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This transcript represents the nearly verbatim record of an unrehearsed interview. Please bear in mind that you are reading the spoken word rather than the written word.

Oral History Number: 024-002

Interviewee: Harry Oscar "H.O." Bell

Interviewers: K. Ross Toole and Pat Morris

Date of Interview: April 26, 1966

Project: Harry Oscar "H.O." Bell Interviews Oral History Project

Note: Bell's wife, Mary Mista, participates occasionally during the interview.

[Tape begins with testing of the mic levels and talk about the weather.]

K. Ross Toole: This is a tape-recorded interview with Mr. H.O. Bell, being the second reel of this interview. There are two interviewers, Mr. Pat Morris of the Department of History at the University of Montana and myself, Ross Toole. We are going to discuss very informally with Mr. Bell, automobiles, the automobile business in early Montana, roads and all conditions surrounding automobiles and roads, and this is April 26, 1966.

Mr. Bell, I would like to ask you one question which perhaps isn't germane to the whole thing, but about which I am very curious. The last time you and I talked, you said in an aside, "Well, someday, I would like to tell you about racing." And I remembered that. Would you relate some of your experiences in this business here and in Spokane, was it also?

Harry Bell: Well, yes, but I started way back about 1903.

KRT: That early.

HB: But I was a mechanic for a fellow by the name of, two fellows rather, by the name of Carl D. Fisher and a fellow by the name of Earl Kiser. Earl Kiser was from Dayton, Ohio, and Carl Fisher from Indianapolis, who later built the Indianapolis Speedway after I had left that area. And I was their mechanic and I used to go around to the race meets in various Eastern cities, Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and so forth. And I used to do more racing probably than they did when they were actually in the contest. Because I had to test the cars out and see how much better it was or how much poorer it was, and the competition we had. [Laughs] And then we would time them, of course, we would have them timed and things of that kind. From that period when I got to Spokane in 1906, of course, there wasn't much racing in Spokane at that particular time because there was very few automobiles there. In fact, there was only six cars in Spokane in 1906.

KRT: Six cars in Spokane. Boy! Isn't that amazing.

HB: We built the first garage in Spokane—a fellow by the name of [Lou] Rose—it was called the Rose Automobile Company. The building still stands there on the corner of Walnut and Sprague Avenue.

KRT: Well, did you build this to repair the six automobiles that were in Spokane, or what?

HB: No, we brought a lot of cars with us. This fellow Rose had an uncle in Spokane by the name of Bibbins, C.D. Bibbins, and he and a fellow by the name of Charley White, they ran the old Owl gambling house in Spokane and they became quite wealthy for people of those days. And this fellow Bibbins had no children but his sister had married a fellow by the name of Rose, who lived in Indianapolis, and they had a son by the name of Lou. And they conceived the idea that they wanted to put him in business and it would be something they could do. So, they had corresponded with him and such. As it was, he got himself a job with Carl Fisher, the fellow who I worked for, as a salesman, and he worked there for a year. And the last half of the time he was there, he kept talking to me about this rich uncle in Spokane that wanted to put him in the automobile business and [he] wanted me to go with him and out there to take care of all the mechanical needs and so forth and so on. I would be the foreman of the shop and so forth. So, that's how I got to Spokane in 1906.

KRT: Well, if there were six automobiles in Spokane in 1906, I presume there were none in Missoula. Were there? Or one or two, maybe?

HB: Well, I don't know. I really don't know. I think Massey McCulloch's father had an old car. But I think probably that came later. It was a Ford.

KRT: Now, you have raced or in effect, you have repaired the cars and maintained them in Indianapolis and elsewhere. How do you get, do you do any racing in Spokane?

HB: Oh, yes. There and down at Portland and Seattle and all around the Northwest.

KRT: You'd go on a circuit, would you?

HB: Yeah.

KRT: What kind of cars were these, Mr. Bell?

HB: Well, the ones I raced most over there was Stoddard-Dayton, Studebaker-Garford, and the Lozier. Cars that you probably never heard of.

KRT: I have heard of the Lozier and, of course, the Studebaker. How fast do these machines go? They are very fast, aren't they? Comparatively?

HB: Now?

KRT: Well, I mean these are 80 and 90 miles an hour, aren't they?

HB: Oh yes. I think I have a picture here someplace of a car that I drove in a Wemme Trophy Race in Portland, Oregon. It was a 250-mile race. It was a 14-mile course and dirt road and there were six right-angle turns every 14 miles and one S turn. On dirt. I won the race in 1909 at an average speed of 56 and a fraction miles per hour.

KRT: Of course, that is average.

HB: Average speed for the whole distance. 250 miles.

KRT: But on the straightaway, you are going at a terrific speed.

HB: Oh, we would get up to 90 miles or more. I can't remember.

KRT: How much tire trouble did you have?

HB: Well, I never had any trouble with tires on the race. But, of course, we had what they called racing tires. They made a special tire. We had no such thing as nylon tires in those days. It was all cotton cord. And heavy plies and things of that kind.

KRT: Kind of rough. Are these four-cylinder cars? They are, most of them, aren't they?

HB: Oh yes.

KRT: With a big bore or stroke or what?

HB: Well, those days, they made motors mostly with the bore and a longer stroke than the bore. The tendency now is to have a bigger bore and a shorter stroke.

KRT: Were they self-started or did you have to push them?

HB: Oh no. We had no such thing as self-starter.

KRT: How were they geared?

HB: Well, they were just chain drive and then we had some of the earlier cars come along and about that period with the double gear drive and the back end.

KRT: Did you shift back down or use your brakes?

HB: Oh, no shift down. You'd never shift down.

KRT: You couldn't shift down.

KRT: How well would these races be attended, Mr. Bell? Did they attract quite a bit of attention?

HB: Oh my, yes. They had immense crowds.

KRT: All along the right-of-way?

HB: Yes. Then I, of course, did a lot of track racing, you know. A mile and half-mile tracks on fairgrounds and stuff like that.

KRT: Were these races useful to you in terms of thinking about automobiles and improvements in them?

HB: Well, it was sport. I never got paid for any of it. It was my fun.

KRT: Just plain fun.

HB: Well, I was getting paid by the month for the companies I worked for. For instance, like with Studebaker and Stoddard-Dayton company, they paid the company for my racing and so forth. They got the trophies.

KRT: Would they pay much attention to the mechanics involved? That is to say, improvements or things that came out of the races?

HB: Oh yes. That was a lot of the idea in racing, to learn more about brakeage and things like that. I had been pretty lucky about not having any. I had wheels crash, go right through a wheel on a corner or something like that. The wheels those days were wooden spokes. And they were good wheels, but when you get to sliding sideways and come to a sudden stop going sideways, it will blow through most anything.

KRT: There she goes, sure. Did you race around Missoula at all, after you moved over?

HB: Oh no. Oh, once or twice when I first come here on the track out there.

KRT: Let's go back a minute now. I got some of this in the last interview. But let's go back to your coming to Missoula from Spokane and review what caused you to come. And your impression when you first got here.

HB: I was, when I was in the last three years, I was in Spokane, from 1912 until I came to Missoula. I went to work for a fellow by the name of Frank Williams, who was the Ford dealer in Spokane. And he talked me into being there. I was a mechanic and I didn't know much about selling and things like that, but I had an awful lot of people over there come to me for

everything, it seemed, and a number of ones including, probably you remember, the Porter Brothers and Welch Contractors. You ever hear of them?

KRT: Yes, I have.

HB: Well, there was an old fellow there by the name of R.B. Porter, who was a member of the firm, and he had a brother in Portland. And then, Pat Welch, who lived there in Spokane, too. And R.B. Porter was really just like a dad to me. He just always, for the last five or six years, I think, he had been talking to me about wanting to put me in business. You know, I felt that I wanted to go into business, he would furnish the money. Which I had none. So, this Frank Williams talked me into being their wholesale manager. Those days, they didn't have branches, they had a distributor and Frank Williams was the distributor in the Spokane area, which included all of Eastern Washington and most of Idaho and this part of Montana. And in early 1915, the early part of the winter there, R.P. Rice, they were going to do away with this dealership over here because of some skulduggery that was going on, which was things that Mr. Ford didn't tolerate. And Mr. Rice told me that I could have this if I could finance it. Well, I talked to Mr. Porter about it and he said, "Harry, you go right ahead and whatever you need, why I'll take care of the money part and you take care of the rest."

KRT: Had you visited Missoula by this time?

HB: Yes, I had been over here in 1908. So, I came over then and looked over the situation and a fellow by the name of Floyd Logan was the dealer right back of the Mint Bar, if you know where that is, in one of those little rooms. It isn't any wider than this here and not much longer. So, I went back to Spokane and told Mr. Williams about it. I had told him before about it and he had said to me, "Well," he said, "Harry, why didn't you let me finance you?" "Well," I said, "I didn't know whether you'd be interested in it or not." "Well, why not?" "Well," I said, "if it is all right with Mr. Porter, it is all right with me." Frank had told me that I could be more help to you because I had been in the automobile business. I can send a bookkeeper over from here to get you started that way and so forth. So, I talked to Mr. Porter and said well, it didn't make any difference to me, he was only interested in trying to help me get a start. So, I asked Frank on what basis he wanted to finance me and he said, "Well, Harry, you draw up what you think is fair and that will be all right with me." So, I wrote that out in longhand and I still have that document in my safety deposit box in Missoula. I had it written out so that I would pay him off. We had to have \$30, 000 cash to put in the business and a credit of \$30,000 at the bank. So, I paid Frank off in three years, \$10, 000 a year and gave him a percentage of the profits during that period. And that is how I got my start in the automobile business.

KRT: Now, this is probably an impossible question. Let's go back to your first year or maybe two or three in Missoula. Who bought automobiles and why?

HB: Well, of course, when I come to Missoula in 1915, why the automobile was quite a thriving business and I don't remember how many cars were here then but there were a number.

KRT: A couple of hundred maybe?

HB: Possibly. I can't tell you for sure. I just wouldn't know.

KRT: Anyhow, an automobile going up and down the streets was certainly a common enough thing.

HB: Well, it was. Yes, it was quite common.

KRT: How did you go about selling your first automobile? You don't remember your first sale, do you?

HB: Well, no I don't. When I was a mechanic, I used to sell probably more cars than anybody else because people would—I don't want to be bragging or anything like that, there wasn't any automobile mechanics out in this country. There were blacksmiths.

KRT: If a fellow wanted to buy a car, he wanted to talk to the mechanic.

HB: That's right. And, for instance, gasoline. There were no filling stations. We had to buy our gasoline through the drugstore. And we bought it in barrels and we stored it behind the garage in barrels.

KRT: Now, what did a fellow do, in 1915 or '16, if he wants to drive to Helena? What does he do about gasoline?

B. Well, later, along that time, why we had gas then, better gasoline, and we had other facilities to get it. You see they had, Continental had, a wholesale place here in Missoula.

KRT: But you wouldn't have many stations for instance, between here and Helena. Did they carry gas with them in cans?

HB: A lot of it, yes.

T. Was this a volatile fuel?

HB: Very volatile. In the early days you could take a can of gasoline and set it outdoors and it would evaporate in an hour or so. Today you could set a can of gas out there and it would be there next week.

T. There is no lead in this fuel?

B. No. It was what we would term now as casing head gasoline. It would be the gasoline that would evaporate at 75 or 80 degrees temperature. Just go up in smoke.

KRT: You couldn't keep it around very long in your barrels then. It wouldn't evaporate out of the barrels?

B. You would have to plug it up. And keep it in the shade.

KRT: When you are starting here in the teens, what kind of lights do you have on these automobiles?

HB: Well, the early days, we had nothing but kerosene and then later we had the carbide generator with the jets.

KRT: But what, you've got to fill the little tank with carbide and added water?

HB: Yeah. We had a little carbide thing that screwed on the bottom and there was carbide in it and we had a little tank on top that had water and you had a little valve you opened in there and let the water drip on the carbide.

KRT: You were not driving around very fast at night with those lights, I presume.

HB: No, but you see, in 1904 and 1905, it commenced to come into general use, the Prest-O-Lite tank. I don't know whether I told you about the Prest-O-Lite.

KRT: You just started and then we didn't pursue the Prest-O-Lite.

HB: Well, I would like to go into that sometime, too.

KRT: Well, I would like to go into that right now. Because it is a pretty critical kind of thing.

HB: I think most anybody should know that Prest-O-Lite gas is probably the most explosive gas there is known to man and it's a gas that was impossible to compress into a tank. And a number of people had tried in the early days to compress acetylene gas by having a generator, you know, generating gas from carbide and water and everyone that ever tried it got killed. There was a lot of killings by it and a fellow by the name of [Percy] Avery from Dayton, Ohio, finally found the solution by having a compressor and pipes and so forth all buried under chipped ice. It was the friction in the pipe that caused the explosion. And you have probably heard of the Prest-O-Lite tanks. You know, our acetylene welding tanks as we know them today and so forth. That was the kind of gas.

KRT: This was the precursor of acetylene.

HB: That's right. Well, these tanks were made in Pittsburgh and they are about that long and about that big around and they fasten right on the running board. They had clamps come with them.

KRT: That is what? Two feet long and eight inches around maybe.

HB: Well, 10 inches or something like that. Then they had a valve there and you had a hose that went to your light and you just turned it on. The little lights got as bright as you wanted them and that was your light.

KRT: What happened if you rolled down a mountainside with your Prest-O tank?

HB: Well, it didn't never bother it at all, but what happened was in the, after the Prest-O-Lite, see, Carl Fisher was the fellow that brought out the Prest-O-Lite. They organized the Prest-O-Lite Company. He and a fellow by the name of Jim Allison and they took Avery in, the fellow that had patented the Prest-O.

KRT: Where was their headquarters, now?

HB: At Indianapolis. And they built a little plant out on North Indianapolis. Called it the Prest-O-Lite Company. And this gas was compressed out there. They fixed up trawls and racks where they put these tanks along and they had the compressor with the big box on where they could keep it in ice. And they pipe in ice and stuff like that. And by carelessness, at one time the plant blew up and killed an awful lot of people around that area. Killed nine in one hospital there. And blew the end out of the hospital, which was about a block away. They had trouble this way. A car would be in a little garage or catch fire or something. They used to have quite a little fire in those days. The cars, themselves, the gas was so volatile that they catch fire from the exhaust.

And if there was any leak. And they had some trouble with these tanks blowing up see, getting so hot that it just simply blew the end out of the tank and killed some people. And they, Carl, got a fellow by the name of Moore, who worked for him and myself, and we'd done some experimenting on trying to find a way to keep these tanks from blowing up. Well, anyway, I could go on to quite a lengthy story telling you about how we devised the scheme and everything. But, anyway, we devised a plug that went in the butt end of the tank that had a soft lead fuse in and when we got into a fire, that lead would burn out and, of course, it would act just like a jet, but it didn't have enough volume to push the car away. But if it was on, it happened to be laying loose on the ground, why it would take off, see. Just like our jets that we know about today. We had quite an experience with some of those doing it.

KRT: I'll bet you did. Now, did this go back to the factory and did they put this in the tanks, thereafter? The lead plugs?

HB: Oh yes, you bet they did. All the tanks after that came out with these plugs in them.

KRT: Now, how long is the Prest-O-Lite—roughly, when does the battery control or generator control light come in on your automobiles in Missoula? Quite early, isn't it?

HB: Well, it's quite early. I can't remember, to tell you the truth. You see, of course, on Ford, you know, the flywheel was the generator in a Model T and all your lights would burn from that generator and it was your ignition also.

KRT: It was everything, that flywheel?

HB: That's right. You had no battery.

KRT: When you slowed down therefore, the lights dimmed. You had to keep the flywheel going to keep the level up on the lights.

HB: That's right.

KRT: Let me ask you a couple of questions about roads. Mr. Morris here is terribly curious about a subject which is, as I have already told you, nobody has ever done anything with. What kind of changes took place because of the improvement in roads? I think he has concluded from what he has been reading and researching that the automobile got better than the roads and the demand when the automobiles got good and fast, or better and fast, for roads, got pretty intense sometimes. But, it is terribly difficult for anybody now to realize that these things they speed over, the freeways and so forth, are pretty new. How reliable, for instance, how long would it take you just offhanded, if you wanted to go to Butte or Helena in 1915 or 1916 and what kind of roads did you encounter?

HB: Well, of course, they were dirt roads. You just had the soil condition of every part of the route.

KRT: There wasn't any real—were they graveled this early in the game or just plain dirt?

HB: No. There wasn't even graveled roads. Well, about in 1915, we might have started some gravel, but very little.

KRT: How did you get, for instance, over the pass? How would a Model T and—?

HB: Well, there was a fellow by the name of Rextall, Ruckstell [Grover Ruckstell] that developed a gear shift and it's used in big trucks today. A two-speed rear end plus the transmission. See the gear ratios in the transmission. You have two-speed rear ends. And a fellow by the name of Ruckstell developed a two-speed rear end for a Model T.

KRT: That early?

HB: Yes, that was along about 1915-1916, along in there someplace. And we sold a lot of them around Missoula because of the hills here. But the gear ratio in the rear end was, of course, not a high gear ratio either. It wasn't, it was a car made to travel. You could get different ratios there, you know, if you ordered the car that way. Probably three or four different ratios.

KRT: Did you install the Ruckstell as an extra, for instance? You could bring your car in and say put in a Ruckstell?

HB: Yes, that's right.

KRT: Now, with a Ruckstell rear end would you have trouble with, for instance, MacDonald Pass or Priest Pass?

HB: Yes, some people would. I have been over it lots of times, but I didn't have much trouble.

KRT: Well, you were a racing driver. You knew what you were doing.

HB: That's right.

KRT: I was curious about, well, I can remember my mother, for instance, saying that when she was a young girl, to go in Kenneth Ross' Packard, a great big touring car, was quite an experience, because you would go 15 or 20 miles on very jagged rocky roads and then you would have a flat tire and then they got out and you didn't put on the spare, you fixed the tire.

HB: That's right.

KRT: And you did it with a hot patch or some kind of a thing that nobody knows anything about today.

HB: Well, the early tires, you know, we had clincher tires and then we had lugs that were inside that would hold it down in the clinch so that when you went around the corner, it wouldn't peel the tire out of the clinch.

KRT: But punctures must have been a very frequent experience in the teens.

HB: Well, it was. I have got a picture here someplace. I was just going through some old pictures here last night. I thought maybe you might like to see them.

KRT: I'd love to see them. Was the county early in the game, for instance, in Missoula, did they get into the road building business at all, Mr. Bell?

HB: Oh, a little, yes. You might say—this is an old picture taken in 1902, that's me and an uncle of mine there.

KRT: What kind of a car is this?

HB: That is a Winton. A two-cylinder Winton.

KRT: Chain drive, two-cylinder. Carbide lights?

HB: No, that is oil. That was taken in 1902. Oil lights. Kerosene.

KRT: Boy, it looks like that machine would have been hell to steer.

HB: Well, it was. You had a gear reduction in it, of course.

KRT: You had to work.

HB: I have got a lot of old pictures someplace. I don't know, there was a lot of pictures that was at home. My daughters must have them someplace or they have thrown them out or something, I don't know.

KRT: I wish they hadn't because I would like to copy them. And keep them in our automotive file.

HB: Well, you will have to talk to Susan sometime. Susan Mowbry, you know.

KRT: Where is she now?

HB: Well, she is in Missoula.

KRT: Because we could put, start an automobile file in the archives and these things are terribly hard to come by.

HB: I got the negatives.

KRT: A 1902 Winton, boy, what a machine.

HB: Well, I was at Indianapolis then, you see, and this car was bought from Carl Fisher, that fellow I worked for. He and my uncle had had a steam car before that. A Milwaukee Steamer. No one ever heard of one. Made by some Germans in in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. And he had bought that car and that is where I got this scar on my hand. Right there from that and it was a kerosene burner and it had some automatics on it and stuff. It was quite a genius piece of

mechanism. It had 300 flues in the boiler about that big around and about that high. And had kerosene burner underneath.

KRT: How long did it take you to get up steam?

HB: Not long. It didn't take long. It was a very efficient thing. Later on, of course, it developed into quite a thing.

KRT: I have heard of the Stanley.

HB: Stanley and White, they were the two [who] really developed later, you know. Made progress.

KRT: Mr. Bell, who would come in, in the early days in Missoula, also with agencies and dealerships? What were some of the early dealerships?

HB: Well, Frank Schumacher was one of the oldest dealers here. You must have heard of Frank Schumacher.

KRT: I think I have.

HB: Frank Schumacher.

KRT: What did he sell?

HB: Frank Schumacher?

KRT: Was that Buick?

HB: Reo. What was the fellow that ran the bar right back of the First National Bank? The old First National Bank there. Years ago. You must have been just a little kid then.

KRT: Yes, I was born in 1920. My memory is pretty dim.

HB: That was about the time that he was in there.

KRT: You had a total when you went into business in Missoula of \$60,000, \$30,000 in cash and \$30,000 in credit. And you had paid back \$30,000 of that in three years. So that you must have been doing a gross business which was very active.

HB: Well, we did. You see, we didn't take any cars in trade those days. Everything was cash and the Ford Motor Company, old man Ford, was very strict on the, we had a buyer-owner's agreement about that long that you had to sign when you bought a Ford car that we never

could change. The title was changed by the Ford Motor Company to the fellow who bought the car. It had to go back to Detroit and okayed and everything and had to be just according to Hoyle.

KRT: There was no financing?

HB: No.

KRT: You didn't have to repossess automobiles.

HB: No. You just couldn't give a man anything other than a full tank of gas, which was supposed to be included in there and there was a set of tools in there. There was a tire pump and some extra spark plugs and things of that kind.

KRT: And that was it?

HB: And that was it.

KRT: You couldn't dicker on the price? You couldn't have a special sale?

HB: Nobody ever asked for anything. It was just a—

KRT: They buy a car and that was it.

HB: Yeah.

KRT: Now, when did you hire your first mechanic?

HB: You mean here in Missoula?

KRT: Yeah, here in Missoula.

HB: I was mostly the mechanic when I started.

KRT: For quite a long time, weren't you?

HB: Well, I hired a fellow by the name of Shorty Hash. Gaddis Hash. He was one of the early ones. He was just a kind of natural mechanic.

KRT: But they were pretty scarce, I suspect.

HB: Yes, they were. Well, everybody just blacksmithed. Everybody took all the mechanical stuff to a blacksmith, you know.

KRT: Roughly, what would you have to pay this fellow, for instance, when you hired him?

HB: Gosh, I don't remember.

KRT: Pay him by the month, not by the hour. No union.

HB: Probably \$100 a month or not over that, I am sure.

KRT: Did Ford Motor Company make many of these things extras? Wasn't your windshield extra?

HB: All the accessories, the top, the windshield and all that stuff was extra, yeah.

KRT: You could leave the top off if you wanted to, and the windshield off? How much equipment did you have to have in your garage? Just standard tools?

HB: Well, we had standard tools and then there was always special tools for every new model, we had some special tools that would come along. But then, we didn't have many model changes, the Model T days. We had the same model, you might say, we had what they called running changes. But they were changes that would improve the car in some way or another. But style was predominant entirely.

T. So was color, wasn't it? Weren't they all black?

HB: Everything was black. You could have any color you wanted, as long as it was black.

KRT: Just to jump ahead now, a few years, what impact did the Model A have? What is this? '28, I guess.

HB: The first one come out in December '28.

KRT: This is a revolutionary change in Fords.

HB: Very much so, yes.

KRT: Was this reflected in your sales? Did you sell a hell of a lot of them?

HB: Oh yes, all we could get.

KRT: How much could you get? Were you strictly rationed?

HB: Well, we got, in the later Model T days, we would get about 400 cars a year.

KRT: 400 a year. Would you get that many Model A's, or were they very short?

HB: Oh, gosh, I don't remember now. We got a lot of cars.

KRT: What was your first experience with pavement? Do you remember?

HB: Well, when I went to Spokane, they paved the Riverside Avenue the next year from Monroe Street to Division Street. That is about six blocks.

KRT: What did they pave it with? Concrete or oil?

HB: Gosh, I don't remember.

KRT: How about the first paving that you recall in Montana?

HB: Well, I have forgotten now whether the street was paved on Higgins Avenue or not.

KRT: How about outside?

HB: There wasn't no pavements at all.

KRT: This doesn't come until very late?

HB: We never got really started in doing much outside paving at all until about 1926, '27 along in there, was the beginning. It was our Montana Automobile Association, which you might say instigated and fostered all of this progress in highway construction. Which is true also with the American Automobile Association.

KRT: Well, I want to get on both American and Montana for a minute.

HB: Well, I can go back to 1904 with that.

KRT: Well, we want to get on that, I am sure Pat does. I want to ask you a question about trucks. How early in the game you sold trucks and compared to passenger automobiles, how many you sold. I am thinking about farmers and ranchers.

HB: None. As far as farmers were concerned, no. We had a pickup and we sold quite a lot of pickups. I think John R. Daly Company, at one time, had six Model T pickups.

KRT: For meat deliveries?

HB: Yes.

KRT: But in terms of the farm population around Missoula, you didn't sell very many trucks.

HB: Well, we do now.

KRT: No, I know you do now, but I mean in 1915, '16, '17.

HB: No, none at all.

KRT: Well, how the devil were these people getting their stuff to market?

HB: Well, teams. You mean their trucking, their hauling?

KRT: Well, I mean hogs, pigs, teams.

HB: One of their teams.

KRT: How about their cattle? Drive them?

HB: Yes.

KRT: What would your predecessors here on this ranch [Lazy B Ranch near Ronan] have done with their herds? Taken them down to the railroad for sale? Drive them?

HB: Yes, the buyers would come out and buy these. There was buyers that went through the country and the buyers have been coming for years and they knew who was raising cattle. And they would go around and buy the cow as they went along.

KRT: And then they are driven? There isn't any, of course, now. All it is is trucks, which makes quite a difference in the industry. Cause you don't have to drive them to railhead. Which means, I presume, that you can ranch now a lot of places you couldn't then, really. Now, let's get back, Mr. Bell, to the Montana Automobile Association and your connection with it. When does this thing start?

HB: Well, it started in the early '20's and, gosh, I thought I'd know his name as well as my own. He was the first president of the association.

KRT: In Missoula?

HB: No, in Helena. Headquarters was in Helena. He was a lawyer in Helena. You'd know his name if I mentioned it.

KRT: Well we can look him up.

[The first president was Creighton Largey of Butte, elected president of the newly created Montana Automobile Association in 1908. When it was incorporated in 1921, A.W. Miles was elected president. Bell was the Missoula representative.]

But how does it get started?

HB: Well, the start of it was on account of roads. The roads was the main thing. There was some federal legislation passed that where the federal government would participate in building what was known as the 7 percent system of highways, which was designated in all the states of the nation as the main highways, or better known as through-ways, where you travel from state to state. It was something that was foreseen coming for the future and it was the beginning of the vision that brought this thing on.

KRT: The 7 percent highways.

HB: The 7 percent system of highways. In other words, you could have as much as 7 percent of your total roads in your state on the 7 percent system in which the government would participate in building. They would pay 50 percent of the cost and in the states where there was a lot of public domain their percentage would be a little higher. For instance, in our state, I think, our percentage today is 53.7 percent or something like that. And the state, by gasoline tax and things of that kind, why we raise money to match all of the available federal aid.

KRT: And this starts quite early and gives rise to the—

HB: That started in 1926. That was when the state, the first Highway Commission. You had to have a Highway Commission to function in the state in order to participate with the federal government, the Bureau of Public Roads.

KRT: Now the Montana Automobile Association starts after this?

HB: No, before. This was a part of the whole program in the beginning.

KRT: Were you a member right at the beginning of that association? Did you go to Helena a good deal? The meetings were in Helena?

HB: Yes, yes. Legislature was there and I would spend half my time over there. And never got paid for it either. [Laughs.]

KRT: Lobbying. What were you after?

HB: Well, we were after roads and we were also after revenue. We instigated the two-cent gas tax. And then we had an awful time too, when we got the gas tax, why they took, I think at one time at least 60 percent of it for schools. And one thing and another. In fact, that went on, not

that percentage, the percentage dropped off some until about six or eight years ago, when we got a constitutional amendment so that the gas tax all goes into the highway fund.

KRT: But it didn't do that in the beginning. Everybody wanted a finger in the pie.

HB: And do now, as you can see right now. There, if we didn't have this constitutional amendment now, I don't know what we would do.

KRT: Everybody would get in and get the money.

HB: That's right.

KRT: How many members, for instance, would you have had in '26, '27?

HB: Gosh, a hundred or two. Just a few public-spirited citizens, that's all.

KRT: Did they lobby at each biennial session? Would somebody always go? You always went, I presume.

HB: Oh yeah, we would, of course, try to get people elected to the Legislature that would be sympathetic with our views on the highway program.

KRT: It must have been kind of tough in those early days, though.

HB: Well, it was, but it's surprising though, I think we, in the early days, at least in my experience, we had a lot of broad-minded people that went to the Legislature. We had to me a much higher type of people going to the Legislature then than we do now. It was a patriotic thing. People run for office because they didn't have some petty thing that they wanted, personal thing or something like that to do.

KRT: A duty. How much public support would you get? Any advertising, for better roads through the association?

HB: Just through publicity throughout the papers and stuff like that.

KRT: Pat, have you got any questions you would like to ask on our other subjects?

Pat Morris: I don't know, these might be a little hard to answer because of the things that would be impossible to find. I was wondering if you have any impressions as to different periods when you first started selling cars, when different groups of people started buying them. In other words, I suppose for a while the first cars, there were just a few people who were particularly interested in them. The roads were pretty bad anyway. When was it that everyone starts having cars?

HB: Of course, in the very earliest days, it was just the wealthiest people, you might say, that bought cars. When I first started in Indianapolis, why it was just the plutocrats, you might say, that bought cars.

KRT: After all, you had to pay for those early cars, an awful amount of cash.

HB: Well, now you take a Lozier or Locomobile, or a Packard or all those old famous cars, you know you pay five or six thousand dollars for them in that kind of money as of that day.

KRT: Hard cash?

HB: Yes, sir. But you got to remember that those cars were practically hand made. In the factories, you would see great lines of lathes and shavers and drill presses and stuff of that kind. Now you don't see that in any plants. It is all automatic. Today a cylinder block, a V-8 cylinder block in a Ford, for instance, a human hand never touches that block when it comes out of the mold.

KRT: Did the Model T change all this, Mr. Bell? The Model T costs what? \$800-\$1,000 cash?

HB: Down as low as \$390 for a pickup and \$414.85 for a touring car.

KRT: This you begin to see a change as far as that is concerned with the Model T?

HB: As time went on, yes. See, the Model T, for instance, back in—well, I can't remember—but anyway, they were selling for around \$800, \$900 dollars, \$1,000 to \$1,100 and Mr. Ford brought these prices down. It just seemed ridiculous sometimes when he would announce a \$50 reduction or something like that, don't you know. And they did it by automation. The assembly line. Things of that kind. They had an engineering staff there that was—it's just unbelievable to conceive, don't you know?

KRT: Of course, Ford invented that really, didn't he?

HB: Yes. This was the beginning of automation and the assembly line.

KRT: Well, you get a car down to \$390. This comes within the realm of possibility for a lot of people. So, when is this? '20, '21, '22, that a Model T is available for that price? Or am I too early?

HB: Yeah, in there. Another thing you have got to remember, Henry Ford was not an engineer, but he was one of the greatest.

KRT: He was a genius.

HB: Yeah, and, for instance, Ford in the early days developed the best steels I think the world had ever seen up to that time. The vanadium and molybdenum steel were developments of Ford and the same thing is true with precision. The Johansson, known today as the Johansson gauges, precision gauges, is used by everybody today where they need precision. You can measure in millionths of an inch.

KRT: And this is a Ford development?

HB: Well, Mr. Ford went over to Sweden and brought this Johansson back from Sweden. It was developed really in Sweden.

KRT: Pat, that is about as close as anybody is ever going to get to that answer. What else have you got there you would like to ask?

PM: Well, I was wondering now, starting in 1910, in Montana and moving on for a period of years, you have what is called statehood roads conventions and they get some federal engineers in and build roads that are supposedly supposed to show everyone what a good road looks like.

KRT: What did they call those things? Object lessons roads?

PM: Object lesson roads.

KRT: Did you ever hear of object lesson roads?

HB: Well, we used to go out, just a gang of citizens and patch roads up ourselves, just to improve the roads, to show what could be done with them.

KRT: Get a shovel and a rake and fill up the chuck holes. You used prisoners sometimes, didn't you?

HB: Well, they did. When Frank Conley was there they had some prison crews that they took out and built roads. Some of the roads up the canyon here were built by prisoner labor.

KRT: Does the word object lesson road mean anything in particular to you? As a government phrase?

HB: No, not necessarily so.

KRT: I had never heard of it until Pat starts finding little object lesson roads, oh, in the teens built outside of Bozeman and they hire a federal engineer and I don't think anybody ever heard, except Pat, of object lesson roads. Well, go ahead Pat, I interrupted you.

PM: Well, that probably answers the question to a large extent. I was just wondering how effective these were in getting people interested in better roads and apparently if you don't recall them, they didn't have much impact.

HB: Well, of course, I think the automobile brought on the demand for roads when cars got down to so more people could buy cars. It just had to grow.

KRT: You had another question there, Pat.

PM: Well, I was wondering, again, this is probably an extremely difficult thing to answer, but you start out early with just roads that are more or less an evolution from wagon tracks, I suppose, between place to place. But I was wondering, say taking 10-year spans from say 1900-1910-1920, what the evolution of the road is in improvement. When do they start improving the dirt road and when do they start gravelling the road and—as far as you recall?

HB: I think as to specific dates that it would be pretty hard for me to say. That would vary, too, I imagine, with areas. Depending, of course, on some patriotic group in some area, you know, bringing pressure to bear to get these things done and things like that.

KRT: You don't recall any good road conventions held early in the game in Montana? The reason I ask is that Pat has found references in newspapers in Helena, the old newspapers, to for instance, to a good road convention held in Great Falls. When, Pat?

PM: No, this is a little later. The first was in Billings in 1910 and then there was one in Missoula in 1911.

HB: Well, you see, they had them within the town itself, in that vicinity and if they had one in Billings, we didn't know about it in Missoula, and things of that kind starting out with and then, of course, we got statewide.

KRT: This goes into the Montana Automobile Association. I expect all these efforts are concentrated after the formation of the guild. Have you got anything else there, Pat, that worries you? Everything worries him because he is having a hell of a time with this thing.

HB: The real basic, as far as I can go back, the real basic road program goes back to 1904. The creating, that is, the American Automobile Association had a meeting in St. Louis and they had had some meeting east of there before that. It was the Lincoln highway from Pittsburgh to St. Louis. And I went to it with Carl Fisher from Indianapolis in a Franklin car to this convention in 1904, and I never went through worse mud in Missouri than that black gumbo mud down there.

KRT: And you were bound to a convention that concerns itself with roads? Well, now what happened at that?

HB: Well, they built the Lincoln highway eventually with crushed limestone. Crushed limestone rock. That was the first real basic improvement in highways in the U.S. as far as I know.

KRT: Takes it a long time to spread elsewhere, doesn't it?

HB: But it was just crushed rock. They had those old horse crushers, in those days that could—horses would run in a circle like that and then these big jaws that would crush those limestone.

KRT: The mud out here must have been terrific. Mud out here in this valley must have been terrific.

HB: No, our mud here was not too bad because it is not gumbo. Well, we have some gumbo here but very little. This is all decomposed vegetation here and it's not as sticky as gumbo. Gumbo is the worst stuff, you know. A wheel will go along and pick up everything as far as the pressure goes down to pick it up and it has got to be scraped off the fender and the fender will scrape it off and drop it off behind.

KRT: Missouri is famous for it. Of course, there is a lot of it in Eastern Montana.

HB: No, we don't know what mud is in our country.

KRT: Although it must have been hell for a fellow who has to get goods to market, at that time of year. Because this is when it is he wants to get to market in the spring or in the fall. In both cases he is in trouble because of the roads.

HB: Now in the Palouse country, in the fall in the Palouse country, they used to haul wheat to these elevators, to the rail elevators, to the railheads and many times I have been driving along in these ruts. It just seems as though the roads down there where somebody started to drive and everybody followed that rut. And hundreds of times, I can say that, that driving through that country which I did, but you don't see, you don't know anything about dust. How I got any lungs left, I just don't know. Honest to god. And I used to wear goggles, but the water would run out of my eyes so here there were just big mud balls on my eyes. You would be driving along there following those ruts. And all at once the whole car would be off of the ground. All four wheels! High-centered, see. And then we had high-centered cars. A car had 10 or 11 inches clearance then. Nowadays 5 ½ or 6 inches is a good clearance.

KRT: And 11 ½ inches is a lot for a four-wheel drive now. Well, that must have been hell if they were moving wheat. How were they moving them?

B. With teams. They would have teams with, you know, six or eight horses out with two or three wagons tailing behind and that is all.

KRT: Get through anything.

B. It was all sacks in those days. You can see those old warehouses over there yet. Where they used to haul these sacks of grain and pile these sacks, you know, all by hand.

KRT: That Palouse country is mud country, isn't it?

HB: Well, but it isn't bad as—it is a kind of a volcanic ash, you know.

KRT: Not as bad as Missouri?

HB: Oh my, no.

KRT: Well, Pat, have you got anything else you would like to ask?

PM: Well, just one thing that occurred to me. When you were talking before, the fact that when you started out with all the cars and now most of them have disappeared and long gone, is this because they couldn't adapt to the new methods of production and distribution that the larger companies did, or what caused this disappearance?

HB: Well, I would say a lot of things. You can look in the papers today and see the businesses that go broke that, you might say week by week, over the nation. It's just isn't, there isn't enough of whatever it takes to make the business click.

KRT: Were a lot of these companies caught by Ford's mass-production methods, and unable to compete?

HB: Well, I imagine some of them were because they lacked finances to go ahead and so forth, and then, too, I think Ford had a good start because he developed a car that anybody could drive and get along with and it was dependable. All you needed was a pair of pliers and a monkey wrench and little stuff like that. You couldn't break it. You could bend something but you couldn't break anything.

KRT: It must have been rough on his competitors.

HB: Well, it was. Yes.

KRT: Essentially hand-making automobiles.

HB: They never advertised. The old man never believed in advertising at all.

KRT: Make a good product and it advertises itself.

HB: He always said put that money in the car. Put that money in the product. The people will find out about it.

KRT: Which is true. They did.

HB: But then people got very conscious about styles and stuff like that. Really, it is ridiculous now what people fall for. And it is a necessity. If you don't have style and you got the best automobile in the world, why it isn't going to sell.

PM: Mr. Bell, how did the Depression affect your business in Missoula?

HB: Well, we happened to be in financial condition enough so that we could carry through, but it bent us quite a bit.

PM: It must have bent you quite a bit because automobiles are one thing that you can give up or can do with another three years and there must have been hell to pay in the automobile dealership business in the '30s.

HB: Well, there was. We had just built that building across the street, the year '29. We moved in it the day—I mean, we had our opening the day the '29 crash came on Wall Street. That day. We had our grand opening. We had four special cars, NP [Northern Pacific] officials. I had dealers here from all over the Northwest. The Ford Motor Company had people here and we had a real—we got a lot of pictures around here about that someplace. And that was the introduction to the Model A. That was when Ford had to change the style and so forth, which he felt was wrong as far as the public was concerned. He felt that what they wanted was transportation and cost of moving something from here to there at the least expense. That was his whole idea. But nowadays, that's— [Laughs]

PM: Well, did the Model A help you get through the Depression, do you think? Because it was a marvelous automobile.

HB: Well, it did. Yes, of course. It was popular. We sold a lot of cars, of course, but we went in the red every year there for several years.

PM: When did you start financing automobiles?

HB: We were financing in those early days. Some. Not much.

PM: Did you carry the papers? Or was this done through banks?

HB: No, our papers have always been carried at the bank. Western Montana National Bank.

PM: The Model A is, of course—my memory of the Model T, I had a Model T, which was marvelous, but the Model A to me was an incredible machine because I could fix it.

HB: You know, if we had a Model A today, we could sell Model A's. Bet you we could average 100 a year at least. Right now.

PM: Your first customer would be me.

HB: Me, too. I'd have one right here.

KRT: I can remember, I guess I had a Model A when I was 13 and I could take off the head, four bolts, I could inspect the valves and the pistons, I could clean the distributor with a little wheel that came out of the middle of the distributor, take a pocket knife and scrape off the points. There was damn little that a 13-year-old kid couldn't do in the Model A. And I drove a 1928 Model A from Missoula, Montana, to Boston with \$50. Missoula to Boston, Boston to New Orleans, New Orleans to Los Angeles, Los Angeles to Seattle, Seattle back to Missoula and I replaced one coil. This is about 11,000 miles. An incredible machine. I then sold it for \$18 to my brother and he drove it for another three or four years. The last I saw of it, the engine was a pump out in Orchard Homes. I don't care what you say, automobiles aren't that good anymore. They are good, of course, but they are so complex.

HB: They are more and more complicated, of course. You look under the hood of a car nowadays, gee whiz.

KRT: I can't understand any of it. Hopeless. Although I can understand some of the Bronco. That's why I like it. It's very simple. Well, I tell you, Mr. Bell, we will be back when we get the transcript to you of these two reels. This will be triple-spaced so you can make notes and then if we are not going to pester you too much, we are going to come back when you have notes here and there to fill in. Because it almost always happens when you see the transcript, you think of a lot of things, then you make a note and then I will come back and fill it in. The bottleneck, of course, is our girls. They have an awful time typing. They have a little earplug on this thing and a foot pedal and they stop it and they type, and then somebody brings in something else to type. But they will inevitably get it done and when they do, I will bundle up five pounds of it, send it to you, give you a month, and then when you receive it, if you will make notations in the triple-spaced margins. Now, I would like to fill in here and there. Then back I come with the recorder and then we can start the process all over again.

Mary Mista Bell: Well, I have two scrapbooks here, I am working on a third one now. I don't know how much information from that you can gather for certain things to fill in.

KRT: A good deal.

MMB: Well, all righty. Then I think it might help then. If you want to, you can take them and go over them.

KRT: That would be ideal.

MMB: I think that would be a tremendous help myself, because—

KRT: It would because these interviews, Ms. Ford, always proceed the same way. You can never get the first go-around, you never get the second go-around and it is a long, long process. But it is terribly valuable when you finally have got it.

MMB: Well, I have said this a long time ago, when I told Harry, why don't you take a tape recorder? Many times he has just described to me of all this these things that have come up.

KRT: Then all you have to do is push it on.

MMB: And it is there, you see. So often with house guests or with friends and such, something comes up and it really, it just makes you feel badly because he had had such a complete and such a full life of so many adventurous things that have come up through life, you see.

KRT: And, of course, in this industry, you see, he goes back to the year '01 and I doubt if there is anyone in Montana or within our reach that can touch him in experience.

MMB: No, I don't think so.

KRT: Well, I will tell you what else we would like very much. Any photographs which we can copy and return to you.

HB: There is a lot of those, and he has a lot of them. Now, we were going through so much of it. Honestly, there are just boxes of these things around here.

KRT: Well, all of it is valuable to us.

MMB: He has felt badly in his younger days that he hasn't kept the clippings or those things. You know they meant nothing. You know, like a lot of young fellows. They never think of that, of course, naturally all of us are like that. We just don't think, that's just another incident happening, when somebody is just picking up a clipping from the paper. Well, it does become history when you reach an age like Harry has and has gone through this cycle of ours that has been the most productive cycle that he could have gone through. There will be year ahead, but I don't know whether they will be as productive. They will be a different sphere of life again, and an entirely different atmosphere and our venture into the future will be probably, will be on space more so than it will be on an auto.

HB: Do you take Reader's Digest?

KRT: I buy it usually, yeah.

HB. Well, here is an article in this one, you probably read now and then, the one, "My Most Unforgettable Character." Well, in this last issue, Carl Fisher's wife writes about him. You ought to read it.

KRT: Well, I will. We will have that at the library. You see, what you are trying to do—

I hadn't seen this one. This is April, 1966, Pat.

What we are trying to do is put together any archives, various chunks of history of Montana in manuscript form, tape recorded form, clipping form, photographic form, and one of the important chunks is transportation. And, of course, we start with the fur traders. And do everything we conceivably can all along with transportation. Now we have a lot of material on the Mullan Road, 1859. Now we are in no trouble there. We are in no trouble in steamboating on the Missouri River. We have tons of material, literally, including photographs on steamboating on the Missouri River. We know a great deal about Mackinaw boats, keel boats. We know a very great deal about the early railroads, how they were built, when they were built, what this meant to the economy of the country. We know a startling lot about airplanes and we are getting a good deal. The single most important thing—the automobile—we don't have. And this is, the strange thing is, that it's not been done any place in the United States.

HB: I have got a book here probably you would like to take and read it. But for gosh sakes, don't lose it.

KRT: Well, I never lose books. I lose everything, my head included, but not books.

HB: Well, here is a book here written by a fellow by the name of Chris Sinsabaugh. And I knew him. He is one of the early days—

KRT: Forty Years of Automobile History.

HB: —of automobile writing. And he had been to every race meet. All the shows and everything like that. And I think you could get an awful lot out of that.

KRT: This would be very, very interesting for us. The high-wheel era.

HB: Of course, I was in that era, too.

KRT: Vanderbilt Cup, Ford Motor Company. He really has some. May I borrow this? I'll take very good care of it. Safety glass, the rubber industry, four-wheel brakes. The braking problem.

PM: There is my thesis.

KRT: I think slowly we will put together the automobile industry.

HB: I made some notes here of different times I happened to think of you asking me questions here. Now the history of our airport in Missoula, for instance, and how we got it and all about it.

KRT: That is a subject I have got another young man working on, early air transportation in this area. His name is Duane Manson and he has the same trouble Pat here had. Except there is more material, you see.

HB: Well, I imagine myself and probably Bob Johnson could give you the whole things locally here.

KRT: Well, I better send Mr. Manson down to see you.

HB: You see, the first airport here, I bought it, and I got C.S. McLeod to help me and we bought the first piece of ground and for the airport, where the high school is now, the new high school. [Hale Field at what is now Sentinel High School site.] Then in 1926, the state had to create an airport board in order to participate in any airline use and stuff of that kind. The Civil Aeronautics Commission. And the county commissioners, of course, made me chairman of the board until I resigned about six or seven years ago.

KRT: That is a long chairmanship.

HB: Yeah. And then I don't know if you want to go into raising horses or not.

KRT: You bet your life I do.

HB: Let's see, we talked about the American Automobile Association. The National Automobile Dealers Association, I was director of that for 18 years until I wouldn't go anymore.

KRT: Well, we ought to talk about all that.

HB: And then the Montana Auto Association, the National Aeronautic Association, I was the governor of that for several years, and the Ford Dealership, all oil exploration, mining exploration.

KRT: I want to get all that. Next time I am going to bring my airport man with me, but I want to get all of this and then get it all in triplicate.

HB: I was on Eisenhower's national safety council and the governor's interim highway committee and the I was quite a hunter, you know. I was on many hunting expeditions.
[Laughs]

KRT: Well, we will cover all of that.

HB: Then I helped the kids going through the University. I put quite a lot of kids going through the University out there, you know.

KRT: I have heard about a good deal of that. But we ought to cover that in detail.

HB: Then I have got car racing here and then Stanley Young, the boat builder at the lake here, that built sub-chasers during the war.

KRT: I didn't know Stanley Young did that. He is up at the lake now, isn't he?

HB: I started him out in the boat business and I talked to you about Johansson Gauges Precision and that's a very—people don't realize what precision is. We wouldn't be any place today if it wasn't for precision.

KRT: Millionths of inches.

HB: And people forget that the wheel is the greatest invention the world has ever seen. And we never hear it.

KRT: Oh no, we take it completely for granted.

HB: Take it for granted. You couldn't have a thing today without the wheel. Just think of it.

KRT: Absolutely fundamental. Everything depends upon it.

HB: Just name anything. You can't name anything that we wouldn't have today if it weren't for the wheel.

KRT: It requires wheels. Well, I will come back either at your convenience here or at the garage when you are there and we will tackle it again. As I was saying to Mrs. Bell, there isn't any way to hurry this process. You try to sit down. When I used to do this years ago, I started out at the Historical Society. Now this is perfectly simple. I'll just take my recorder. And I'll list the questions. Well, this never works.

HB: Trouble is you don't think of these things. Like with me, a lot of those old things, well I remember but I'm getting so I can't remember names.

KRT: Well, it isn't only that; nobody does. I've been talking to Wellington Rankin. Rankin in terms of political memories is loaded. You sit down with a tape recorder and think you're going to get it done in an hour. This is a life that spans, oh, I guess 88-89 years. It's a very long-term proposition. You go back and back—

HB: Another thing that just dawned on me, in 1916, or '17—but anyway, see when the income tax was first put in, it was based on your capital. And you could only make so much on your capital. Well, my gosh, I woke up one year and I can't remember whether it was 1916 or 1917, along in there someplace, and I owed \$14,000 in taxes. [Laughs] It took everything I made, you might say, because I didn't have hardly any capital so I sent Dean Whitlock back to Washington, D.C., to handle it and anyway we got it reduced down to, I have forgotten what now, but something which I could afford to pay. It might just as well quit business if they are going to take that much taxes. Holy mackerel.

KRT: In those days, \$14,000 was a terrific pile of money. Those little things are fascinating. They'll crop up. What you really need for me is now the transcript of these things for the next step. And I'll get those to you as soon as the good ladies can get un-bogged.

HB: I guess I'm just too old. I just don't understand the thinkings of our people today.

KRT: I don't think you're too old, Mr. Bell, because I don't think very many people understand it.

HB: I understand this: I understand we won't be the country we have been if we keep on the way we are. I just can't understand how in the world we can take 300-and-some-odd billion dollars and unless we go through the ringer someday. And we're all going to pay for it. And that isn't me because I'm too old, but my offspring and yours and everybody else—

KRT: I'm just crossing my fingers and praying that my immediate offspring will get through it, and then of course I'm going to start worrying about grandchildren. There's no end to that. Somebody's going to pay the piper.

MMB: You can't take and not give back. We can't do that as individuals.

KRT: Well, neither can nations do it. All I hope is that my immediate family gets somewhere along the line before the explosion occurs. I'll be off in limbo or someplace, of course.

[End of Interview]