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### Oral History Interview: Robert Cassell

Robert Cassell

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ORAL HISTORY

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DATE 12 March 1986

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DATE 3/12/86

J. Schuppener  
 (Signature - Witness)

CASSELL, Robert P.  
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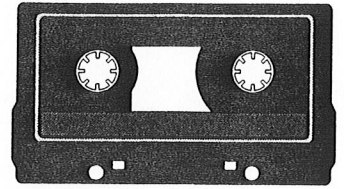
**AN ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW WITH: ROBERT CASSELL**

**CONDUCTED BY: JOHN HENNEN,**

**DATE OF INTERVIEW: MARCH 12, 1986**

**SUBJECT: MARSHALL UNIVERSITY HISTORY**

**TRANSCRIPTIONIST/TYPIST: GINA KEHALI KATES**



**JH:** This is John Hennen for the Oral History of Appalachia Project focusing on the research I'm doing on the Nelson years at Marshall University. I'm in the apartment of Bob Cassell, at 1130 Third Avenue. It's Wednesday evening, March the 12<sup>th</sup>, 1986. Bob, if you could just make a small introductory statement and we'll check the tape and make sure everything's ok.

**[Mr. Cassell makes a brief mic check]**

**JH:** Bob, I'll start out with a few background questions. First, let's get an update on what you're doing. You recently left the social studies department. Is that correct? And you're working with the VA in Charleston?

**BC:** That's right. Well, the Veterans Affairs, Department of Veterans Affairs. My (JH: Oh, I see) position is deputy director. The difference of the Veterans Affairs is the state and the Veterans Administration is on the federal level. Yes, I was a graduate student in the social studies department.

**JH:** And you just left that position?

**BC:** In December. January, whenever. At the end of the last semester here.

**JH:** Okay. What is some of your educational and family background? Just a biographical sketch.

**BC:** I attended school in Southern West Virginia, a graduate from Magnolia High School. First year of college was at West Virginia Wesleyan College. Then came along the Korean conflict, which I attended. And then came back to go to Marshall. And finally after some few years finished up here. My first years at Marshall was in 1954, when I got out of the service the first time.

**JH:** Okay. And your birth date is....?

**BC:** Fourteen December, 1931.

**JH:** And you're a veteran of the Korean conflict?

**BC:** Right.

**JH:** First enrolled at Marshall in 1954. Was Marshall an integrated school at that time?

**BC:** As far as I know it was. It seems it's always been. Marshall College, I think, at the time. But I don't believe there was any discrimination that I knew of, as far as actual integration. I don't believe there ever was.

**JH:** What was the approximate size of the student body at Marshall when you first entered?

**BC:** I can't recall exactly, John. I should imagine around six or seven thousand students. It hasn't grown that much in forty years.

**JH:** Well....

**BC:** I'm not for sure about that. It may have been less. It may have been considerably less, come to think of it. But I don't really know. I can't say.

**JH:** And you did earn a bachelor's degree at Marshall? (BC: Eventually) And when did you get that degree?

**BC:** I got it only a couple of years ago. I attended Marshall over four decades. In the fifties, the sixties, and seventies and back again in the eighties. And I had some few hours accumulated. I think about a hundred and eight credits accumulated. But my degree was a Regents degree. They gave me 47 hours, I think, or 48 hours for military service related work.

**JH:** Were you a career military man?

**BC:** No, I was, with the intent to be, indeed. But my legs...I got my legs broken in Korea. And...and they retired me medically. I had better than ten years in.

**JH:** Oh, I see. Were you a draftee or enlisted?

**BC:** No, I was regular Army enlistee.

**JH:** Well, I didn't...I wasn't aware that you had such a lengthy association with Marshall. It's kind of going to help put a good perspective on this time period that I'm going to focus on, I think.

**BC:** Yeah, four decades. I rather enjoy Marshall. It seems I returned when skirts are shorter. What other reason?

**JH:** That's as good a reason as any, I guess. [laughing] Well, I guess Dr. Smith was president during your first days at Marshall.

**BC:** Yes, I think so. He was.... No, that's the governor. Stewart Smith. Yes, he was around for quite a few years.

**JH:** Well, getting on to the two-year, I guess it was about a two-year tenure that Roland Nelson was here, '68 through '70. (BC: Mmm-hmm) What...you were enrolled as an undergraduate at that time, studying what? History? Social Studies?

**BC:** Political Science. Public Administration.

**JH:** And can you recall some general statements about the social and political climate on the Marshall campus at that time?

**BC:** This in the sixties, right? (JH: Right) Much activity. Student unrest, I guess is what we would call it. I might say that I remember when Roland Nelson came, and the talk that he gave at the Campus Christian Center, it wasn't well attended. But one of the statements that he made was that the university was not for the students. It was for the teachers, for the instructors. And I always thought that rather strange. I questioned him on that. And he seemed to imply that the

university could get along well without the students. But not without the administration and staff. I thought that strange.

**JH:** That is strange.

**BC:** But I thought Nelson was a strange man, too. I felt he was a weak man. A small man and a weak man.

**JH:** Could you elaborate on that?

**BC:** Only that his personality seemed to be flat, that he was not a strong administrator. And I don't know if he ran into problems with...I can't recall what his problems might have been. I'm not for sure if it was drinking or what.

**JH:** I know he had some health problems while he was here.

**BC:** Maybe that was it, maybe health problems indeed.

**JH:** Yeah, I recall a statement by...by Dewey Parr in a newspaper article that Dewey Parr was one of the-, apparently, one of the organizers of the anti-impact or anti-SDS resistance of the community, that Nelson just didn't understand Huntington. He just didn't understand Huntington.

**BC:** That's true. And he wasn't accepted by them. And one of the other things that Nelson did was, too, I think he...either he planned to or did, either disband the Greek organizations or attempt to, something. But he was definitely anti-Greek.

**JH:** Uh-huh. That wouldn't make him very popular on the campus.

**BC:** Well, certainly not with the fraternities and sororities. [chuckles] And with many people in the town, you know, because Huntington is still a southern town. And these organizations or clubs are socially important to people.

**JH:** Did he have an...I don't want to ask a leading question...but I'm probably going to. Did he have

a sort of a self-righteous attitude or attitude of being above the masses or above the community (BC: I never felt he did) that he alienated the people?

**BC:** I never felt that he projected that. [inaudible]...complex.... He was small, maybe a bit of the Neapolitan complex. But as being better, no, I don't think so. I think the man was just a weak administrator and did not understand the Appalachian culture, or the city or the town.

**JH:** Now, during his tenure, several areas of controversy...the ones I'm particularly interested in are the...the reaction to some of the impact program, the recognition for the Students For A Democratic Society. Do you recall, generally, the reaction, if any, when the Students For A Democratic Society emerged on campus?

**BC:** Well, I cannot recall specifics. In general, though, I think they were met with opposition. And by far the vast majority of students did not choose in any respect to display any acceptance of radical politics or of that which was against the efforts that were being expended in Vietnam or in that regard. Now, many of these students were just shunned. And quite frankly, many should have been shunned, because they were not only radical in thought and idea, but in dress and manner. And by far, the vast majority of students here were here for an education. They did not want that disrupted. They were on the line from the family which says, "You go to school, you keep your nose clean, you get an education, you do better than your parents did," or whatever. So the radical element group just was not accepted generally. I daresay, by 85% of the students.

**JH:** So they intruded on the traditional sense of what education was and it was making a lot of students uncomfortable then?

**BC:** As it was being understood by the students at that time, I think they did. They were pushy. We had groups that were doing their field work say from Antioch, Yellow Springs. And one year it was



supposed to be spent in some sort of activity, you know, maybe voter registration or whatever. They had this back when they were registering in the South, in Selma, Alabama and areas like that. But these students were to engage themselves in some of social activity. And they were here.

**JH:** They were here in the area?

**BC:** Yes. Many would come down here, transfer down and do a semester of work down here. Or rather, come down and do their semester's work down here and transfer it back to Antioch.

**JH:** Now, were some of these students involved in the SDS, to your knowledge?

**BC:** Yes, I'm sure they were.

**JH:** I know a couple of articles I've seen mentioning the draft counseling service that was initiated at Marshall. Well, I think some of the organizers of that were from Yellow Springs.

**BC:** Very possibly. I knew four, five of them, I think, that came down.

**JH:** Do you remember the SDS publication, The Free Forum? How was that received on the campus? Or do you have any notion of that at all?

**BC:** I don't remember actually seeing a copy of it. I can't recall. At the same time, some of us were engaged in our own publication, along with them. I know I've gone over on the south side to meet with them and get the ideas of what they would be doing. We had an underground publication ourselves...a group of students here. We felt, as most Appalachian people do, that our ideas are just as good as anyone else's and we have that privilege to express them.

**JH:** Now, is the group you're mentioning with your publication, would that be the Students For Democratic Ideals? Were you associated with that?

**BC:** I don't know that we ever settled onto a name or acronym or anything like that. We were just there. And out of this grew our Free University, because we felt that many things were not being

taught which could be taught. Or that many things that were being taught, were not being taught in the way that they should have been.

**JH:** What was...exactly the concept of the Free University? I know you had a-, you played a large role in that while at Marshall.

**BC:** Well, the basic concept of that, I suppose, was that you could receive credit for a class presented under sponsorship, basically of the university, and attend off campus. And in this respect, I mean, we...imagine my home on Fourth Avenue, which is across from the UpTowner. At the time, I had a large house there, had about eight rooms, I think, upstairs. And we met upstairs and we probably met at least three nights a week. And we had professors that would volunteer their time, and we had people within the city attending, as well as students on campus. I don't believe any of our credits were ever recognized by the university. But I believe in other areas, the concept was, yes, there is a need for this. It may be small, it may not be warranted enough to add into a university curriculum. But perhaps there are some people who want to study mandarin Chinese, or what's Dow Chemical doing in Vietnam this week? Or whatever. And our classes were well attended, usually from twenty to thirty people. Because I bought a big coffee pot and always made coffee. And people would bring cookies and so forth, we'd have a break. And our classes would sometimes last late because it was basically a conversation group. But Simon Perry came down a time or so. I forget another gentleman. He wrote [inaudible]....I think he died recently.....

**JH:** Dr. Williams.

**BC:** Yeah, yeah, Dr. He was down quite a few times. And with me at the time, was a friend living in one of the apartments that I had. And he was a grad student at the time. And he contributed quite a bit, too. In fact, he's back at Marshall now, Joe McCoy. He's in the political science department.

I think after Joe left Marshall, he went on to Wesleyan, and became head of the political science department there. And when Rockefeller went into office, Joe rode with him and became chief of the Corrections Institution in the state. Then when Rockefeller was out, Joe was out, too. He's teaching now at Marshall.

**JH:** So [inaudible]...you'd have a visiting professor? From each...

**BC:** Yes, visiting professor or someone in town that...a particular expertise that we were interested in. Or sometimes just a darn good rap session among the students.

**JH:** And sometimes, I gather from what you mentioned about Dow Chemical, sometimes your meetings would focus on the issue of the war, the military.

**BC:** Yes, in fact, I remember being on campus at a demonstration the day that the Kent State thing happened, a Saturday morning. And I can remember when the companies, industries would come to recruit, it followed a demonstration, you know, against the companies, if they were somehow doing something in that part of the world, Southeast Asia. They were making some contributions.

**JH:** You mentioned at the very beginning of the interview that activism on the campus was fairly wide-spread at that time. What...do you have any thoughts on what are the pre-conditions for campus activism, political activism especially? Did it take something galvanizing, like the Vietnam War to rouse them into action?

**BC:** No, I should think not. An issue, yes, is important. But issues can be formed in strange ways. Remember the political issue here one time that occurred after Silver Bridge disaster? And everyone felt the political issue then was to go look under bridges and see which ones are going to fall down next. I ran for the House of Delegates and found it to be an exciting and learning process during this time. One of my campaign concepts was that the voting age should be lowered. Of course, in the

groups that were activists, this was one of their concepts, too. Hey, I'm sure you've heard that if you're old enough to fight, you're old enough to vote and so forth.

**JH:** What kind of response did your campaign get?

**BC:** Well, it met with a negative response. Because when I would go out to outlying areas, to talk before groups or school groups or labor unions or whatever, it was always older people....and...or middle-aged people. And they were opposed to such a radical thought of eighteen year olds being privileged to vote. It fell flat.

**JH:** So you didn't get elected, huh? Did you ever go into...did you ever campaign for office since then?

**BC:** No. It served its purpose; it was a learning process. And it was our concept, too, at the time that even now, you will notice the number of students-, votes that are counted in many of the elections in the city or county, the students at Marshall could put in their own candidate, if those chose to do so. But the population of whatever it is now, ten, twelve thousand, they could easily do it. With half the number of votes. If you have about five or six thousand votes, you can control it. I think Bobby Nelson rode on this for a long time. Bobby was, now mayor of Huntington, was always active in the campaigns back then. And of course, he tied his coattail with Ken Hechler. And rode around for a while and then finally came back home. But I think it was always known that these students, had they the privilege to vote, could carry any city, this size. Apathy toward voting is as [inaudible]...selections.

**JH:** Yes, some university communities, that's...that's the case.

**BC:** Sure, it can be done.

**JH:** They're registered to vote in the community, they can control the city council.

**BC:** It can be done. And a lot of the local politicians recognize this. That's why you see so many damn green jackets running around.

**JH:** Yeah, big greeners. I think I heard you say earlier that the group of students that you were associated with in The Free University, had a publication. (BC: Mmm-hmm) What was the...what was the format and title and the....

**BC:** I don't even recall. I don't recall. Our idea was that The Parthenon, the part of nothing, did not express the views of all the students. Therefore, that these [inaudible]...entire student population should be allocated somewhat differently to permit those of us who felt differently to fund our own publication. As best as I remember, some small portion was allowed for that. And I think we got about three issues of an underground paper, as we called it...underground paper. But it wasn't. We were open. Everyone knew who we were. And we had some interesting issues at the time. I can't recall what they were. But I know that they galvanized students. And I suppose one of them was police brutality. I remember one night kids got fired up and they pulled the trailers from [inaudible]...out there out in the middle of the street, set them on fire. And the local gendarmerie, they came marching up the street. And they used tear gas. But the city had one concept in solving this problem. And that was to arrest and bash heads, because it was..... And [inaudible]...to the people of this quiet town, that people should speak out against the government, or against a constituted administration...or whatever.

**JH:** I remember I was sitting on the steps in front of Old Main that night, just watching what was going on down there.

**BC:** Of course, there were narcotics in it at the time. Back then it was, I suppose, just weeds and seeds and a bit of marijuana. Maybe some crazy Mexican pills. But I guess marijuana was the drug

of choice at the time.

**JH:** There was a head shop down on Fourth Avenue at the time, wasn't there?

**BC:** Right, in the house right below, above Latta's [Educational and Art supplies]. Terry [inaudible]...had a place downstairs call the "Earth." It was from the....

**JH:** Yeah, the Middle Earth.

**BC:** Yeah, the Middle Earth. But I think Terry had his problems because he sold paraphernalia. And that was frowned upon, you know, just can't sell those funny little pipes and roach clips and things like that.

**JH:** Now you uh, before we started the taping, and you mentioned and also Keith Peters had mentioned to me that Mrs. Payne used to attend some of the Free University meetings. She, it seems to me, represented a lot of the old community affairs of the community unrest concerning student activism at that time. What sort of woman was Mrs. Payne? And what kind of relationship did you all-, the Free University, have with her?

**BC:** She was a stately woman, a charming woman, an articulate person. We found her to be very interesting, if not somewhat humorous at times. But she seemed to be a staid enough citizen. She was dedicated. I think she wrote "Oh, Hale, Huntington," or other about that time, or for maybe the Centennial that we had in the later years. But she was a patriotic enough citizen. We didn't see her as one of us, really. She was there.

**JH:** Did she ever lead the discussion with the....?

**BC:** She always had a bit to say. As I said, she was a articulate. And her opinions were listened to, respected, and well, that was it. We...we were nice.

**JH:** How long did the Free University operate?

**BC:** Probably about two years.

**JH:** Why did it disband? People move on or...?

**BC:** I suppose it was not meeting the purpose that it had intended to meet, or the interest was lost. Or the people spearheading it was lost. I don't know that we were able to do what we wanted to do. And that was to have it recognized that well, it's as good a three hours as doing something else, you know. And perhaps more informative. And perhaps will better fit you for living in those times or the times that were then of that day.

**JH:** How would you compare the political climate on campuses now as opposed to that time? Could the Free University concept catch hold now, do you think?

**BC:** I think it's probably a better time for it now. I don't know what the issues might be that would prompt or bring it about. But in a way, out of that groove almost, policies which *the* university, speaking of Marshall and others, have adopted. Perhaps this matter of I think we called it auditing a course at the time, and now it's credit/no credit situation. This may in some way have stemmed itself from the free university concept. I'm not for sure. I don't have the connection definitely. But I feel there's some connection.

**JH:** I know, I'm with...

**BC:** In other words, we were cooperative.

**JH:** You were [inaudible]...by the...?

**BC:** University.

**JH:** Sort of like a small party [inaudible]...by the larger party. Were you on the Marshall campus during the Bottino affair? Do you remember that at all? The geology professor who was denied tenure.

**BC:** No, I don't remember. No, I wasn't here at that time. (JH: I think that must have been with...)  
That must have been some time in the 70s.

**JH:** Right, Dr. Barker was the president at that time.

**BC:** Yes. Because I left at the end of the 60s or probably early 1970s.

**JH:** Did you go off to work?

**BC:** I moved to Florida. I had a couple of duplexes there on 16<sup>th</sup> Street and some property out on Route 2 and I sold them and moved to St. Augustine.

**JH:** I'm really intrigued by the...by Ms. Payne. I remember my mother talking about her when I was a kid. But I really can't remember her response to Mrs. Payne very much. But I know she was a very influential woman in the community. And that she...I wondered how much she spoke for the Women's Club, for instance, or did she happen to be there most [inaudible]...representative.

**BC:** Whether or not she recognized it, I think she fulfilled a role in the politics of this town, which has been lost by the attrition of old families either leaving the area or dying. We no longer have that strong base of leaders and old families, Longs, Emmons, that controlled behind the scene what should be done. I suppose the Ritters were the last to leave. But towns like this, and most towns, have the strength of old families who don't engage directly in the affairs of the city.....

**END OF SIDE 1 - BEGIN SIDE 2**

**BC:** . . .and whether Mrs. E.Y. Payne recognized the role that she was fulfilling at the time, I don't know. But I think she did try to do it. And she wasn't missing any basics, be at the radical student group, or as you say, the Ladies Club or whatever. I think she touched all bases.

**JH:** The Long's....was Walker Long the newspaper publisher? (BC: Mmm-hmm) Okay. Well, you'd be around Huntington at that time. I'm interested in the loss in America of what I perceive



as the loss of the independent press, being more or less swallowed up by the newspaper chains. Is that a reflection of what you were just speaking of, the local autonomy of local people sort of disintegrating? Is that reflected in the local presses?

**BC:** I'm not for sure I'm following you. I think..... Let me approach it this way. If it's not right, then say, "Hey, that's not what I'm talking about." Technology has caused the newspapers to be conglomerized, if there is such a word. There is now, I suppose. But for years, the Huntington Publishing Company was one thing or the other. The Herald Dispatch, the Huntington Herald, whatever, until I think the Long's chose to disband it, and larger areas, such as Gannett News Service, started purchasing these things and getting into the electronic communication. We're served well by this system of electronic communication. This is why [inaudible]...that we can have it instantly, like our t.v. Local news is perhaps not a, any such great interest any more. I suppose there's still a little paper of America called the Grit. Which is sold in rural America. And there's still, I'm sure, many small town newspapers. But for the old men who stand around and set type and put out a weekly, there's no market. Just like there's no market for many things any more. The boob tube has replaced a lot of it. Our electronic communications...that we want it now. We want to see the astronauts go into space now, today, this instant, live.

**JH:** You mentioned earlier that you did some-, you do some writing, historical writing. What sort of areas are you particularly interested in? I know you said you're doing some work with the people in your building now.

**BC:** Appalachia. I...I left Florida some years ago to go to South America. And I chose as a destination, the little Switzerland of South America, [inaudible]...perhaps one of the more advanced nations of the world. They've had women's rights since the 20s or before. They have one of the

better medical programs in the world, especially in South America. They are probably the most cultured and advanced nation in all of South and Central America. I spent thirteen months there, came back last year, and working on a novel about Appalachia. And it was accepted for publication in Holland. But I felt it was not ready to be published and it needed some research done on it. So I came back, was accepted at Marshall for graduate school and came back with the idea of working on a masters, and plugging in some more things into the book, called Mountain Mosaics, or in Spanish [speaking in Spanish-inaudible]. And that's how that came about. It has not been published yet. There it is, you see it all over the place. It's still in manuscript form. And I have found that there are many things that can go into strengthening it, and some things that should come out. Many things that should come out, or the type of things that you will run into in interviewing people of the area, is that our memories live on and the people that we have known are still very much alive to us in that we are reluctant to speak harshly of them, or to speak at all about certain events, certain times. I ran into this in trying to research the massacre at Matewan in 1921. Known some of the children whose father's were involved in it. But yet, they would not consent to on tape, or even to be interviewed. Because in the living memory of many people, these people are still there, and so is the families. So there's a natural reluctance to talk about such things.

**JH:** I'd be interested in if you have any observations on particular characteristics, particular Appalachian characteristics, and how they may relate to your work with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Have traditionally, particularly the areas of relating to authority figures or to government. Is there a hesitancy among Appalachian veterans to work with bureaucracies, to go to the Department of Veterans Affairs, for instance?

**BC:** Well, I think naturally nobody likes to ask for help. And we are a department that desires to

help and tries to help and wants to make known to veterans of all wars that we are there to help them. Many people just do not...they serve their time, they did their duty and they want to forget it. This is something that maybe a little different with the Vietnamese or the veteran of the Vietnamese war. These boys have seen some difficult times. But they are...they are allowed. They come on strong. Whereas, many of the boys where.... I go up to Montgomery twice a month to work in the social security office and file claims there for veterans. And I remember a prisoner of war coming in. And his hand, he'd lost the use of it. Never in all this time has he filed for anything. But...

**JH:** Prisoner of....?

**BC:** Of the Germans in World War II. And he said, "Well, it wasn't necessary. I did what I was supposed to do at the time. I went, I served my.... But now I can't use my hand. And maybe I could use a little help now." I think it's the Appalachian culture not to ask for help, in any respect. And sometimes you have to determine what exactly the veteran is asking for. It's difficult sometimes to cut through what's going on and say, "Oh, this is what you want." Because he...either he has a reluctance to express what he wants, or he is inarticulate in making it known. So, sometimes you have to cut through that and determine what really you can do. Surely though the history of this land has been one of battle, of blood. And the heritage of our people, some of them, knew it from the other countries, from immigration and our ancestors. And they fought this country. My people came into West Virginia and built a fort in 19 and 59, I think. Hinkle's Fort, up in Pendleton County. And they fought Indians and they were the back door for the Revolution. And so were many of these earlier settlers. They kept the Indians and the British allies and from coming in and taking over colonies from the backside, you know. And they, truly they were just as important as the Continental Army. But it's always, they've always been warriors. It's in our blood. And I daresay if there's a

war anywhere, we're interested in being in it.

**JH:** And Appalachians....

**BC:** And of course, Kentucky and West Virginia and these areas of the mountains settled by the Scots and the Irish and the Scotch-Irish and the Dutch and the Germans. Very much interested always in battle. Because they have fought for so long.

**JH:** I would assume the closeness to land, as well.

**BC:** Love the land.

**JH:** A knowledge of survival instincts.

**BC:** That's true, that helps, too. There's an interesting situation that, an observation I might make, in that the Appalachian soldier can recognize well, one of the great classic stories was a Sergeant York story. But he can recognize things that other people can pass on by. Many lack the intelligence to understand verbally sometimes what's going on. But the body language is so important, the actions of people. For instance, you can take a hillbilly, put him in a mess hall in Japan, and in a week's time, he's working them in their language. Because he's observed the movements. And he learns fast. He learns to watch the seasons change or where the, which side of the-, or where the squirrel is, whether to bark him out, or the birds or all these signals. He watches for signals. And he understands that way. Other people are not that keen in doing things, not accustomed to doing things that way. We are great observers. And I think it enhances our skill as warriors, to be that careful. Now, many do get killed. But we, we contribute a lot of soldiers to all the wars, more than proportionately to other states.

**JH:** I've heard that commanders really like to have Appalachian volunteers in their service.

**BC:** I think so. You are speaking of the authority concept there. I think most soldiers, or at least

when I was in, they respected authority. We recognized there was a need for it. And we respected it. We may not have liked it, we may have chafed under it. But we had chosen that method of spending our time or Sam had chosen it for us, many. But we were there to do our duty and we did it. The rifles were always the best. The marksmen from these hills were always the best, experts. The shoes were always the cleanest and the men were always the nicest. Now, of course, they liked to fight, too, you know. But that's what we were there for. Many were trained to the high pitch of battle, and enjoyed it. Not that it's pretty. But it was, it was where the war was at the time.

**JH:** Heightened the senses, I guess.

**BC:** Yes, I suppose.

**JH:** Why do you suppose veterans of the Vietnam conflict, as you said earlier, are louder than other veterans?

**BC:** I don't know. It may be the age group. It may have been the war, which did not meet with popular support here in the states. It may have been the way things were administered, or administered, I should say, in that many were unfavorable to the war and through one method or another, they did not go, or were not drafted, and they ran off to Canada and later on were given amnesty. And there's a resentment about that, I believe. There's a resentment about the method of training. Now, surely in the second war and other wars, men were, in the beginning men trained with broomsticks and they were shipped out soon, as cannon [inaudible].... In Vietnam, true, too. Many were cannon [inaudible].... Maybe it was a factor of not knowing who your enemy was. But we had that in Korea, too. We didn't know who our enemy was, necessarily. There perhaps a greater fear, a greater destructiveness, than other wars, which might deem more conventional. The, the chemicals that were used, the mass annihilation areas. Certainly though, nothing could be more mass

annihilation than Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But we didn't see that. Not many soldiers saw that. Many did that went in after the war, you know. But we didn't see it in Vietnam. It was seen on a daily basis. There was no rest. If you were in a compound, you were surrounded by the enemy, always. There was no...you were under the bunkers, there was no sanitation to amount to anything. The rats were big. The attacks were violent. Anything could happen at any time, and did. Men were blown up beside you. One of the old concepts of the Army is "Don't make friends." You have to lose someone. I don't know. I don't have all the answers about Vietnam. It may have been an age group. Of course, I'm older now, they're younger. So I don't really know. This stuff of no parades. There's no parades for the boys that came back from Korea.

**JH:** I was just gonna ask, what...we hear a lot about the return of Vietnam vets, the isolation, the no parades, the culture shock of going almost immediately from a combat setting to the street corner. Part of the parallels to that is that the Korean vets would know better than anyone else. Similar?

**BC:** Well, I don't know. We didn't feel we needed a parade. We were just glad to get home. And I'm sure many of us did need help and wanted help. But again, not many of us asked for it. I did. I had a GI Bill and I burned it up. [laughing] (JH: Really?) Going to school...sure. I asked for help in that respect. But perhaps the drugs were a big influence, I believe, in Vietnam and that after awhile you knew that you were going to die. So you didn't care to try to preserve your life. And if you could narcotize it in some way, then you were pleased to do that, you know. Because the demands on the soldiers were great, always and continually.

**JH:** Did the soldiers in Korea have any kind of problem with morale, about wondering about support back home?

**BC:** No, I don't believe...I never...no, I believe that war was supported by, by the people at home.

And I'm sure many of them felt as MacArthur felt, that we should push on to the [inaudible]...and take China, too, while we were there. That's why he got fired, you know, he didn't obey orders. This was another factor in Vietnam, too, as parallel. There's many fine officers and fine men who disagreed with some of the troops and some of the troops were [inaudible].... Of course, there was many soldiers that were killed with bullets in their back. But many, many officers and men, sergeants and non-coms, those in command, were fragged, killed in battle.

**JH:** Is the....

**BC:** This did happen in Korea, too, but not to the extent it happened otherwise.

**JH:** The Department of Veterans Affairs, seems to me, is faced with a really momentous task to administer to the needs of veterans in this state. Is that going to be affected to a great extent by the recent budget constraints, the <sup>(Gramm)</sup> Graham-Rudman Legislation?

**BC:** Well, as I prefaced earlier in this interview, we are an agency of the state, rather than the federal government. (JH: Right) I'm sure the Veterans Administration, this arm that serves the veterans on the federal level, they are being hurt, in that many job slots are not being replaced. Many veterans would need treatment will not be treated. And this will amount to millions per year. Many cuts are being made already because of the <sup>(Gramm)</sup> Graham-Rudman Act, such as.... I'm one who believes greatly in education. Now, all the education benefits have been cut. In 1984, they raised the benefits for a GI going to school about 10%. Well, as of March the 1<sup>st</sup>, they cut it 8% this year. People on OJT, On-the-Job-Training, or vocational rehab, <sup>their</sup> ~~they're~~ benefits are being cut. And I hate to see that done. Because I'm a strong one to believe in education. I daresay one of the great things that could happen to this state would be if, if perhaps we had a money-making mechanism, if it'd be off-track betting or casinos or whatever, but if all the money went to education, what a jewel that would be in the

crown of West Virginia. Because there's some magnificently brilliant students that need the opportunity to learn. They need the facilities. The teachers need the pay raises, too. We need quality teachers. For so many years, Marshall has trained teachers to go elsewhere to work. They're all over the United States and all over the world. Because we pay them nothing.

**JH:** [inaudible].....when I hear some of the salaries of the people and faculty at Marshall now, it's...it's shocking, really.

**BC:** And many people choose to stay and teach. Well, used to, you know, men didn't teach. Only girls, women taught. And it was only until recently that men really started teaching. But there's a tradition of teaching in this area and an honor for instructors that sort of parallel's these soldiering ability, I daresay, of the mountaineer. Many do it because it is the custom, or the parents did it. I think of Jesse Stuart, why he spent so long over there in Greenup County, teaching, doing what he wanted to, I guess. But not getting paid tremendously well for it. But Jane, his daughter, she did magnificently. She's...a smart gal.

**JH:** Jane Stuart.....

**END OF INTERVIEW**