ones in the hands of the politicians and the others in the hands of God.

J: I mean, when you say \_\_\_\_\_ AIDS, you know, because of bad moral choice or whatever, (pause)....

H: Well, it started out with our children in the permissive society...

J: Yes.

H: ...and I think everybody at that time thought: it has to end somewhere. Well, it has ended somewhere.

J: Yes. Yes. OK, I see what you're saying.

H: And we'll probably inherit it.

J: Yes. Yes. I see what you're saying. That's pretty frightening.

H: It is, it's very frightening. To anyone that thinks about humanity at all.



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J: Well, it just seems like the whole world, I mean, there's HIV2 in Brazil and... I don't know where, they're finding like three major big strains now in different parts of the world.

H: And not too many years ago, it was such a big hullabaloo about the swine flu...

J: Yes, right. (laughs)

H: ...and we thought that was so terrible. That wasn't anything in comparison... this is the female (laughs) or the human....

J: Yes, that's a good point. (laughs) Well, let me lighten up the conversation here.

H: All right (both laugh)

J: You talk about atomic war and AIDS and that's about as \_\_\_\_\_ as it can get.

And one thing I guess I wondered was... you know, in the interview over there, once or twice you said something about how you're really glad that you haven't had to have the kind of life that your parents had. That you've been able to, you know, move forward and progress. And I guess... what are some of the major differences and similarities you would see between, like, your life and your mothers, and yours and your daughters?

H: When my father, he was in the first World War, and when he got a bonus they bought their first home. And they already had a big family.

J: Yes.

H: Now, they had been married for years. Freddy and I bought our first home within a year-and-a-half of our marriage,...

J: Yes.

H: ...and now, my daughters had a home as soon as they got married. I mean, that's the first thing... they had to buy a home.

J: Yes.

H: So there has been a big difference in the abilities of families to be willing to take on the responsibility of buying a home and paying for it before their families developed.

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J: Yes. Yes.

H: My family could not do that... I mean my parents could not do that. But it is becoming --as we said awhile ago about the mobile homes-- a young person can afford 6- or 7-thousand dollars to step into a home already furnished. All they have to do is take in their food and clothes...

J: Yes. Yes.

H: ...and it's cheaper than paying rent.

J: Yes. Right. Right. I wonder, is that because... it occurred to me when you were talking about, you know, your parents, is that because, before they were farming, and farmers, you know, for the most part were more subsistence; they didn't have a lot of cash flow? Is it partly tied in with the mood \_\_\_\_\_?

H: It is tied in, certainly; it was tied in with the economics. My father was a smart man, but he had no learning,...

J: Yes.

H: ...no book-learning. And I think that is one reason that he was unable to get a home before he did.

J: Yes.

H: We wanted our... we had some book-learning but my... My children have gone to college.

J: Yes.

H: So you see how it has progressed. In three generations.

J: Yes, that's a lot.

H: That is a big step -- in three generations. Well, what is going to happen in another generation?

J: Well what... yes, you've got grandkids.

H: Four granddaughters.

J: You've got four granddaughters. How old is the oldest one?

H: 20.

J: 20.

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H: She's going to college, and working full-time.

J: Yes. Yes. So that's a lot of change.

H: So there is a lot of change. Has her own car; drives back and forth to school; drives back and forth to work.

H: What do you think about all this? (laughs)

H: I never had a car in my name 'til after my husband died, and I put his car in my name. (laughs)

J: Yes. Yes.

H: So, she has her own home; she pays her own insurance.

J: She has her own home?

H: No, I mean, she pays... has her own car,...

J: OK. Right.

H: ...she pays her own insurance.

J: OK. I knew that.

H: \_\_\_\_\_ to keep up the car and everything. And that just didn't happen in my generation.

J: Yes.

H: So there has been a huge change, and I just wonder how far can we go?

J: Well, what do you think about that? I mean, just in terms of... I don't know, how does it make you feel...

H: I'm glad.

J: ...seeing your granddaughter with all these opportunities?

H: I think it's wonderful. That's why I'm so scared of AIDS.

J: Yes. Yes.

H: It would be such a shame to take people who are bright and in their prime, and lose it all.

J: Yes. Yes.

H: Yes, I would like to see my children... I'm very proud of what they \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm very proud of what they are trying to do for their children.

J: Yes.

H: But I just hope and pray that this thing is conquered in some ways so that they won't have the kind of life that it looks like is going to happen in another generation.

J: If... you mean, if all these other things aren't brought under control.

H: Right. It has to be.

J: Well, let me ask you this. When you look at, like... when you look at the women, you know, are there some things that seem... some things that haven't changed very much?

H: Well, probably not in a lot of ways. I think women are women, and they will always be different.

J: Yes.

H: Like my friend... I told you my friend had a 5-way bypass?

J: Yes.

H: Well, his friend was telling him... he had had a bypass, and he said that when he was in for his surgery, that there was a 90-year-old woman in at the same time. She had a 5-way bypass and she said... he said, "She went home before I did." And I said, "Well, women are different."

J: Yes, and actually... I'm thinking back. Yes, we talked about someone who was just....

H: Yes.

J: They have... particularly after retirement, I guess, is what we were talking about. They never really retire; in some way they keep going.

H: They keep active, not only physically but mentally as well. And I think that's one reason women live longer.

J: Well, how else... can you tell me more about when... I know about the active part 'cause they're still, you know, taking care of the house and doing stuff around the house. But what else?

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(pause) Do they, like, stay in better contact with friends and things like that? or...?

H: Women like to associate with other people more than men do.

J: Yes.

H: Unfortunately, men have a tendency to think their life is over when they retire. And I get the impression sometimes, that a woman would like to feel that way and can't. (both laugh) But actually, I was home here for a year, or better, and I found myself putting things off. "Well, I have tomorrow." And that's a bad habit to get into.

J: Yes.

H: And I still do it to a great extent, but... no, I think women... because of women's habit of staying active, it makes them much more healthy.

J: Yes.

H: And they live longer.

J: Yes. There's enough widows in this town to prove that. (laughs)

H: There's enough widows in this town to prove that. In fact, we lost another widower this past week.

J: Oh, who was that?

H: A man... Louis Baker; he passed away. And then this widower passed away yesterday; Fred Riggle So that's two widowers that passed in just the last week.

J: Yes.

H: No, there are enough widows in this town to prove that women are the hardier sex. (both laugh)

J: Do you think... just out of curiosity, since it seems like opportunities and things have changed, you know, for the women through the generations. Do you think men have changed too? in terms of I-don't-know-what? In terms of maybe what we're talking about here; in terms of their attitudes towards I-don't-know, women or work, or anything like that? Do you see much change in men?

H: Yes, I think women have forced... but they did have to be

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forced.

J: Yes.

H: Proved to men about their value as something other than just a housewife.

J: Yes. Yes.

H: But not that that isn't a noble profession. But they have proved that they are capable of doing other things besides just keeping house and raising children. And I think men have had to admit that as far as intellect is concerned, women are just as smart as they are; can think just as quick.

J: Yes.

H: They have not had the advantages in past years to prove that, but I think in your case, you are proving it now. You have the advantage to prove it.

J: Yes.

H: And the number of women who are going to college keeps growing and growing, doesn't it?

J: Yes. You just made me think of my own mom. She couldn't afford to go to college; her family couldn't afford for her or her sister to go then. So I guess, it is pretty striking that the change that happens in that generation.... It's not always easy in certain ways, I mean. I'm sure my mom wishes, you know, that she could... that those same kind of opportunities had been available for her.

H: Yes.

J: You know, sometimes I feel bad that I've had them and she hasn't. And I guess it's a lot of change in just \_\_\_\_\_.

H: Oh yes, and it isn't just in poor people, like my family was.

J: Yes. Yes.

H: But maybe it is the fact that we have changed so much in three generations because we had so far to go, makes it more dramatic.

J: Yes, I see, because you started out, well...

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H: Yes.

J: ...poor.

H: Churchmice poor.

J: Yes. Yes. That's true. Do you think... well, all right, let's talk about being poor then, for a second. Just because I remember... I think I asked at one point: were you different from most of your neighbors?, you know. Your family? When you were young, I mean. I guess the impression I have more is that everyone was more kind of in the same boat, more or less.

H: A lot of people were.

J: A lot of people.

H: But one of my sister's best friends, when we were in grade school, was a lawyer's daughter.

J: Hmm.

H: So we weren't exactly isolated just because we were poor.

J: Yes.

H: But it did make a difference in our feelings, I'm sure.

J: How?

H: Well, to give you a for-instance....

J: OK.

H: We had a neighbor; the girl was the same age we were.

J: Yes.

H: And her father was the postmaster. She brought her lunch to school and rode on the same bus, and she would have a meat sandwich. Well, we had biscuits and peanut butter. And she had meat so much that she would trade her meat sandwich for our biscuits and peanut butter. (both laugh)

J: Ooh.

H: So, that's just an example.

J: And that's a good one.

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H: (laughs)

J: Well, so was it more people in the country? I guess I'm imagining that she may have lived in the town or something like that.

H: No. In fact, she lived right close to us.

J: Right close.

H: Her father happened to be the postmaster which made him one of the.... As a matter of fact, I have gone by the home where they lived --in back of our house. And at the time I was in the 4th, 5th and 6th grade, that seemed like it was a fabulous house -- to me.

J: Yes.

H: Well, the contrast between what it is and what I thought of it at that time, is just... you can't believe.

J: (laughs) That must have been funny.

H: It was. But, you know, at that time, why, it seemed like a fabulous home and actually it isn't.

J: But at the time....

H: But at the time, it was; we thought it was.

J: Yes. Yes. Well, I guess the way I have \_\_\_\_\_ is that there were some people \_\_\_\_\_. There were more the kind in the lower rung and there was more distance between them and \_\_\_\_\_. You know, like there wasn't.... Now we have pretty much \_\_\_\_\_

H: There used to be just two classes: the wealthy people and the \_\_\_\_\_. And now there is three, and the biggest part of the people are the middle.

J: Yes. Yes.

H: I guess we should thank God for that.

J: It's like the change that has been for your mother \_\_\_\_\_.

H: Right. My mother and family was as dirt poor as we were when we were growing up. Maybe even more so. But my children could never say that they have asked for something that they



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couldn't get -- if it was something they needed. We were not of the affluent group, but we did try to get everything that they needed. And my granddaughters... I mean, I feel like they are given a lot of things they don't need.

J: Well, I like... in the transcript over there, where you talk about clothes, you know, and how you and your sister used to share with each other, and how your granddaughters have their own wardrobe and stuff, and they'd be horrified if you suggested that they....

H: It's just a difference in the years, I guess, in the way changes have taken place over the years. But they did take place so suddenly; you don't realize it's happened.

J: I was just about to ask you that. 'Cause, you know, if you sit back and think about it, just the change that happened in your life, you know. You've gone from the time when it was more a barter economy to credit cards and motor machines and TV in every house, and all the stuff that goes on TV. It just seems like... to me it seems like so much change is happening. What you're saying is that it just kind of happens.

H: It just happens so slowly that you all-of-a-sudden just stop and realize: just when did this happen? And it's been happening all along.

J: Yes.

H: And it's so subtle that you didn't realize it at all.

J: Do you ever get really like, just surprised at times. You're just caught short by something. Like "Wow."

H: Yes, I do.

J: Does that happen very often?

H: Yes, quite often. (both laugh) It brings you up short, it really does.

J: Yes. But aside from times like that, it's just like, you're going along and you just don't really notice things.

H: I guess... and, of course, I hope my life isn't anyways near over, but I guess really, I've had a good life as far as variety is concerned -- from what it was when I was small to what it is now that I'm of the older generation.

J: Well, how about homemaking? How has that changed? or

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what's changed... how can I say it?

H: Well, let me give you an example.

J: OK.

H: When I was a youngster, we would can bushels of beans, green beans. And we canned them in half-gallon cans and we cooked them over an open fire in one of the big large buckets. And you'd keep the fire burning under that for hours, to cook those green beans. Right now I have a pressure canner that I can can green beans in just a few minutes.

J: Yes.

H: And I cannot get containers small enough to can them in. (laughs) I couldn't get containers big enough...

J: Big enough then.

H: ...to can beans when I was young. (laughs) And what mother wouldn't have given... she'd have given anything for the canner that sets in there; maybe I use it once or twice a year.

J: Yes. Is that just because you're just one person. Or do you just buy stuff at the store and....

H: Well, I have green beans in my basement that I have canned three years ago.

J: Oh. Which... are there any of the new technologies that you think have made the most difference in terms of women and work, like you mentioned the pressure cooker? Are there any in particular or do you think it's all kind of overall?

H: I think maybe the use of electricity has made the biggest differences. I told you on our previous interview about the washing of clothes?

J: Yes. Right.

H: Our grandchildren don't know what a washboard is.

J: Yes.

H: And when you see one in an antique shop, they want to know what that's used for. So, I thank God for a washer and dryer, that I certainly didn't have when I was growing up.

J: Yes.

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H: And my children and my grandchildren take them for granted.

J: Yes.

H: And maybe we do the wrong things by taking things like that for granted because if there was no electricity, this household would not function at all.

J: Most cars \_\_\_\_\_. You're right, the whole house is just out.

H: It just stops. And I wish, at times, that when we built our house that we had put in a chimney because, if the electricity goes off, the furnace goes out. We have no way of heating our house at all; no chimney.

J: Yes. Yes. So that's pretty straight forward.

H: So some of the technology that has taken place --like electricity and all-- has made us too dependent.

J: Yes. Yes.

H: You see what I mean?

J: Yes, I do. And it just occurs to me too that it's something that you have to think about too.

H: You pay for it one way or another.

J: Yes. Right. But you wouldn't want to do without it, would you?

H: I wouldn't want to be without it. I would not want to go back. No.

J: Yes.

H: No, I wouldn't. But as I say, it does make us very dependent on someone else. When we were home, if we got cold, we'd build up the fire in the stove. If we ran out of wood, we went out and cut a wood.

J: Yes.

H: You can't do that now.

J: Yes.

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H: I thought about putting in a fireplace as a... if the electricity should go off and something would happen, at least I would have a little heat.

J: But... are you thinking about it?

H: I have considered it. If it weren't so darned expensive, I would. (laughs)

J: Right; that's what I was thinking of, yes. I'll just bash on the wall. (both laugh) How hard can it be?

So that's something that's kind of struck you every now and then...,

H: Yes.

J: ...just how dependent everything is.

H: Yes, how dependent we are on other people.

J: Yes. Yes. That's interesting.

H: Yes, when we moved into town and all the electrical gadgets became commonplace, we lost our independence. And I don't think that is really good in a lot of ways.

J: Yes. Hmm, that's interesting.

H: Maybe you hadn't thought of it but I sure have.

J: I guess I had once, but I haven't thought of that for a long.... I guess, I mean, I didn't think about it just in terms of people like yourself that grew up more in the country, you know. Not even so much out in the country --that was probably not the biggest difference-- but just grew up when there weren't, you know... carrying their own water and everything that was so....

H: Carrying your own water, cutting your own wood, growing your own vegetables.

J: I guess the way I thought about it more is, just cash, you know. You pay for everything; you pay for heat, you pay for electricity, you pay for water, you pay for garbage \_\_\_\_\_

H: You know, in the case of a nationwide strike or electrical failure --like they had the blackout in New York City-- do you know who would survive?

J: The poor people out in the country.

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H: Right. Because they would have....

J: Who are the people that survived the Depression in better shape than the other people?

H: Those who lived out in the country where they could raise their own food. Right now, if... within a week's time, the cities would be in utter chaos.

J: Yes. Yes. That's true.

H: And that frightens me. Somebody said, "Oh, we have enough." But how long would you have enough if your neighbor was hungry?

J: Yes. Yes.

H: Or the people from the city came and were hungry. How long would you have enough?

J: So that's a real big change.

H: Very definitely.

J: I was thinking about that. I hadn't thought about that.

H: And those people, when they get hungry, they're not going to stay there and starve. They're going to get out and forage for food, and that person who....

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J: ...old, not that you're 86.

H: No.

J: Well, there's 86-year-olds can talk me under the table. (both laugh) I feel like I should get my blood tested.

H: They've had a lot of experiences. (laughs)

J: Well, that's a good point. That's a really good point; I should feel better. Well, like I mentioned Owen Stout, and there's a whole bunch of them that can talk me under the table. (both laugh)

H: Owen never runs out of something to say.

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J: Yes.

H: And he is interesting. He comes in and teaches our Sunday School classes.

J Yes.

H: In fact, last fall he taught for a whole month...

J: Wow.

H: ...and we really enjoyed him because he was really interesting. And he knows the history back of it.

J: Yes. Yes. He puts a lot into it.

H: He puts a lot into it.

J: Well, like for that party, that old-time music party. You know, he put up the fliers and...

H: Oh yes.

J: ...all this kind of stuff that was really \_\_\_\_\_.

H: He prints old sayings...

J: Yes.

H: ...and during the Sunday School lesson... every Sunday he would come in with something that he had printed that pertained to the lesson. Just a 9 by 12 sheet of paper.

J: I think that everytime I went out there I left with something. (laughs)

H: Yes.

J: A saying or two, or something like that. Yes.

H: And he knows them all.

J: Yes. Yes. That's true. He's a remarkable man.

H: But he practices what he preaches.

J: Yes.

H: (long pause) Well I think we could talk all night on the...

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life's experiences, you know. The way things were and the way they are now, and wonder why things have changed so much.

J: Yes. Does it ever get, like, disconcerting or...

H: A little scary at times.

J: A little scary?

H: Yes, it does.

J: It does?

H: It really does.

J: Just more in terms of thinking about the fact that, you know,... like you said, if something happened, the cities would last three days, I mean. In terms of things like that?

H: Right.

J: But not in terms of just going about your everyday life?

H: No, I'm not... just living as we are now does not scare me.

J: Yes.

H: I don't look into the past. In fact, unless I talk to you, I hardly ever think about the past. (both laugh) But I can look into the future and see things I want to do; things I would like to accomplish in years to come.

J: Yes.

H: But I think you have to have a positive outlook.

J: Yes. Well, you certainly do. I mean, you certainly do; I didn't mean one certainly does.

H: (laughs) One certainly does. That ...

J: It's that and you have it. Yes.

H: That is... that's what keeps people young and alive is the positive outlook.

J: Yes. Yes.

H: And I guess I've always had it, and I hope I keep it.  
(laughs)

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J: Does that come from the church? I mean, or is that just your nature, do you think? or both?

H: I would say it's human nature...

J: Yes.

H: ...but some of the most progressive thinking people that I have known, were those with a positive outlook. They always looked ahead to some... always had a goal to forward to.

J: Yes.

H: And they were never content to sit back and say, "Well, I'm done. This is all I'm going to do. I quit."

J: Yes. Yes. Can I ask you what some of your aspirations are? Anything you want to share right now?

H: Well, I'd like to be of more service to others in the future.

J: Yes.

H: Right now, I... as I said, we talked about in the AARP, I'm so busy, I haven't... I don't have time to go out and volunteer. And yet I find myself volunteering without being asked in a lot of things,...

J: Yes.

H: ...in a lot of ways. But I do...

J: You'd just like more time.

H: I do it because I want to.

J: Right. But you'd just like more time to be able to focus on

H: The days are not long enough.

J: Yes. Yes. I guess \_\_\_\_\_ (both laugh)

H: I guess that's right. When my granddaughters were here, we took a trashbag and we went all along the street picking up trash and broken glass, and they couldn't understand why I would do that. And I said, "Well, it's to make the community look pretty."



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J: Yes.

H: And when we got through and we looked back... and I said, "Now, doesn't it look better to have those blowing papers away."

J: Yes.

H: Well, yes, but they hadn't thought of it, you see.

J: Yes.

H: When they're at home, the only thing they see to take care of is their own yard...

J: Yes.

H: ...and they live in Terre Haute.

J: Do you think... is that... does that have anything to do...? Well, they live in Terre Haute; maybe.... Well, does that have anything to do with the differences in how your generation looked at things and how their's does? I mean, is that... or is it just the difference between, maybe, ....

H: I think it's the difference in grandmother and grandchild.

J: Just in general. (laughs)

H: Right.

J: OK. All right.

H: It's just a different generation. They will probably be able to do things in their life that I never even conceived of...

J: Yes.

H: ...and I hope they do.

J: Yes. Well, it's a nice \_\_\_\_\_. (long pause)

Can I just ask you when the best times... you know, looking back, when were the best... when were the best times?

H: The best times of my life?

J: Yes. Yes.

H: You know, I would find it very difficult to answer that

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because I have always been happy.

J: Yes. Yes.

H: And I'm happy almost all the time.

J: Good for you.

H: So, one....

J: One time?

H: I don't have any high peaks or low valleys; I stay more-or-less on... in the middle.

J: Yes. Yes. OK.

H: So really, I doubt very much if there were any really high peaks or low valleys in my.... I wanted a son, and when he was born.... I already had a daughter, and I wanted this one to be a boy so bad that I think I was extremely happy at that time.

J: Why did you want a boy so bad?

H: Well, my husband was quite a bit older than I am and he didn't think he would ever want children. And of course, when the first one was a girl then, naturally, he wanted a boy; and I was very much in love with him so I wanted to please him.

J: (laughs)

H: But the third one, I didn't care; it wouldn't make any difference what it had been as long as it was healthy.

J: And it was, and it was a girl too? Right?

H: Right, it was a girl.

J: That's right.

H: But both girls have two girls each, and the boy will never have a family.

J: OK.

H: So, unless my nephew in Texas, who has recently married, has a son, the Hickman name --my husband's name-- will die out, in this generation.

J: How do you think he would feel about that?

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H: He is 35 and has a daughter who is 10, and said he would probably never have another child.

J: Oh really? How would your husband have felt, do you think, if he thought...? I mean, he's dead and he doesn't know this right now, what's going on, but if he thought that the name wasn't going to be carried on, do you think it would...?

H: I don't know if he would think it \_\_\_\_\_. See, there are Hickman men in the family...

J: Oh, that's right.

H: ...but the ones that are in the family that have children, have girls. No boys.

J: Hmm. Maybe the girls will just have to hyphenate their name (both laugh) and that way you'll keep the name going.

H: Right.

J: Well....

H: If I had to tell you what I would like to do, I would like to travel; be able to do some traveling. But not overseas. I would like to travel in this country.

J: Is that partly because things seem a bit more crazy overseas, or just because you...?

H: No, because I think there is so many things here that I'd like to see, that I'm not going to have time to go overseas.  
(both laugh)  
But I have a...

J: True.

H: ...Turkish daughter; she calls me her American mom. It was a girl who went to school at Erlham with my daughter, and she was from Turkey. And my daughter brought her home for holidays, and we more-or-less adopted her; I hear from her once a year and she has invited me to come to Turkey.

J: Oh wow!

H: But somehow or other, I have never gone beyond saying, "Oh, I'd love to." I just don't have the desire to go overseas.

H: Just because you'd rather just get busy seeing all there is

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to see...

H: Right.

J: ... in our country. Yes.

H: I would like to travel sometime by train.

J: Yes. Yes.

H: I've never been on a train... well, I have; when I was 4-years old, I was on a train. And I think you would see a lot of beautiful things from a train.

J: I've done that from Chicago to San Francisco, and from Chicago to Seattle. It's beautiful. (laughs)\_

H: Yes.

J: It's really great; it's a really nice way to travel. And you get to meet quite a lot of nice people. Yes, you would enjoy it.

H: I think I would like that.

J: So you'd want to travel some more?

H: Yes, but as far as acquiring anything else, I have no desire for... to acquire anything. I think I have everything that a human being could need to be happy, and mostly good health.

J: Yes. Yes. Well, let's see if I have \_\_\_\_\_; but before we end, is there anything, like last word about anything? About Paoli or about...?

H: Well, I'll probably live here the rest of my life, and I'm anxious to see what happens to this town in the next few years.

J: It just occurs to me: I'd love to, like, come back in 20 years (laughs) and....

H: I'll probably be right here. (laughs)

J: You'll probably be right here?

H: (laughs)

J: (laughing) I'll know exactly where to find you. Anyway, then you'll have a chimney. (both laugh)

Well, once again, I thank you very much.

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H: Well, I've certainly enjoyed having you here.

J: OK. I've certainly enjoyed it myself, I really have.

H: Sorry you have to start off and go home in the dark.

J: Yes, well I better get going because it's not going to get any lighter. (both laugh) Not for awhile anyway.

H: Well, thank you for coming.

J: Thank you so much.

H: And if you happen to be in the neighborhood and want to just stop and talk and I'm home, please stop.

J: OK, I will. I certainly will. And thanks a lot; I appreciate that.

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