Rosa Stone: This is an oral interview for the Historical Society. Rosa Stone interviewing—

Willard Handrich: Willard Handrich.

RS: Okay. So let's start out with religious background, and what kind of difficulty, or non-difficulty, you had was getting the 4-E classification, and then where you were assigned, and transfers, and so on.

WH: Well, I was working in a county that was not connected with Mennonites, and so I worked all night [unintelligible], so I could get off the next day to register. I registered over in Oscoda County where the Fairview Mennonite church is. The next day, when I got back on from the job, I went down the restaurant to eat, and the draft board clerk told me, “Your papers came in today.”

We had to give our nearest, quickest address, which was Harrisville rather than Fairview. So my effort to get in with the group that would be registering in Oscoda County—my effort was useless because they just sent my papers over. As far as I know, there was only four COs was in Alcona County, and I was the first one to be drafted. In fact, they weren't going to draft any of us, and my boss came in one day. He said that he just up and checked with the draft board, and said somebody came in from the state office, and said they had to send these people. They had difficulty sending me, because I was the first one, and the girl working in the office didn't know how to get me off. So they called a clerk in, and they finally sent me off. I was supposed to spend the first night in Lansing, and when I got to Bay City the bus didn't go any farther. They wouldn't honor my—I don't know what you call it—an order that I had, papers that I had, to get my supper and lodging, so I paid my lodging. I don't remember about the...The next morning, when I got on the bus, and over to Flint, one [unintelligible] was on the bus, and so we picked a one or two more up down the line further. We got into Medaryville [Indiana] in the evening. So we were there.

But I had no difficulties. I was very meek and mild, however the draft board clerk, when he was up to send me off, why, he asked me to write and let him know how I was doing. There was one lady there that...she always made a lot of noise when the boys left for the army. Of course, she didn't know that I was leaving, but I decided she wouldn't make any noise if I left. I was rather amazed, because after I was in camp a while I got a letter from her—wondered what I was doing and so on. So, I sat down and wrote her the whole ball of wax, and we had very good correspondence all through the years. I went back on my old job for a while when I came back, and she came in and give me a big hug. There wasn't any real reaction I know a lot of the
people really didn't believe like I believe, but I think they respected me for what I...for living up to my convictions, so I never really had any real oppositions.

RS: You went to Medaryville first, and [unintelligible].

WH: Yes, I was in Medaryville six months—from November to the end of April. Then I went to Pennsylvania dairy testing, and I was down there for, I think, 23 months.

RS: Close to two years. Then, from there, did you find out about smokejumping?

WH: No, I found out about smokejumping when I first came out, and I guess there was several reasons why I wanted to get into smokejumping. One is, I love adventure, and this was something that I’d never done before. [laughs] The second is, I suppose, that I have love the out-of-doors, the wild, the wilderness. I guess, the third reason, was that that was perhaps the most coming closest to any danger that, I guess, anything that a CPS could get into. But I think that the adventure part of it was probably the strongest—

RS: But you also wanted to prove you weren’t afraid of the danger?

WH: Well, that was along with it, but maybe was a toss-up between that and the adventure that...I guess, it was equal. [laughs]

RS: You felt that they work here would be important work?

WH: Yes. We didn’t have anything that was important in Medaryville. There was still wood that was piled up that the CCC boys had put up, so in order to put in our time, we sawed wood and we pulled weeds until you had to hunt for a weed. There was some national importance from the standpoint of growing trees. In fact, that the last week I was in camp there I was pulling trees. You put your fingers through the little seedlings, and so you pull up a root together. It’s sort of like picking strawberries. Your back aches quite a bit.

RS: Where did you train when you got here then?

WH: At Ninemile.

RS: You were here only the last year—

WH: Last year. I guess, you’ve heard me tell, the first two examinations...I volunteered every year, and the first two examinations, the doctor put down “potential hernia.” The last time, the last doctor, when I was in Pennsylvania, was Dr. [unintelligible], he was a Mennonite doctor, and his nurse was [unintelligible], who has just retired from the India mission field. I got my examination, and she weighed me and took a blood pressure, and for some reason or other my
blood pressure was a little high. She asked me if I was excited, and I said I thought I was. So she waited a while, and she took it again. She said, “I guess you’re still a little bit excited.” [laughs]

So I don’t know what my blood pressure was. Anyway, the doctor...She did preliminary work, and then he’d just [unintelligible] it to me. He was busy with a lot of people in waiting room. He said, “Do you have any aches, or pains, or anything wrong that you know of?”

I said, “No.”

He just went down the list and checked them off and sent it through, and that was accepted at that time.

RS: You don’t regret—

WH: Oh no. I made seven practice jumps and seven fire jumps and was hauled to another fire, but no problem at all. After about 20 years ago, doctor told me that I would be in less than two years for a hernia operation, and I still haven’t gone for that operation yet.

RS: [laughs] Tell us about the jumps that you made. What was some of the adventure in those?

WH: [pauses] I suppose, it was usual. That is, the first time I...It was just it’s hard to jump off of the tower, as it was to jump off of the plane, because we’d jumped out of this mock plane and then jumped off of the tower, and you don’t go up in the air 12 feet and then jump off. Even though the net was under there, it was something that’s unusual. In the same way, I guess the reaction on the plane, when was making a final run to jump, I guess I was thinking I’d like to have a little more time to think about it, but you didn’t have that time. So you just hopped out.

The second jump, I turned upside down before my chute opened, and I got slapped pretty hard on the back of my head.

RS: Not enough to knock you out?

WH: No, but it hurt my neck pretty much. After that, they told us to jump standing up and down—just step off and drop it straight down—but I found that every time I did that, my feet would be up with head down when my chute opened. After I learned that, I would dive right straight out, and then I would be up and down when my chute opened up so I had no problem there. My first jump, I landed in some second-growth lodge pole, and I just eased in there so easy. When it stopped, my feet were just barely touching the ground.

RS: Did you have any eventful jumps that kind of banged you up?

WH: No. I think I had one jump on a real steep slope. I came down, and I didn’t realize how steep it was. I was oscillating, and I didn’t realize that either. I thought I was going to...
land...When you can or make out the grass-blades, why, you know you’re just about ready to land. I thought I was going to land; instead I didn’t land, I swung out and then of course my chute dropped back against the ridge. I don’t know. I probably had a freefall of maybe eight or ten feet, and it was just one of those times when you plunk into the earth, and of course, the wind’s knocked out of you and you start wheeling to see whether you’re still together. [laughs] You find you are and so you go on, but that was the hardest landing that I had.

The other one I jumped was with a lad by the name of John Kaufman, I think. I got down, I couldn’t figure out where John was. Finally, I spotted him way up in the top of a big pine tree. [laughs] I mean, he was up in the air. I think we had to tie a rope onto his rope or something to get him out of there. Most of my landings came in pretty good.

RS: Then the fire jumps. How were those jumps for you?

WH: The practice jumps were all uneventful, except this second jump when I got my neck slapped, but these were fire jumps...this was a fire jump where I missed the mountain the first time, and that was on a fire jump.

RS: How does one miss a mountain?

WH: If it had been on the level, I think I may have, but I was swinging...If the mountain had been on the other side of me, why, I would have landed too, but due to the slope, I just missed it and it was a pretty steep slope there. We had gone over the ridge and on down on the other side. I landed. I landed quite solid. [laughs]

RS: What were the fire like that you worked on that summer? [pause] Did you have some small fires and some larger fires?

WH: Most of the fires were small fires. The first fire, we worked all night, and by morning we had a fire line all around it. However, we got up to one side and a log fell over the line and rolled all the way down, and so we had to get back the bottom and start over again on the one side. We had it all surrounded, and the next day, they walked some, I think, they were Mexicans in. That happened several times.

There was another fire that was pretty big that that, but I think we had it all surrounded when we left. It was big enough they had dropped a kitchen in, and they had a lot of Mexicans in there and I think they had it under control or a line around it. I think the Mexicans just stayed and mopped it up, and we went on.

I was on a fire down in Idaho somewhere, was on about a week, and then...I don’t remember what airstrip it was, but we walked into this airstrip. Then, the next morning, the plane came in and picked up the load, and I had already had breakfast. I could have gotten on the plane, but I decided, well, I’d stay and do dishes and go with the second bunch that went out. When the
plane came back, they said that they needed equipment for some jumpers because we were out of jumping equipment. So they loaded all the jumping equipment on the plane and left, and of course, I suppose this was all cut and dried before we knew what was happening. Then they authorized us to be hauled 50 miles in a truck to another fire, and that was a big one down in Idaho. They had jumpers on this fire, but we got in the fire about two o’clock in the morning and even then it just sounded like a freight train rolling along. We worked on that fire all day. The next afternoon we didn’t need anybody, we were building fire line. The next afternoon, we had a radio, also, they’d dropped in...I don't know how we got the radio.

RS: How many of you went by truck?

WH: I suppose there were probably eight or ten of us. I don’t just recall.

Anyway, we were in a draw, and this plane overhead, the guy was on the radio. I heard him say, “It’s a little hot down there where you are, but you won’t have any trouble with it, the wind’s in your favor.” Just a few minutes later, why, there was branches as big as our arms going right over the top of our head. We grabbed the old radio, and [laughs] got ourselves out of there. The next day we came through there, and that was just as bare as could be. Everything had been burned out.

RS: How did you get away from it? You ran?

WH: We ran and got out of there. That’s all.

RS: There wasn’t water to go to.

WH: No, it was high and dry up in the mountains. It’s one of those things that the conditions were nothing unusual. It’s one of those conditions where you could have had a fire suddenly come up with the right kind of a...But the wind was in our favor, but the heat of the fire just pushed these limbs right into the wind. I suppose that was the closest fire I ever had.

RS: That gives you some feeling for the Wag Dodge [Wagner Dodge] situation in the Mann Gulch fire, doesn’t it?

WH: I never had any fear, even at that time, I suppose the follows there may not have had it either, because I just figure on getting out of there. That was all.

RS: The difference was you made it, and they didn’t.

WH: Yes, we got out of there. If I hadn’t, you wouldn’t be interviewing me. [laughs]

RS: [laughs] Right, I wouldn’t be interviewing you. Was that towards the end of the fire season, do you remember, or was it—
WH: Yes, that was towards the end of the fire season. But earlier than that, I was on a fire. I jumped on it Sunday morning with one other fellow. There was a number of lightning strikes, and they dropped two...I think they went out with a Ford Trimotor, and I think I and one of the young Forest Service fellows jumped on the last fire. It was just a little crown fire in the rocks. In fact, about all that was there was rocks, and there was a little pond a little ways from there, and this was just smoldering away in the needles and duff, so we’d go get some water and put it out and mix it up and sit there and watch it. Pretty soon there would be a little curl of smoke come up. We did that all day until the evening, we figured we’d had it all out. Just as we was going to bed down, a thunder storm came up, so we crawled down under some spruce trees and pulled the fire-pack cover over us. It didn’t rain much, it rained a little bit, but not much I guess, like yesterday when it rained. Anyway, in the morning when we got up, we went over and checked our fire and decided it was out, and just turned around and about 200 feet from where we were sleeping lightning had struck and started another fire. So we had another group of trees that we spent the rest of the day putting that fire out.

RS: Fortunately, you were there. Right?

WH: We were right there. The fellows across the canyon had seen this crown out. We didn’t see it. One of them tried to find it the next morning and he didn’t find it, but we were there and put it out. That was... [pauses] I don’t know where...It towards the end of the summer. Anyway, this other Forest Service fellow said we were supposed to carry our equipment out, so we carried our equipment out of there down over a ridge and mountains and—I don’t know how much—but we had our whole outfit. We carried—

RS: No mule-train?

WH: No. Well, we were the mules, I guess. Anyway, we got in onto a game trail, and it got dark and we laid down in this game trail. I was just hoping no grizzly bear would come along, and there was a little lake right there where they’d naturally come down and get some water. It was probably an elk trail or something. Anyway, the next morning, we got up, and we thought we should be getting close to out. So we didn’t eat any breakfast until we got so hungry that we had to eat our last box of K-rations. Then I don’t think we walked 15 minutes after we ate our K-rations until we did get out. There was some ranger station there, where we got more pancakes or something anyway. When we got out, they told us the war was over. The war was over before we...We didn’t get on it—

RS: Before the fire season was over, the war was over.

WH: Yes. So, they said, the war is over. Then, I think, maybe that may have been...I don’t know just how the rotation was, but my last fire that I was on...Well, I was on a fire over in Oregon, and there was two plane loads that jumped in there—big open area. There was double air-currents, and I was drifting one way and I turned my chute around to drift the other way. When
I looked down, I was going just as fast the other way. Quite a number of fellows missed that. It was a big open place and missed it, and Carey Evans [William Carey Evans?]—there was two fellows that got hurt on that job.

RS: Because of that wind-shift?

WH: Wind-shift that carried them over into the rocks, and I helped to them carry Carey Evans out. We started out with him that night, and the ranger that was with us—it was dark, he had a flashlight—but he said, “I think we’d better simply bed down until morning.” Which we did, and somebody else had our sleeping bags by that time.

So we rolled up in parachutes, and one of them said, “I don’t think kings sleep in silk.” [laughs]

RS: Did Carey have broken bones?

WH: I really don’t think he did, I think he just sprained, a bad sprain, I think, his back or something. We carried him all out anyway. One of the things that I recall, I think Wilmer Carlsen was on that. He and Norman Zook were the only two that I recall, and Virgil Miller. One of the things that happened, of course, two men would carry at one time. We’d keep switching off, and we had a pack-along with us. Virgil was carrying this pack, and he stumbled and put his hand out on a ridge. We were walking right along parallel to a ridge, and he put his hand right into cactus. Of course, he jerked it back quick and then sat in the cactus. The last time I saw him, he said he was still picking out the thorns. [laughs] We had a doctor with us too. A doctor had come on horseback and met us, I guess, so the doctor picked out some spurs.

Anyway, we got out to the end of the road. There was a truck or ambulance. I don't recall just what was there. Anyway, they picked up Carey, and we had to wait. I'm not sure how we got to an airstrip there, but right there, there was a little farm there. There was an old man and woman that lived there that his horses were so high-life that he could hardly handle them anymore. He was telling us about this, and he had hay cut and he had it in doodles. I suppose that they’d probably lived their life there in this very peaceful little valley, a river along the side. So we hitched up his horses, and put up his hay for him before we left there, and he was quite tickled about that to get his hay put up and it was fun doing it too.

RS: Then the plane came in and picked you?

WH: I don't remember whether there was an airstrip there, or how we got to an airstrip, but I remember a plane picked us up then. I think that that was the time that we came into Missoula, and Mount Sentinel was on fire. When we came in, the fire was just going up the side of the mountain, and it went right up to the peak.

RS: That was the end of the fire then, when it got clear up, or did you have to go out on it?
WH: No. I don’t think. I think there was some smokejumpers that were working in the nursery right nearby and with shovels. They wanted to put the fire out right away, and they wouldn’t get they permission because they were on a special fire detachment. So the fire went right up over the...I think it was started with some little boys playing with matches in there. They could have put the fire out right when it began, but they weren’t allowed to so the fire went up over the mountain. It took them about a week to get that thing out. I don’t think that they jumped anybody up there, but they did drop supplies up there up top by plane.

The last jump, a fellow by the name of Hisey [Jacob Hisey]...I think we just came in off of that big fire, and this fire was still going. We’d been on a fire for two weeks, and most of us were getting sort of sick from the smoke and the fire and the heat. One of the fellows, his boots were just about gone. Another fellow—I don’t know what happened to his pants, probably caught on fire—he didn’t have much pants left. So they called us off the fire then—let us to come in—and they were still hauling people in there when we left the scene. We walked for, I think, two hours along the line where there was fire, and there was no fire line there. It was a huge fire. We came in, and I was really tired. Next morning, I think, before evening was that I was back...before I just got in, I think they put me right back on the jumping list. So they told us—I don’t know whether it was in the evening or the morning—that they got us up at five o’clock to go down to jump on two fires—one big fire and one little fire.

I sort of succumbed to the big fire, because [laughs] I didn’t feel like fighting fire anymore. While we were standing around the [unintelligible] waiting for our orders, one of the Forest Service fellows came by and said, “Handrich and Hisey, come with me.” That was music to my ears, because I knew we were going on the little fire, because I didn’t want any more big fires. This, again, was a lightning strike right up near the Canadian border. I think we had a fire line around it, but it was just smoldering away there. We watched in the evening, and in the evening we saw some goats and there was two little kids that were having a lot of fun frolicking there in the rocks. Then we went up on the ridge to get in our sleeping bags, we met this band head-on right on the top of the ridge.

RS: Goats?

WH: The goats. Of course, they hopped down over the rocks.

RS: These were wild goats?

WH: Wild goats, yes. They’re quite big. I didn’t realize they were that big, and we came together just right on the ridge. I don’t think it was over two rods from them when we saw each other.

RS: Were they dangerous?

WH: No, no. I guess we were both surprised. There we were. We were right face-to-face with each other. They turned and ran down the mountain, these two little kids were with them. We
went to bed, and the next morning I woke up. I think the thing that woke me it was a deer snorting at us, and it had snowed during the night and so everything was wet. So we checked our fire, and of course that was out because of the dampness. We did stick around, I think, until nearly noon. We decided to walk out, and we started walking and we didn't look at our compass very much. After we walked an hour all of a sudden we were back at our fire again.

RS: You made a full circle.

WH: We made a full circle. I don't know who was in the lead. I don't remember whether Hisey was, or whether I was. Anyway, we took a new compass course and followed the compass. We got out to a sub-station. I guess there was food inside, but the door was locked. We couldn't get into it, but there was a telephone outside. So we called Spotted Bear Ranger Station, and the ranger there came up and picked us up at Spotted Bear. Next morning, there was all kind of excitement around. Somebody come in and stole some of their horses during the night. A plane and picked us up and flew us back. I think that was the end of the fire season. It had snowed and rained, and that was the first time, then when we got back, that we could go on furlough or take time off. Up to that time, why, we were frozen on the job.

RS: Did you get compensatory time, because of all the time you spent—

WH: Yes. I had about five or six weeks. I don't recall if it was five or six. Norman Zook and Jim Hain [James Hain] and I decided to go over Hood River, Oregon and pick apples during this time. We could get furlough because of the wet weather. There was still, I think, a few jumps after that, but they let us go. So we went over to Hood River, and we went to the employment office to see whether they needed apple pickers. The fellow in there asked us if we were carpenters. I said, “I think I could do carpenter work.”

Norman said, “I think I could.”

Jim said, “I'm not a carpenter. I do common labor.”

He took us over to this job. They were building cabins for a co-op canning company. The boss hired all three of us. Norm and I were carpenters, and Jim was a common laborer. We went out and bought hammers and saws and squares and nail aprons, I think, and we reported on the job the next morning. He also told us that we could stay in one of the cabins that was already seated in. So we went out and got some blankets. Then, talking this thing over, we went back into the canning factory, and wondered if we could work at night. They hired us on the night shift, so we decided that we’d just get our meals out at the restaurant, instead of try to do our own cooking. Rent didn’t cost anything, because we had this cabin, so—

RS: You didn’t work day and night, did you?

Willard Handrich Interview, OH 163-009, Archives and Special Collections, Mansfield Library, University of Montana-Missoula.
WH: Well, the night shift began at either seven, or eight, in the evening, and they would work until they run out of fruit, which was anywhere from 12 to two in the morning. The thing that happened was that they had one crew going through framing, and then they had a sheeting crew coming to just nail on sheeting. Well, anybody can nail on sheeting, and they put us nailing sheeting. So we were nailing sheeting, and I think we got about a dollar thirty-five an hour, and big Jim was carrying boards to us for 95 cents. He told the boss, “I could do that. I think I can nail boards too.”

The boss told him, “Well, I need laborers more than the carpenters now.”

So Jim worked a few days, and he was just telling the other day, the rest of the story—that I didn’t know the rest of the story. He had hopped a freight train one night and going to hobo and see the country before he went back. In Oregon, somewhere, he got picked up for riding the train and was put in jail for...I don’t know. He couldn’t remember how long [laughs] he was in jail. He said he thought it was about two weeks, and he said he finally got out on parole. For a while there—at least he got out of jail—they put him up on a pea machine. They were harvesting peas, and he said you had to work or else you get covered up with peas. He said it was pretty hard work, and he said he couldn’t remember how he got back to camp but he said he got back anyway.

My time ran out and Norman had a week longer, so he had relatives over in Oregon, in Sweet Home I think, so he decided to go over there for a week. But several days before this, he had missed the nail and hit his finger. I was going to work the night shift yet, and he was going to leave in the evening. Just before quitting time—I was going to work until quitting time, and then I was going to leave for Missoula. He came in, and he said, “My finger hurts so bad that I’m going with you back to camp.” His finger—the infection was so bad that he was in hospital for almost a week when he got back, but that was the end of our trip anyway.

RS: You were discharged by then and could go home?

WH: No, no. I knew, by that time, that I would be discharged in March. So when I got back, they sent us down on the Lochsa River to build a bridge. We walked 20 miles in on this bridge job, and—

RS: That was just an interlude where you could earn a little money, because the money was—

WH: No, I was still under the government there in—

RS: But while you were doing your carpenter work, you got paid and—

WH: Oh, I got paid. I made more money that time than I ever made in my life. I came back, I had nearly 600 dollars. Yes. We worked. We had enough time, and we didn’t have an alarm clock with us. We worked there for, I think, either five or six weeks. We never missed a meal, and we
were never late for the job either. Then when we got all these cabins sheeted, the boss told us, “I'm going to send you two fellows over—we have six more cabins another place—and have you sheet those up yet.” So we sheeted them up. Then, the boss said—a big Swede—“Have you boys are put in any windmill door yams [doorjambs?]?” [laughs]

I said, “No, I never did.”

Hermann said, no, he didn't either.

“Well,” he said, “Here's where you learn.”

So we got in on the finishing of these cabins too. I don't know whether they held up very good, but...By the time we finished up there, our time was up anyway, but we worked full-time.

RS: Your compensatory time was up, so you had to go back—

WH: We had to go back, but everything worked out just right. We didn't do much...I don't even remember going to church, but maybe we did, I don't know. I think mostly we just worked. Probably when we slept in was on Sunday morning. I don't remember all the details anymore.

But we came back, and then we went on this bridge job. We had to walk in 20 miles. The bridge was nearly completed when...I don't know whether...At least, I came out...some of them, a couple of them I think, were just discharged by the time I went out. It was around the first of December when I came out. I think, maybe, I was with the last of the CO boys that came out, but we had the bridge pretty well done by that time. It was a 200-foot swinging bridge, I think, was what it was. They had it on cables. It was a good project. Then December 5, I think, that we left the unit, that my transfer hadn't come through yet. Mary had relatives over in Oregon, she and Norman happened to be first cousins, so we drove over there and spent a little time. Then her sister was living in Los Angeles so we went down there. Then I called back from there, and they said Mulberry, Florida, so we just kept on going. [unintelligible] around the United States when we got home.

We were there in Mulberry, Florida until the 8th of March. Most of the discharges were coming through around the 25th. I ended up a laundryman there, and we decided that I had enough furlough time and weekends, and I had it all figured out, and when the week’s laundry was done, my job was done. Nobody wanted the laundry, and I didn't want it either, so that was one of the compensations; that when the laundry work was done, why, you didn't have to work anymore. Mary came up to camp with me that morning—she was in Sarasota—and we were going to do the washing up Monday and then take off. Before we ever got started washing, I was discharged, but we did the washing for them anyway. [laughs] So we gave some extra time in the CPS.

RS: That’s like doing the fellow’s hay. It was kind of bonus, wasn’t it?
WH: Yes.

RS: Did you ever meet any other game on the trail? You talked about those deer snorting and the—

WH: No. I think that, really, that game there was just about all.

RS: You never went hunting?

WH: Oh, I guess we saw deer once in a while.

RS: But you never got to go hunting or fishing?

WH: We went fishing down there. This morning that I was waiting on the plane to come in, it left, and we had the dishes all done and nothing to do. I did have some fish-line in my pocket so I caught some grasshoppers, and I’d just gotten down getting ready to go fishing and I heard the plane coming. So I turned my grasshoppers loose and the fish ate them, and I came rushing back so I could get on the plane, but I rushed back so I could get on the truck to go fight that big fire. [laughs]

RS: Before you went into the draft, did you have your plans made on what you were going to do with your life?

WH: Yes, very much so. We had been married in the end of December, and I knew at that point that I was...No, I didn’t know at that point. Our plan—a fellow and I had found an old abandoned elevator that had gone broke in the First World War, well, back in the Depression was when it broke. It was a chain, Martindale and Kimbell, or Kimbell and Martindale I believe was the name of the firm that had it. It was still written on the building. They had loaded it up with beans. They had some elevators down here in the thumb district of Michigan in bean country. The prices started going, and they tried to hang on and they lost the whole works. This old elevator was supposed...They were about ready to tear it down, and so we bought this old elevator and repaired it, and we were going to open it up. We were going up there that fall and open it up. Try to have it repaired for business in the fall. Then, in July, that’s when the boss came in and told me that this man came in and said that we had to go. Then nothing happened after that, and when you can’t make any plans...In fact, I wanted to go, at that point, to get it over with, but nothing happened, nothing happened. It came the first of November, and nothing happened. Then I didn’t want anything to happen for a while, because I wanted to take hunting season yet. The 7th of November, I got my notice I was to report. So, when I got down to camp, 15 deer seasons opened, and fellows from back home, they were all taking furlough all the same time to go hunting, and I couldn’t even get a weekend, at that point because I just got in camp.
RS: Then after you got out, did you decide then to go into the ministry and into [unintelligible]?

WH: No. That’s kind of a story all on its own. We had this mill, and really, I pretty much lost interest in it during the time I was in. I always had a hankering to do carpenter work, so the discharge in Mulberry, we did a little traveling to see Florida. Then I got a job with a construction firm down there, and I worked there until about the first of May. Really, the only thing that brought us back to Michigan was the fact that my partner and I had had this mill. So I came back, and we opened up the mill. We operated there three years, but it’s one of those things that business was good and the business is still going. That is, they changed names, but the people that we sold out to still operate it and have made a good business out of it. But we came back, and it was just one of those things where we just couldn’t stay there, that’s all.

So, another thing that had happened, was the fact that they were going to ordain a minister at Fairview, and we had just gone to Millersburg and put everything we had all invested, everything, into our home and business there, which was 60 miles from Fairview. I happened to be in the lot, and one of the things they wanted us to do was to come back to Fairview. I didn’t possibly see how we could; we didn’t have the business really going yet, and so it was at that juncture were I couldn’t see my way clear to come back. So, I was dropped from the lot there. But three years later, we just come to a place where business kept picking up every year, but we just didn’t stay there, that’s all. It was one of those things, that I suppose, Providence. So, we went to our pastor one day and told him of our feelings, and we didn’t tell him we wanted to go anyplace but we just told him of our feelings. I don’t remember, but somehow or other General [unintelligible] contacted us about Africa, then in the meantime, why, our mission board was going to Grand Marais. I don’t know, really at this point looking back, why we decided for Grand Marais, but we did and we went to Grand Marais. We had problems, of course, selling our home and also selling the business so we drove, for a whole year, back and forth which was about a 160 miles, I think. We never missed the weekend that we drove up there. Then we had a problem finding housing in Grand Marais and then was able to rent a house, so we moved up to Grand Marais. But I spent about half of the time back. We finally sold a—

RS: Our tape has run out, and I want say thank you very much for being in this interview. Okay?

WH: You’re welcome

RS: Thank you.

[End of Interview]