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B. S. Brake

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ORAL HISTORY

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Date Sept. 28, 1973

B. S. Brak
(Signature - Interviewee)

201 Point St.
Address

Clarksburg, W. Va.

Date Sept. 28, 1973

Ruth Ann Cornell
(Signature - Witness)



RAC: The following interview was taken at Clarksburg, West Virginia, With Dr. Brake who is BSB: Not Blake, Brake., who is the Director of the Harrison-Clarksburg Health Department. Okay, Dr. Brake, if you just would tell us your reminiscences of your childhood, things about your education.

BSB: Well, I'm not always, don't always use good language, so I'm going to start off by telling you a little story about three little girls who had the bad habit of using cuss words. And, it didn't make much difference where they were when they'd use them. And, it happened the preacher was coming to dinner one day, and the mother was very anxious that they be on their good behavior, so she talked to the little girls and told them that she would give them 50 cents a piece if they didn't use any cuss words while the minister was there. Well, they agreed to behave. And, all went well until at the dinner table one of the little girls spilled her soup, and she said, "Oh, dammit." And, the other little girl leaned over and in a whisper, but loud enough for all to hear, said, "Now, you've played hell with your 50 cents."

RAC: (Laughs) That is cute.

BSB: I'll try to be careful and not use any profanity, and I won't ask you to give me 50 cents.

RAC: No, we would really prefer that you just act normally and if you want, can express your feelings better.

BSB: Well, alright, alright. Now, what is it you want?

RAC: Okay, first of all, I would like to know something about your background, who your mother and father were, where they came from, where you were born, raised.

BSB: They, they came like other people from same.

RAC: (Laughs) Same place, huh?

BSB: Yes, they. My parents were both, ah, born in Lewis County out from Jane Lew, and they, same, ah, place that. No, I'm wrong. My mother was born in Buck--in Upshur County. But, my father was born out from Jane Lew. The same place where, where his father and his grandfather were born. So, there's

four generations of us born in that hollow. It was a hollow. Only one family lived above us there. The road ended up there. That was the way it was. Now, what else do you want to know about that?

RAC: Let's see, ah.

BSB: You don't want to know when I was born, do you?

RAC: Yes, we'd like to know when you were born.

BSB: Well, I born, they say, January 20, 1884.

RAC: Which makes you.

BSB: Makes me almost 90 years old. I'll be 90 on the 20th of January if I survive.

RAC: And, you're still actively working.

BSB: Yes, I am still, and matter of fact, ah, I am the oldest, I'm quite sure, health officer in the United States, and shall we say Canada?

RAC: (Laughs) I can almost believe that. Really and truly.

BSB: The reason I feel sure about that is, is that in no other state except West Virginia would I be allowed to, ah, continue the. Here, why, there's no limit to it.

RAC: There is no age.

BSB: No age. Now, ah, I, ah, you said you wanted to know my early history?

RAC: Uh huh!

BSB: Well, when I was a boy, a youth, we had no high schools; and I went to West Virginia Conference Seminary which gave me a little more than the equivalent of, equivalent of that. I spent four years there. That's at Buckhannon, West Virginia. It is now West Virginia Wesleyan College [RAC: Oh.] of which John D. Rockefeller IV is president and was, ah, what you call it?

RAC: Inaugurated.

BSB: Inaugurated yesterday, wasn't he?

RAC: It was either yesterday or today.

BSB: Yeah, I graduated there in 1904, and I, you may be interested to know that I taught a country school when I was only 16.

RAC: Where did you teach school? Where was it?

BSB: About a mile and a half about, ah, southwest of Jane Lew.

RAC: Now, did you go to grade school in Jane Lew? Was there an elementary school?

BSB: Ah, I went to a grade, grade school out from Jane Lew. A little school house out in the country there near the farm.

RAC: Was it one room, one?

BSB: One room. Had all, the teacher had all the grades. That was the one room that I taught.

RAC: Oh, you taught the same school that you'd gone.

BSB: Yes, I later taught the, taught in this school where I went to school myself.

RAC: My goodness.

BSB: Yes.

RAC: How many students did you have?

BSB: I, you might be interested in my salary. The first year I taught was \$32 a month.

RAC: Thirty-two dollars a month. Now, how long did the school year run?

BSB: Five months. And, ah, there was nothing to spend money. That seems like a small amount. There was nothing to spend money for. We had no movies; nothing to go to. Only thing

I've ever had in the country to entertain us in the winter-time was what we called protracted meetings, revival meetings. We'd go there to see the people shout. There was always one or two, they'd get, ah, very emotional, emotional and, ah, shout.

RAC: Did you go to any denomination, or was this one particular one?

BSB: Mostly Methodist. They was all denominations, but they don't do that any more. And, that was in the Methodist Churches. I don't know if they do it in any churches now, but they (laughs).

RAC: Sort of like that was your local entertainment.

BSB: That was it. I remember one old woman that was always a shouting, and she'd, ah, she'd get happy, you know, and shout; and she would holler, "Praise the Lord!" ah "Hallelujh!" until she'd lose her voice. And, finally she'd end up in just a whisper. Now, that I think that kind of business, er, entertainment was very common in Appalachia. You're talking about Appalachia. That, that was down in the mountainous region, but I think that is probably very common down there yet.

RAC: It was very, it was very common in the south during the 1800's.

BSB: It may be, but you never heard of any of that around here any more, any these.

RAC: Towns are too grown up.

BSB: They'll throw you out if you start to shout, throw you out of the church (laughs).

RAC: How many students did you have in your school where you taught?

BSB: I had, I think, about 15. I had, ah, two or three that was older than I was. I had, ah, I remember a couple of boys that were 19.

RAC: Now, did these, was this a fairly well representation of the students in the community?

BSB: Yeah, it was a fair representation, representation of the schools, country schools then. There were very few high schools. They had, ah, I think, ah, a little one, high school in Weston, West Virginia, which is the county seat of Lewis County. Jane Lew is in Lewis County. But, ah, very few high schools then.

RAC: How long did you teach school?

BSB: Oh, I taught, ah, six different, ah, terms they call them.

RAC: Then what did you do the rest?

BSB: I ended up here as principal of (inaudible) here in this area where I live. Then I, you want to know any more about me?

RAC: Yes, I do.

BSB: I decided teaching wasn't my, ah, what you call it?

RAC: Your calling.

BSB: I'm trying to get his common slang word for it now, but I can't.

RAC: Your thing.

BSB: Well, thing, that's all right or bag. It wasn't my bag.

RAC: Oh.

BSB: So, I, ah, got admitted to the University of Pennsylvania School of Dentistry, and I studied denistry and graduated with a Degree of Doctor of Dental Surgery in the Year of our Lord 1911; and I practiced that noble profession in the town of Jane Lew for two years, then I decided I wanted to see the whole show. So, I got admitted to the, ah, Medical College of Virginia in Richmond, and I spent four more years there in the study of medicine and graduated with the Degree of M. D. in the Year of our Lord 1917.

RAC: So, you've really had a varied career.

BSB: Then I went to New York and spent two and a half years in a hospital training, and then I landed back here and practiced here from 1920 to 1950, 30 years.

RAC: Now, when you say back here, do you mean [BSB: Clarksburg.] Clarksburg.

BSB: In Clarksburg, West Virginia, the, ah, where John W. Davis, ah, practiced law and later became, ah, the democratic nominee for president [RAC: What?] in 1924.

RAC: Ah, did you know Mr. Davis?

BSB: No, I was at his inaugural address here. He delivered that in what is now, ah, (Inaudible) Plaza which is well built up. That was just a field then. And, I remember right admist of his speech we had a tremendous downpour of rain. Everybody got soaked.

RAC: What were political rallies like then? Have you, can you see a difference between the politics of then and the politics of today?

BSB: Oh, I suppose, yes. But, you're either a republican or a democrat. That's right. West Virginia, you know, was republican for many years till Roosevelt was elected, and since that it's been democratic.

RAC: Why do you think there was this change?

BSB: They haven't been democratic either all this time. Ah, I think Nixon carried West Virginia, and we elected two or three public, ah, ah, republican governors. Present governor of West Virginia, ah, Arch Moore is a republican.

RAC: And, then, Underwood was a republican.

BSB: Yeah, Underwood was. I knew we had others before that, but not since Roosevelt. They're the only two since Roosevelt.

RAC: Why do you think Roosevelt was the dividing line between a republican West Virginia and?

BSB: Well, you know what brought, how Roosevelt in. Hoover was,

ah, president. He was a republican president, and they in '29 we had this, ah, ah.

RAC: Depression.

BSB: Huh?

RAC: The Depression.

BSB: Yeah, the Great Depression came on. That's what ruined him. He wasn't responsible for it, but the darn fools blamed him. And, ah, Roosevelt, ah, I want to get in a little whack against him here. I remember hearing him in his acceptance speech in Chicago. You know, he flew out there. He was one of the first presidents, I reckon, no, he wasn't president yet, but he was a nominee and became later that ever flew. He flew out there, and I remember he gave, ah, Hoover hell for, ah, being a spendthrift. You know how much the national debt was then?

RAC: No, I have no idea.

BSB: Sixteen billion. And, our, our national budget then was three billion. Can you imagine that? Three billion.

RAC: No, I can't.

BSB: And, he, he scolded poor, ah, Hoover for being a spendthrift, and I heard him with my own ears over the radio promise to reduce the cost of government at least 25 percent. Did he do that? No. When he, ah, after, ah, he, when he, when the Second World War come on, we, instead of owing 16 billion, we owed 45 billion. I thought we were ruined then. I was predicting, ah, economic collapse then. Even then. And, you know where we went from there. It's been going up ever since. I don't know when, I don't think it will ever stop. I don't think they can stop it.

RAC: I don't either, but that's ... I want.

BSB: Well, now, I'll tell another. You can pretty well tell what my political politics has been.

RAC: Well, what party are you from?

BSB: I've always been repub--voted republican. I don't know what I'll vote for the next time. Ah, I, ah, my, ah, I was, you know, politics is largely inherited your politics /RAC: That's true./, and I, my father was a republican, and I remember when he was 90 years old saying to me one day. He was sitting by the fireside, ah, meditating, and he said, "Don't you know, Blonda," that my first name, ah, "I never voted, I only voted for one democrat in my life, and I don't know whether I made a mistake or not." Well, I said, to whom, for whom did you vote? He said, "For Perry Awford." Perry Awford was one of my early teachers, and I said, "Well, you didn't make any mistake." He had voted for him for sheriff in Lewis County.

RAC: Oh, in Lewis County.

BSB: So, that's why I've been republican most of my life. I vote, though, for 1960 I remembered I voted for, ah, 13 democrats and 13 republicans I believe it was equally.

RAC: Sort of split your ticket.

BSB: I voted for Nixon, but I wouldn't again.

RAC: Well, ah, I think.

BSB: And, I wouldn't vote for McGovern.

RAC: You wouldn't have had much of a choice then in the last election.

BSB: No, I voted for Nixon, and he's done so many good things, but he's in a mess now.

RAC: Ah, to go back to your early childhood and your education, what was it like being a dentist in a small community?

BSB: Well, it was, ah, economically very difficult. I was graduated from the best dental school in the United States or in the world at that time. People come there from there from all over the Europe, and the world, and New Zealand, and, and, ah, such places as that. Germany. I remember the, the Hitler's dentist who the man, the dentist that turned out to be Hitler's dentist was in my class.

RAC: You're kidding. What was his name?

BSB: Blaschke. (Spells) B-l-a-s-k-e (Spells) B-l-a-s-c-h-k-e. Blaschke. He was, ah, I found that out since Hitler died, ah, that he was his dentist. They, ah, found a skull
[RAC: Uh huh.] of that they, he had, ah, records in his office, although he was dead, and his, ah, mechanical duties, ah, mechanical work had it that proved that, ah, this skull was that of Hitler.

RAC: And, you were in school with him?

BSB: We were in the same class. He graduated from my class.

RAC: Who else was in your class or was there anyone else?

BSB: That became famous? I don't know of anybody that became famous. He, that was a poor way to become famous.

RAC: Yes, ah, but he was more infamous really.

BSB: Of course, he had to be a follower of Hitler, or he wouldn't have been his dentist, you know. He would have been afraid to be.

RAC: That's true. Well, now, ah, you lived during World War I and World War II.

BSB: Yeah, I had a commission in the, ah, Naval Medical Reserve, first lieutenant junior grade in the World War I. I saw no active duty though. The war ended before they called me to duty. I was sorry about that.

RAC: Then did you serve in Second World War in any capacity?

BSB: No, I was a little too old for that (laughs).

RAC: You just missed it both ways really.

BSB: I missed it both ways.

RAC: Of course, you lived through those periods. Do you find that.

BSB: Oh, I wasn't too old. I could have served, I suppose, but

I didn't try. I had a sick wife then. I couldn't, ah, I wasn't way beyond the draft age, you know. What you say?

RAC: Ah, I was going to say did you find, were there major differences between World War I and World War II?

BSB: Yes, we, we heard a lot about, ah, slackers then. There was a great war spirit in World War I. Not so much in this second war. If you didn't, ah, get in the service when people thought you ought to you were called a slacker.

RAC: And, they were.

BSB: You never heard that in World War II. I never heard that world used much at all. But, that was a common word. I remember a doctor here who, ah, ah, said something. He was against World War I, and I think now he was right. We, we'd been a damn site better off if we stayed out of it. Here I promised you not to use any bad words, but there one went. And, ah, they, he was almost ostracized around here. Ah, they thought he was pro-German, you know. If you were pro-German, you had a hard life then back then. Now, there was no, wasn't any such spirit as that, I don't believe, in World War II. Although, ah, the war was well supported, you know, and, ah, well, we couldn't very well do anything else after we got into it after, ah, Japan did what she did at Pearl Harbor. He had to get into it. Why, ask me something else.

RAC: Well, West Virginia, this is something I'm interested in. West Virginia has always been noted, or at least during my lifetime and Viet Nam War, a high percentage of men in the armed services and died fighting, ah, did it seem that way to you during World War I and II that so many West Virginians have gone?

BSB: No, I never noticed that, but I've read that there, I've read that there's a larger percentage of West Virginians killed in, ah, Viet Nam. I never heard about World War II.

RAC: I just wanted to know if it seemed like a large percentage of them.

BSB: Well, it's, no, I think comparatively, and I have no way of

comparing it. I never looked up the statistics, but West Virginia didn't shirk. Maybe looks like I did since I did. I graduated, you see, in medicine in 17.

RAC: Uh huh.

BSB: War was declared, ah, World War I was declared in April. I think it was April the 17th, 1917. I graduated in early June of that year, and I thought that I, everybody said the war was going, we was going to be in it for four years and thought that I just having graduated I'd be able to be more of service if I went to a hospital, served an internship. That's why I got, went to New York City, and then, ah, after, ah, about a year, I, ah, less than a year, I volunteered, ah, I got anxious to get in then I applied to the Army Medical Corp and the Navy at the same time. And, I got, ah, I received an appointment as a first lieutenant in the Army and as a lieutenant junior grade in the Navy about the same time. I accepted the one in the Navy.

RAC: So, you really had your choice.

BSB: And, I, it's hard to believe that I received, ah, later without ever having any real active duty. I remained in the reserve, the Naval Reserve, Medical Reserve for almost four years, but I received, ah, an honorable discharge from the navy and an honorable discharge from the army (laughs).

RAC: So, that's rather unique. Not everybody can achieve that.

BSB: I didn't even accept my commission in the army, but I got an honorable discharge.

RAC: Well, I guess that's better than getting a dishonorable one anyway.

BSB: Well, I didn't get any dishonorable.

RAC: Ah, where did you do your internship in New York?

BSB: Oh, I was first in the New York City Health Department. And, then I went from there to Bellevue Hospital.

RAC: Oh.

BSB: I was there. I was at Bellevue twice. First on pediatrics and, ah, later on, ah, urology. And, I was, ah, house surgeon at the French Hospital in New York City for one year.

RAC: Hmm.

BSB: So, that was it. About two years and a half actual experience there, and [RAC: And, then.] I had some, ah, you might be interested, ah, in when I was in New York Health Department. Ah, diphtheria was very common then.

RAC: Huh.

BSB: We had, ah, there on, I was stationed on North Brother Island. Had, ah, one building capable of, ah, 30 or 40 patients, I'd say, for diphtheria. Another, another for tuberculosis about the same size soon, so forth.

RAC: Now, is that one of the immigration islands?

BSB: No, wasn't immigration. Brother Island, it's over in the East River.

RAC: Oh.

BSB: And, ah, there we, I learned to, we had many cases of laryngeal diphtheria. That's diphtheria down in the voice box. And, ah, it's very fatal if you, they can choke to death if they, they didn't get antitoxin properly. And, many times we had to insert a tube in there in their throat so that they could breathe or even antitoxin before it could clear the thing up; they would suffer. I learned to innovate for laryngeal diphtheria. I innovated a, I remember on an am--in an ambulance one night racing through the streets of New York. I had a child. It was an Italian family, and, ah, the child had just quit breathing, and I had to innovate him. Sit there, and I was able to pry his mouth open, its, or her, I don't know which, and, ah, insert the tube. And, as soon as you do that, they, they take a big gasp of air, and, ah, the color come back in their face. It's a very dramatic experience. So, they got that child in, and he lived.

RAC: And, you did that in an ambulance.

- BSB: In an ambulance. And, ah, innovated, learned to innovate there. Well, there, oh, they always had a bunch of cronic, ah, tubes. They'd sometimes, they'd never better be able to get good altitude, ah, certain percentage of them. Not very many big percentage. But, ah, sometimes, we all had ten or 12 tube cases there we'd call them. They'd cough up their tubes, and then, by golly, you had to get them back in in a hurry. And, they had a whistle. They'd blow a steam whistle there like at a heating plant, and then every intern, there were several of us, would race the, run as fast as we could from our rooms. No matter what time of night it was. We didn't stop to dress. And, the first one there would, ah, have the job. If he failed, there was always a more experienced man available. That was a very exciting life.
- RAC: Well, what other kind of unusual, you know, cases, perhaps, did you have or incidents?
- BSB: I had the experience of, ah, innovating there or four of them. I think it was four cases back here after I came back here to practice. Innovated them for diphtheria. One of them was, ah, a young boy 12 or 13 years old. Doctor, his family doctor called me one night, told me to bring some antitoxin. He though he would need that, and I got out there, I'd fortunately, I took the tube set. They had one at the hospital here, and I got out there, and they boy was just about ready to die. He was ash in color, labored breathing, part semiconscious. Well, I boiled this equipment up right quickly, and got the tube in, and he took a nice big gasp, and the color come back to his face, and he got over the diphtheria. And, but a strange thing happened. Not strange, an unfortunate thing. After, that was a long time ago. That was back in the 20's. And, he was in a mine disaster here down in this county after he became a man, was married, and he died in the mine. And, I guess he's still in the mine. I don't think their bodies were ever rescued. That, that boy. And, you want to hear another one?
- RAC: Yes, I'll hear another one.
- BSB: Well, this, I never told this. I never had anybody listen for me to tell these stories. Now, I was, I had another experience up at Jane Lew, up at, ah, not Jane Lew, up at Mt. Clare. That's a town six miles south of here.

RAC: I know where Mt. Clare is.

BSB: Well, we didn't have any road, any hard road up there, and there were very few, that was back in, that was in 1920, 1920, 52 years, years ago, I reckon. Oh, yes.

RAC: Yeah, that's right.

BSB: Fifty-three years ago. They had no, there was a hard road being completed then. There was very few automobiles. And, I bet there wasn't a dozen in town. And, ah, I remember I had a Ford Coupe, but it couldn't get up there. It was one of the, very few of them then. Ford Coupe. So, I, we had an interurban electric line run to Weston through, and I knew, went to see this girl in the evening and knew I was going to need, looked like we were going to need the tube set, innovator set for diphtheria bad. And, I sent her father into the hospital on the, ah, interurban car, electric car, to get the tube set. Well, he got back on the last car, and I saw she was about gone, and I had a pan of water boiling, and I dumped it in there and hardly got it boiled till she quit breathing and clamped her jaws together. And, in order, in my efforts to, she clamped her jaws down and to pry her jaws apart got a, ah, got apart so I could insert the tube. I knocked out one of her front teeth, but I got the tube in, and the girl lived. She was, she had quit breathing. Now, she would have never breathed again. When they stopped breathing, that was it with the diphtheria. Got that tube in, the color come back to her face, and she looked normal, and she lived. Now, don't you know, I probably, she wore that tube several days, and, ah, I never had any cronics in the four, none of the four, I think it was, four or five I innovated; none of them became cronics. And, after she got well, do you know I never saw, now that was in 1950. I never saw that (break in tape). After that child got well, she was probably, ah, nine years old. I never saw her again until about ten or 15 years ago. I was drawn to her on the street over here in front of Parson Sawyers' Store on Main Street in Clarksburg. An old, she was, ah, Italian. Her mother and this girl apparently was with her mother, and her mother stopped me, and said, "You don't know me, do you?" And, I, I said don't know, and this girl smiled, and there was that vacant tooth, and it just dawned on me whot that, who it was and sure enough it was. She'd never had that tooth replaced.

RAC: Oh, my goodness.

BSB: And, that was about 30 or 35 years afterwards.

RAC: Well, Dr. Brake as a dentist you should have offered to replace her tooth.

BSB: I was, I was, well, see, I never saw the girl while I was practicing denistry or I would, but, ah, I was practicing dentistry in Jane Lew which was, ah, ah, ten miles from, ah, Mt. Clare. And, I never saw the girl. That was after. I wasn't practicing dentistry. That was after I quit practicing. I was practicing medicine then, you see. I wasn't a dentist. I didn't do those kind of things as a dentist (laughter).

RAC: Well, ah, when you were, ah, had your private practice, were you a general doctor that just, you delivered babies, did all sorts of stuff.

BSB: I was specialized in urology, but I did general practice. I didn't limit my practice. I was, you might say, all the excuse they had, ah, for as a urologist here for about, ah, 17 years when doctor, one came here. Dr. (Inaudible) came here, and he limited his work.

RAC: Well, ah, I've heard other doctors that, you know, have practiced for years tell tales about one of the doctors that was interviewed on our studies told about delivering a baby one time, and the only light he had was by headlights of the car. You know, they were out somewhere. You ever have any really unusual things happen like that?

BSB: Yes, I delivered one out here. I did some obstetrics. Not very much. But, in, ah, very poor, ah, what you call these people that are, but, anyway, all the light they had. They lived in a one-room house. One room, and all the light they had was a oil lamp, and it had no chimney. And, brother, it was doing a good job of smoking and was not only one baby, but there were twins.

RAC: You delivered twins like that?

BSB: Yeah, and, ah, buddy, I was amazed. That was the only white

thing in the, in the room were those babies when they were born. They were white, outstanding.

RAC: (Inaudible).

BSB: About the cleanest thing around.

RAC: And, where was this, in the Clarksburg area?

BSB: Yeah, area around there. One of the poor areas of Clarksburg. And, ah, course I never got paid for it (laughs). Spent the night there. Well, ah.

RAC: Doctors don't.

BSB: Huh?

RAC: Doctors don't seem to want to be.

BSB: I hope I haven't seemed to be bragging in these stores that I told.

RAC: No.

BSB: They're exactly, I told them exactly as they happened.

RAC: No, I don't think so at all. I mean, you know, I find it interesting because doctors today seem, most of them specialize, or it they're general practitioners, I mean, I can't imagine any of them ever going to anybody's house and delivering a baby. Course the necessity today isn't like it was years ago, but why do you think there is this big change between what I call personal medicine and institutional medicine?

BSB: Well, ah, of course, there is big thing as the scarcity of doctors. We don't have a, in 19, in the year 1925, we had 101 physicians in this county, for example. Now, we have, ah, about 50.

RAC: But, the population.

BSB: And, the medical services have expanded. So much greatly expanded, you know. Then we didn't have these, ah, modern drugs that we have, penicillin and the other antibiotics.

When I started practicing here in 1920, we, ah, didn't have instruments. It came in a year or two later. We didn't know how to treat, ah, ah, pernicious anemia. Now, that can be controlled. We used to give them liver. Now, they give them Vitamin B₁₂, I believe. And, to control those things. And, then all these other things. None of this. Think of the, how surgery is expanded. That's why we need more doctors. Well, we need more doctors than we had in 1925 instead of having 50. We ought to have more than a 100 to do it right so doctors won't, won't quit making home calls. That, I've made many a home call at night to see somebody I never saw. And, I had the experience of when I'd get there, one or two other doctors had beaten me there, gotten there first. That don't happen any more (laughter). Nobody goes.

RAC: No, that's for sure.

BSB: Why, they don't, people around they wouldn't ever call a doctor to come at night. They'd tell them to send them into the emergency room. Even if you've had a heart attack you've got to come. If it's the daytime, they might go to the doctor's office. But, one reason why they, ah, doctors don't give the personal service, they haven't got time I would say.

RAC: Well, in.

BSB: Sometimes I think they ought to take a little more time to talk to patients. That's one of the terrible feelings now of doctors. They don't have time to talk to their patients and explain their troubles. I have a lot of patients come to me, ah, since I've been a health officer, try to talk about they've been to a doctor, and been examined, and they didn't tell them anything. And, he want me to try tell him something. Well, that's ridiculous.

RAC: Do you think that they say so many diseases are, ah, or this at least what you read are, ah, mentally caused from mental problems.

BSB: Well, a lot of them are. That's what, that's, ah, what in the devil do you call that? (Break in tape.)

RAC: Okay, ah, we were talking about, ah, diseases and doctors and people visiting.

BSB: About the economics of [RAC: Uh huh.] medical practice. Now, I was talking about the scarcity of doctors. The great increase in the service that the people demand now and have to have. Medicine has developed, you know, and advanced, and we really ought to have more doctors than we had in 1925. Where as we have about half as many.

RAC: Well, do you find that because there are fewer doctors that it places more of a burden on the health department in a county?

BSB: No, I didn't say that. It, ah, don't make any more of a burden, but they don't have so much obligation to us doing some of the things we do. Ah, I remember back in the 20's when they first started, we had a health department here, a county health department, had a city, we had two. Now, we've got one combined. But, I remember back there when, when, ah, they started giving what we call, then we called, then was toxin and antitoxin to prevent diphtheria, and, ah, the health department started doing it here. And, the doctors were hard up then for practice, and they objected to it. And, I remember Dr. Kemper was a county health officer here then, and he, ah, agree on, ah, agasint his better judgement to not do any more, ah, immunizations against diphtheria for one year. And, he when I, then I come back here as health officer in 1953, and Dr. Kemper had retired then as, he was, ah, and I remember talking to him about that. And, he said, "Yes, I didn't do any for a year," and he said, he said, doctors did practically none. So, he started up again. We've, ah, we don't find any, we, in fact, we have doctors who send us patients lots, quite often for immunization. They're so busy with other things they don't want to be bothered with it.

RAC: You know, really.

BSB: And, we have doctors who send venereal disease patients to us now, because I had one the other day that, ah, had infectious syphilis sent to me, ah, to treat. I, he said, that he thought I could do a better job than he could, but I don't know that that was it. Ah, I know I can do the proper job, but he was a young, hadn't been here very long, and that's what he did. But, ah, that wouldn't have happened back in the 20's. Doctors, doctors, we called it stealing patients.

You were liable to get your patients stolen.

RAC: (Laughs) They were in scarce demand, huh?

BSB: Yes, fighting for a practice. Now, ah, now, a doctor, if you have a doctor, and you quit him, heck, you can't hardly get another doctor. They won't take you.

RAC: Well, so many doctors have closed practices.

BSB: Yes, they won't take any new ones.

RAC: They won't take any new ones.

BSB: Most of them here, the older doctors, won't take any new ones. And, ah, wasn't no sense in a situation as that when I was in practice even up till 1950 it wasn't that way.

RAC: Do you think that the scarcity of doctors is going to eventually going to evolve into a demand by the people and the public that the federal government do something?

BSB: What can they do? They can't create doctors. They can't make them.

RAC: Well, they might subsidize.

BSB: No, it will be worse. I think you're talking about socialized medicine.

RAC: No, not really. Ah, I was thinking more on the lines of BSB: They're going to do something. I don't know what they'll do. of, of less medically trained people doing less important things like immunization.

BSB: Well, that's a trend now, but, ah, I don't know how that's going to work out. Ah, Alderson-Broadus College over here at Philippi started a course in, ah, physician's assistants RAC: Uh huh., and that, ah RAC: These type of things., and they've trained a bunch, but I don't know. They're going to be, they're not going to be doctors now RAC: Right., and, but they'll, ah, they probably can do things, but nurses can do the same thing that they can do.

RAC: Right. More things like this perhaps, you know ...

BSB: Well, we have one of the biggest, ah, home-health, ah, nursing service of any health department in the state. We, ah, our nurses see twice as many patients as any other, ah, county in the state, any other county, any other county health department. More than twice as many as they do in Kanawha Charleston Health Department. They have a quarter of a million. We have people, we have 72,000. But, ah, we're very proud of our home-health service. That is, now, I was going to lead up to, I was leading up to what I was about to say that we have doctors that, ah, depend on the nurses to keep them informed about their patients out in the homes. They go out to see them, and they call them up and tell them how they are, and, ah, it's, that way the patient gets fair service, many of them at home. They wouldn't get anything maybe if they weren't in a hospital.

RAC: Especially older people that find it harder to get out.

BSB: Yes, mostly older people.

RAC: Ah, something I wanted to ask you, going back to your personal background, ah, were you married, and if so, when, and did you have children, too?

BSB: Yes, I was, I was married when I was 41 years old. Only once, and the girl that I married was a young graduate nurse 20 years old.

RAC: And, her name was?

BSB: Katherine Herndon.

RAC: Herndon.

BSB: Katherine Herndon.

RAC: Was she.

BSB: There's her picture over there.

RAC: Beautiful.

BSB: You see it behind the door?

RAC: She's beautiful.

BSB: There's two pictures of her there. I, ah, those were taken the same day. They don't look that way, though, do they?

RAC: No, not at all.

BSB: I want to show you what I looked like that same day. You want to see that?

RAC: Yeah. Oh, you still wear a moustache.

BSB: I haven't worn one all the time, but I still have one. See any resemblance?

RAC: Yes, I do, a great deal really.

BSB: Well.

RAC: Was your wife a local girl? Did she.

BSB: No, she was from Cumberland, from, ah, Cumberland, Maryland. That's where her mother lived at the time. No, she didn't live there, she lived there later. Her mother lived there later. City of Kaiser (Inaudible). But, she was a grad--she had just graduated as a registered, become a registered, she graduated from what was then the St. Mary's Hospital. It is now United Hospital Center, Incorporated, ah, Downtown Division. That's what it is now, but it was formerly St. Mary's Hospital.

RAC: Right, which actually.

BSB: She was 20 years old. I thought that, ah, and I was 41, and I thought you old cradle robber you. If I, ah, if she, ah, she'll, I'll die with old age, and she'll still be middle aged or not much more. But, at the age of 41, she died. She acquired rheumatic heart disease while she was in training. I didn't know it at the time we were married but found out later, and she died at the age of 41. Twenty seven, ah, she died in 48, 27 years ago.

RAC: So, that's a long time.

BSB: No children.

RAC: And, no children. Ah, one thing I did want to ask you, too, about your mother. What was your mother's maiden name?

BSB: Brown.

RAC: Brown.

BSB: Alice Virginia Brown. Yeah, I started out to say that she was born at Jane Lew, but she wasn't. Ah, she was born at Rock Cave, I think it was, Upshur County, up above Buchannon. She was a school teacher.

RAC: And, what did your father do?

BSB: He was a farmer.

RAC: He was a farmer.

BSB: Never did anything but farm.

RAC: Well, that kept food on the table.

BSB: Well, we raised everything. We, my father, when I was, ah, up till I left the farm in 1907 and went to Jane Lew, a little town. We were two miles out. We didn't sell the farm; we kept the farm. But, during the time that we lived on the farm, we, we always raised corn, wheat. That was white meal for corn bread to feed the turkeys. And, ah, we raised wheat and had that ground into flour. And, ah, raised practically everything. Raised chickens, and we always had about a 100 turkeys. That was always my job in the summer. Feed them in the summer on grasshoppers. They had a range, they range for a mile or two away, and, ah, they'd get them to come home was my job as a boy to go home and drive them home. In the winter, in the fall, we'd bring them in and feed them grain for a while and fatten them up. You know how much we'd get? We'd get a hun--get a dollar a piece. About a dollar a piece for a turkey.

RAC: You had a 100 turkeys?

BSB: No matter. That was about, that's what the average price was.

And, we had to take that out, deal that out at the store. Well, by the time that we marketed the turkeys, we all, we only got half. Less, we'd get half of it in cash. That's the way it was. The rest of it you had to deal out in the country store where we sold the turkeys, and by the time the turkeys were marketed, we always owed the, ah, country store that half, so we got nothing.

RAC: Oh, it's amazing how.

BSB: And, ah, I remember that, ah.

RAC: Did you have brothers and sisters?

BSB: I had a brother and a sister. My sister, ah, after my wife died, she came here and lived here. She died about five years ago.

RAC: And, you all had to work. Everybody had their assigned jobs.

BSB: Oh, yes, work. I remember I hoed corn when my father did when I was nine-years old. Now, can you imagine a kid nine-years old working like that?

RAC: Not today.

BSB: I kept a row with him. I did as much as work then as he did. And, we'd work, ah, eight or ten hours. I don't remember exactly the number of hours but at least eight hours. I know I'd be so God darn tired and weak at my stomach couldn't hardly stand up, but I stuck to it.

RAC: Did you have to milk cows and things?

BSB: Yes, we had cows, and we had about five cows. I, I milked cows. Yes, lots of times.

RAC: Well, good. Let's see, what else?

BSB: How we lived then. We didn't get enough adequate food. We never had any, ah, oranges or oranges, or any the kind of fruits, Vitamin C. You didn't, ah, what vitamins we got. Well, we never heard of vitamins. There weren't any were known or even talked about then. We got in our food. I ate

lots of apples. I suppose I got some Vitamin C through apples. I was a very great apple eater. How we survived, ah, I never had, all, went, had to walk a mile to school through the wet and the snow. My feet were always wet when it was rainy or snow. Never had a pair of overshoes or galoshes. There weren't, weren't any. I never heard of anybody having an over--wearing overshoes, rubber overshoes. So, my feet were nearly always half the time wet. How in the world did I live? No wonder I had colds, but I survived.

RAC: Ah, you mentioned earlier at the first part of the interview where you said your father and his father had all lived in that area [BSB: Yeah.] which means that your grandfather at least must have lived there during the Civil War.

BSB: He was in the Civil War. My grandfather, Granville Brake, was in the Civil War. He was 40 years old, and he was so damn mad at the Yank--at the, ah, not the Yankees, he was a Yankee, at the Rebels that he volunteered and left his family at home, and, ah, I don't know how they lived through the three of them didn't. He had, ah, oh, there was two girls, and, ah, two girls and one, my father survived. He was a little boy. They had, ah, there of his brothers, young brothers, died from what they called bloody flux. That's dysentery.

RAC: Oh.

BSB: You know they had no sanitation, no ice, nothing. [RAC: No.] They didn't know anything about sanitation. Wonder they all didn't die. My father says he went up in, his father and his brothers had this bloody flux that he called it, which is nothing but dysentery, and, ah, he went up into the woods and stayed there. Said he, he survived. He never got it. And, ah, my, see, my grandfather left that family there that way. He was too patriotic. He deserted his family, you might say, and went into the war. He marched down to, ah, what's the name of, ah, that battlefield this side of Lewisburg? He, he was in that battle. What was it?

RAC: Oh, there is one, but I can't remember the name.

BSB: On the mountain there. I'll think of it maybe directly.

And, evidently, he walked that far unless he rode on a wagon or something.

RAC: Did he enlist in a regular regiment?

BSB: Yes, he enlisted. They didn't have, they didn't draft them then I don't think.

RAC: Do you know who he served?

BSB: He enlisted, he enlisted. Oh, yeah, he was 40 years old. They didn't draft people that old, and he lost a leg down at Lynchburg. He got what he called a mini ball in his leg which now he wouldn't have lost his leg. They amputated his leg right up close to his body [RAC: Umm.], and, ah, he was in the Civil War.

RAC: So, your family wasn't divided.

BSB: Oh, no.

RAC: I know in the southern part of the state so many families were divided.

BSB: No. People were divided in that, in that area. For instance, ah, that was only three miles from where I was born and raised from where Stonewall Jackson spent his boyhood days at Jackson's Mill. My grandfather told me that they played together and slept together as boys. And, you know, Stonewall, he went to West Point, he got in West Point, and you know what happened to him. He was, the war wouldn't have lasted so long if he hadn't, if he'd been on the other side. My father, grandfather went in the, in the Union Army but.

RAC: And, they had been childhood friends.

BSB: He, ah, they been used to Stonewall, and when he come back, he hated Rebels till he died.

RAC: Down south they feel the other way.

BSB: Sure, I, I went, studied medicine in Richmond, and I met one of those aristocratic old ladies down there. I stayed at my first year, I roomed at her house where I believe she lived

there with her daughter or somebody, and she was so bitter. She said she had made many, ah, trips to Europe. She evidently had money. I forget, 15 trips to Europe and made several before the war. Used to go to Washington before the Civil War, but never would go no more, never, never would stop in Washington. That's how bitter she was.

RAC: My goodness.

BSB: After they lost the war.

RAC: Do you remember any other stories your grandfather used to tell you about the war or childhood friends?

BSB: Well, he told me, I remember that he told me that, ah, you know, that was before the days of ausepsis. You know what I mean by ausepsis?

RAC: No.

BSB: Well, that's, ah, lack of bacteria.

RAC: Oh.

1860s
BSB: We didn't know then that bacteria, that was 60, in the 60's they didn't know then, doctors didn't know that bacteria was the cause of infection.

RAC: Not until the 60's?

1880s
BSB: They didn't sterilize any instruments. No, not until, until, ah, I guess about 80.

RAC: Oh.

BSB: Around about 80.

RAC: Huh.

BSB: I forget the exact year. About 80 or 81. And, ah, how he survived, but he was delirious. He said, ah, after they took his leg off, and he said he could look out the window. I suppose he dreamed. I doubt if he could look out the window. And, he saw an old razor-backed hog running with a man's leg

in his mouth. Now, I think that, ah, he told me that, but I imagine he was just delirious and dreamed that. But, he thought he saw that ✓RAC: Oh.✓, but he got, he was in prison. He was in the, ah, in the a Confederate prison at the time and how he survived, I don't know, but he did.

RAC: What do you mean? He was captured?

BSB: Huh?

RAC: He was captured?

BSB: Oh, yes, he was captured.

RAC: Oh, which prison was he in?

BSB: In Anderson.

RAC: He was in Andersonville, and he survived?

BSB: Yeah, yeah, no, well, it was Anderson Prison, I think it was. It wasn't Libbey. There was another famous prison, Libbey. I think he was at Anderson.

RAC: He survived. He must have been tough.

BSB: Yeah, he was tough, and, ah, I guess I'm tough or I wouldn't be around here.

RAC: (Laughs) And, still going strong.

BSB: When I was 77 years old, I had my gall bladder removed, and nine days later I had, ah, big hernia repaired, and I lost 13½ days of working in the health department. I did have two weekends coming in there. That did help, but let's see, I lost, I was off 13½ working days, two weekends, and two weekends, Saturday and Sunday, and, ah, Labor Day.

RAC: I don't suppose, Dr. Brake, that you're considering retiring?

BSB: Oh (laughs); people wonder why in the world I don't retire. Ah, I don't like to say this reason. I'm not working because I have to. I don't need the salary, but I think they need somebody over there, and I don't know where in the world they're

ever going to get anybody to take my job.

RAC: With the scarcity of doctors.

BSB: And, I, I feel that I can do a good job yet so why quit.

RAC: That's wonderful.

BSB: And, I suppose I'll just go on until I konk out (laughter).
That's the best way to do it.

RAC: Well, I really.

BSB: I feel that I'm useful. Nobody, my board of health hires me. Nobody's ever suggested that I ought to retire or even hinted. I told them that I thought they ought to get a younger man.

SIDE TWO

BSB: I don't mean to say that I think I'm irreplaceable. They thought Roosevelt was irreplaceable, but we got along without him.

RAC: Uh huh. Well, ah, it just seems like that, you know, you've just had such a busy life, and you've done so much.

BSB: I was, ah, I retired from, ah, private practice at the age of 66½, because I couldn't do urology again or surgery. After I had had my cataract operation, I thought I wasn't, I had to get too close to the operating table. Didn't exactly get my nose in the way, but I had to get too close, so I went into public health. I was a year and a half beyond the conventional age for retirement, and I went into public health as a health officer over on the Ohio River for four counties. I thought I would last probably be health officer for three or four years, and here I am June 1st by nature I will have been in it 24 years.

RAC: Where were you health officer first?

BSB: At, ah, at four counties over on the Ohio River, Ohio River. I had Mason, Jackson, ah, Rowan, and ah, Putnam Counties. I was there three and a quarter years as health officer, and they wanted, they hired me over here. I remember, ah, the

chairman of the, ah, board of health who over to Gallipolis, I met them over there. That's across the river from Pt. Pleasant. Ah, Mr. Bonsil had a little pri-private plane, and he flew the, ah, chairman of the board of health over there to see me and about coming over here, and that's how I got landed over here, how I got back. I was very glad to get back.

RAC: You've spent most of your life really here in the Clarksburg area.

BSB: All but about three years. I maintain my home here. My sister lived here in the house while I was here, way over there. I'd come home nearly every weekend, but I was over there then three and a quarter years, but, ah.

RAC: Do you have anything you'd like to do in the next year or two, something you've never done?

BSB: Just keep this health department a going.

RAC: (Laughs) Just keep them on the right road, huh?

BSB: Well, it's very hard to get sanitarians now. They don't pay enough. You can't pay them enough. They work under the Civil Service. I, so we have to take names from what they call the register.

RAC: Uh huh.

BSB: They take an examination. I was sent a list of, ah, five names, and I interviewed, ah, three of them. Two of them didn't show up. One of them called up, and incidentally we never had a woman sanitarian here in this health department. Four of these candidates names on the register were women; one was a man. The man never showed up, and I, I wrote them all, give them their appointments an hour apart for yesterday. Ah, three of them came in. Three girls, ah, women. One woman called up, married woman. She first said, the only thing she asked me what the salary was, and I told her. She said she wasn't interested. And, the man didn't even call or anything. He didn't come. And, so we'll probably have to take a young 25 year-old married woman, and, ah, I don't think she'll, I don't think she'll do.

RAC: That brings up an interesting point.

BSB: It's a man's job. It's a hard job.

RAC: What does a sanitarian do?

BSB: Oh, you want me to lecture on that.

RAC: (Laughs) Well, maybe just ...

BSB: He's responsible, as the name would suggest, for the sanitation largely of the county. And, he would with particular emphasis on public eating and drinking places, the sanitation of our farmed areas that ship milk into the RAC: Oh., into the city here.

RAC: Oh, I know about that where they go out and check the tanks and all to make sure they're clean.

BSB: They, everything, the dairies, and they're, they're responsible for the plants, and, ah, that's a big job. They have over about a 120; they have only about 120 shippers. They call the farmed area shippers now, and RAC: Uh huh. then distinction from plants. The plants are, ah, they, ah, pasturize and, ah, so forth. And, ah, they're responsible for the, ah, sanitation of our dairies, our milk, our milk that you drink. And, believe me they would be pretty dirty if it wasn't for the health department.

RAC: Sure.

BSB: And, ah, for the sanitation of our public eating and drinking places, beer joints. They don't like for me to call them that, but that's, beer parlors I guess you'd call them. And, ah, I remember talking to, ah, man that sells beer one time, and I was talking referred to his beer joint, and he got mad. And, they're responsible for the disposal of the sewage. Every, ah, person who installs a sewage, every home owner. It would be easier if they didn't live in a city were they had sewers like out in the country, and so many people live out in the suburbs now, you know. That's the tendency. They have to use septic tanks, and they have to be approved. They have to apply for a person to install even a privy. They have to apply to the health department

and, ah, submit their plan and have it approved. And, then we have to, sanitarian has to go out and approve it before they cover it up [RAC: Well, ah.] and, ah, such things as that. Somebody's sewer starts, breaks and starts, we get a complaint about that, and we have to go out and see about it, and make them correct it, and things of that kind. And, garbage, we just about try to do something about that, but we haven't accomplished too much about that yet. People still throw it out at night.

RAC: That's true. Well, during your 90 years, you, I mean, you've seen a lot of changes. You've seen women get to vote, you've seen new states added, you've seen prohibition come and go. Do, You think that, that, I mean, what are your feelings about women in certain jobs? Do you think they ought to be in the home?

BSB: Oh, ah, now, ah, they, way it is now many women have to work. Their husbands don't make enough, but there's certain, I think certain limitations. I don't believe women are, should be doing hard labor, and I don't think many of them want to. They want (laughs) office jobs. But, I'm afraid they have some sani--women sanitarians in the county, in the state. Not in this county, but I don't, from what I can hear, they've been a mediocre success. Ah.

RAC: I see, but, in other words, you do think women have progressed through your lifetime?

BSB: A woman could become a good sanitarian. It's possible. I don't say they can't, but I, this young woman that's going, we may have to hire, I'm afraid she won't. She might fool me. But, they go out (inaudible) somebody a restaurant, and I'm afraid the people, restaurant owners won't want to pay much attention to a woman.

RAC: Yeah.

BSB: Huh?

RAC: That's you're biggest problem.

BSB: Yeah. Buddy, they can, ah, they've got to be salesmen. Ah, they have to sell it. If they can't sell they, their point,

get people to, ah, do the things they require. That's the best way, ah, voluntary compliance. And, then if they don't comply, we have to, ah, suspend the permit or arrest them, say, dairy, too. Then the dairyman, he has to throw the milk down the drain. He loses it. He loses three milkings if we suspend his permit. The dairyman, why, ah, or the restaurant people, why, if we suspend his permit, then if the option, if he goes up and quit, correct his problem and goes ahead, why, we arrest him.

RAC: Oh, so really the legal, the health department really plays a bigger part in most peoples' lives than they realize.

BSB: Oh, yeah, well, we, health officer has lots of authority. I order people to do something. They better do it (laughter). Ah, they get in trouble. We had one, ah, feller under arrest now for not installing a septic tank system when ordered to.

RAC: I didn't realize that, you know, that the health department had that much power really.

BSB: Lots of power. And, ah, oh, yes, we've got lots of, yeah, but, we don't gloat around, you know, we don't consider ourselves masters. We're considered servants, ourselves, servants of the people.

RAC: Right.

BSB: But, ah, they, they don't want to work with us as servants, their servants, then we become something else (laughter).

RAC: Well, Dr. Brake, I think I've asked all the questions I can think of unless, you know, you have something.

BSB: Has this been interesting, you think? Will anybody else be interested in what I'm saying.

RAC: I don't know. I sure was interested. I just hope I, I've covered it well enough.

BSB: Well, turn that off, and let me think. (Break in tape).

RAC: Okay, now, ah, you want to tell me about (inaudible)?

BSB: Yeah, the year 1888 we had a big flood in this area, and, ah, it washed out the bridges here in Clarksburg. And, I was living there on a farm out from Jane Lew. I remember my father told me that, ah, the, we had nine big, what he called gulley washers in one day, and, the, ah, river rose. I remember he took me and, ah, my sister, she was four and a half years older than I was. My brother wasn't born yet. He took us two down to see the river. It was backed up around the schoolhouse where I later. I was only four years old. Where I later went to school. The, and that was a quarter of a mile backed up there. Never, only time it had ever did that. I remember that very distinctly, the flood of 88.

RAC: My goodness.

BSB: And, ah, it, I guess, it was not only in Harrison and Lewis County, but I think the Ohio was involved in that by then. I don't know too much about it, but it proves that I've been around here a while.

RAC: It proves you've been around here a while. Do you remember any other natural catastrophe?

BSB: Matter of fact, I think, I think, I remember my mother taking me to Buchannon on the old narrow gauge, ah, passenger train, railraod to see my grandfather. I told her about that, ah, a few years before she died. And, she said, "Well, my goodness, you were only a year old then." But, I remember, and, ah, at least I think I remember. I remember it's, ah, I have a clear mental picture of, ah, riding on the train up on the front seat on the left-hand side, and there', ah, couple of, ah, what she told were, later when I grew up told her about it, a few years before she died, that there were travelling men or something of that kind that tried to talk baby talk to me, make friends with me. I remember seeing them across there, and I remember some old man meeting us when we got off the train [RAC: My gosh.] in a gray beard. That was my grandfather. Now, she says I was only a year old. Think, do you think that's possible?

RAC: Well, they say that children can remember.

BSB: Now, some people think that, ah, I just heard her tell about

it and got the picture. I have as clear a mental picture of that as anything I ever, ever remember. Very clear in my mind about that sitting up there even in the front of the train, front seat on the left-hand side.

RAC: I think that's possible. They say it is. They say if you have a well-developed memory, that you can actually remember events, you know, way back into childhood. Sometimes I have trouble remembering what I did yesterday.

BSB: I sometimes, myself, doubt whether I remember it or not or whether it's just a dream. I, I, to me it's very clear in my memory.

RAC: Something I'd like to ask you is, do you remember the first car you ever saw?

BSB: Yes, I do.

RAC: Where was it?

BSB: It was in, ah, Jane Lew. Ah, it come up the dusty road. There were no pavement there. Fellow by the name of Cline Hood had it, bought it. He lived down below Jane Lew, and he, I, I went up there to the road. We lived down the street there at the railroad. And, I remember how the dust flew. It was in the summertime, you know. Well, I remember then when the cars first came and people drove horses and buggies, and the horses were scared to death of them. And, ah, it, ah, meet a car liable, your horse is liable to run away. They were afraid of trains then, too.

RAC: Still?

BSB: Now, horses don't, aren't afraid of cars, ah, or anything, trains or anything.

RAC: Huh uh.

BSB: But, they were then.

RAC: Remember what you thought when you saw it?

BSB: I don't remember.

RAC: (Laughs) I mean, you know, that must have been unique.

BSB: Yes. I believe, I believe the first plane they, see, planes, ah, fly, the Wright Brothers flew what was it in 1902 or 3 or 4?

RAC: Something like that ...

BSB: The first recollection of seeing an airplane was in Philadelphia was I, when I was in dental school. I started there in 1908, and I happened to see cars, people flying up there all over town.

RAC: Oh.

BSB: Yes, I've seen. You know they think about developing medicine, you know, the X-ray wasn't, ah, discovered, ah, Roentgen discovered the X-ray. Your thing on there yet?

RAC: Yeah, it's on.

BSB: Well, in 19, 1895, you see we didn't, ah, have X-ray back in those before that. We didn't, ah, I was talking about diphtheria, diphtheria antitoxin wasn't available till about, ah, I think that was about 1890. It's a wonder I didn't get diphtheria and die or my sister or my father. But, ah, they didn't die.

RAC: Mortality rate was very high.

BSB: Oh, yes. It was very high. I think that, ah, I saw some place that the diphtheria was, had the highest mortality rate of anything in children, among children. I'm not sure if that's right.

RAC: What would have been the largest one among adults? I wonder /BSB: Huh?/, the largest one.

BSB: Then?

RAC: Probably tuberculosis.

BSB: I expect tuberculosis or typhoid. I don't know, ah, back there then. I ought to have that information for you, but I don't have it. Typhoid fever had a high mortality rate.

It killed lots of people.

RAC: You never hear of that today hardly.

BSB: Well, you know why it is?

RAC: I guess because.

BSB: It's not due to typhoid vaccine. That helped. Just sani--
better sanitation.

RAC: Oh.

BSB: The, in that's one good thing Roosevelt did do. I never voted for Roosevelt. I voted against him five times. Once when he ran for vice president in 1920 and the other four times he ran for president. But, he did do one thing or his congress did it. I don't know how much he had to do with they started to build what they called Roosevelt Privies. They started building millions of them. And, right then they, ah, typhoid begin to disappear [RAC: Hmm.], and they named that better sanitation, and they got better water. We didn't, for instance, people used well water here back until 1923 I think it was. We didn't have any, ah, treatment plants here in the City of Clarksburg until I believe it was 1923. I remember when I was teaching school here whenever have a big rain the water in the pickets if they had water, you'd take a bath in, in tubs [RAC: Uh huh.]; it would be muddy. We didn't have even then, and that was in, ah, before we had treatment plants. You see, treatments, ah, when I say, 19 [RAC: Twenty three I think you said.], no, 1923, yes, it was about 1923. And, ah, then when we got, ah, treatment plant and people could use city water they did away with their wells and learned how to take care of the, their discharges. Places got typhoid from another. They had to ingest into their alimentary tracts some germs from the patient, usually from the patient's large bowel. You know what that meant.

RAC: Huh.

BSB: That's how you get typhoid fever. Now, we rarely have, we haven't had a case of typhoid fever in, ah, for many years. But, if we would have a case, why, the bowel discharges wouldn't

be turned loose in the, in the, ah, (inaudible). I don't know what they would do with it. They couldn't turn, wouldn't put it in the river like we've been doing. We're getting a treatment, sewage treatment plant here. Now it will be. That's where our sewage now goes into the river, but it'll be taken care of in the sewage treatment plant about January 1st. But, now, the only way you can have, if you, case of typhoid fever it means there's a carrier around, something.

RAC: Somebody's just got it and carried it.

BSB: Never got well of it. I found as a health officer we had, ah, when I first, ah, early in my career here in about 1954 or someplace along there had two or three cases of typhoid fever. But, I personally found out the source in both cases. Each case is due to, ah, typhoid carrier. One, two old women, two separate, one, one family got it from one, ah, cook. She was an old lady from Lewis County who was a cook. And, ah, I found, ah, that she was the carrier. I got her to submit a stool. I think she was, ah, made her mad that I even suggested it. And, I think she submitted, agreed to submit the stool just to show me up. And, the other one we did on an old lady over in Marion County. That was a child that developed. She visited over there at her grandmother, with her grandmother, come back two weeks later and developed typhoid fever. We got them under control, you know, and so that they didn't prepare food for other people any more. I don't think anymore cases occurred from them. They were, of course, both. One of those old women, the one in Lewis County, committed suicide.

RAC: Hmm.

BSB: She was restricted and wouldn't, ah, wouldn't allowed to be a cook anymore. She drowned herself finally.

RAC: That's terrible.

BSB: That got rid of her.

RAC: Well, I want to thank you for giving us this time to come and interview you, and BSB: Well, I told. complement you, and give you our best wishes for being the oldest public health servant.

BSB: I've told you some good ones, haven't I?

RAC: No, I hope not, and thank you very much.