

The National Museum of the Pacific War
(Admiral Nimitz Museum)

Center for Pacific War Studies

Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with

Mr. Norman Moise

September 22, 2001

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(*Marine - Landing at Guadalcanal*)**

My name is Bill Cox and today is September 22, 2001. I'm doing an Oral History for Mr. Norman Moise. The purpose of this oral history is to record Mr. Moise's pacific war experiences during World War II. Its for the National Museum of the Pacific War. We are doing this recording in the auditorium of the Fredericksburg High School. Mr. Moise, thank you for being with us. I would like to ask a couple of questions if I might and you can expound on them however you would like.

Mr. Cox: Where were you born?

Mr. Moise: In New Orleans, Louisiana.

Mr. Cox: May I ask what year?

Mr. Moise: 1923.

Mr. Cox: 1923, and your Mother's and Father's names were?

Mr. Moise: Mildred and Lawrison. My Mother was an Andrews, which was her maiden name. They had been married for ten years. I had an older sister, 8 years older than I.

Mr. Cox: Had they lived in New Orleans?

Mr. Moise: In New Orleans all their lives.

Mr. Cox: OK. So you might say they were a native?

Mr. Moise: Yes, I would definitely say they were native.

Mr. Cox: What ancestry were they?

Mr. Moise: My Mother's side of Andrews came down from New York in probably 1840 or so. My Father's father, actually my great-grandfather came to New Orleans. He was a painter. Not a house painter, but a portrait painter, and has some works well known. One is Henry Clay and it is at the Metropolitan Museum. He had nine sons, of which my grandfather was one. My grandfather then had eight sons. So the family nearly squashed out when the pyramid was born. Wide opening. My father was one of the middle sons of my grandfather's brood. My father was in his 30's when I was born, about 37.

Mr. Cox: Do you recall, was your lifestyle as a child pretty much like everybody else? Was your father a businessman?

Mr. Moise: No, he worked at the company. We did quite well until the Depression. My Father had a pretty good job. Well actually it was after the Depression when Roosevelt passed the law that you couldn't pay any less than \$14.75 a week. My Father was making a heck of a lot more than that, but his company said if that is all we can pay and we have to pay this to the other people, we will cut your salary just to \$14.75 also. My family in the house consisted of my Grandmother, my mother's Mother; my Uncle on my Mother's side and his wife and their boy, Bill, who was five years older than I, he was like an older brother to me; my sister; my father; my mother and myself. We were living off of \$14.75 a week. However, might I add I was never hungry. My Mother cooked well and we ate well.

Mr. Cox: What part of New Orleans?

Mr. Moise: Uptown.

Mr. Cox: Uptown.

Mr. Moise: Yes, by Audubon Park.

Mr. Cox: OK, and I know about where that is at. What school did you go to?

Mr. Moise: High School was Samuel J. Peters. It was called Commy High. It was a commercial school. The reason I went there at the time I was told I had no chance to go to college. No monies, no nothing, so I was going to learn how to type and shorthand, bookkeeping, etc., so I went to Commy High. I graduated, actually I had dropped out of regular school on my last semester to try and help with the family, bring some money in. I got a job with Western Auto in their warehouse and it helped out a little bit. I did go to night school to get the three credits that I needed to graduate from high school. This was in September of 1941. Of course when December 1941 came along, Pearl Harbor happened and I went down Monday afternoon after work to sign up for the Marine Corps. With regards to the education, they said, "well, you've accomplished more already than we have to know," so I was given those credits and in June while I was in the Corps on the coast, my parents were given my High School diploma. That brings it up to that point.

Mr. Cox: OK. Do you think that training that you had in, would you call it a Tech School?

Mr. Moise: A commercial.

Mr. Cox: A commercial school, that helped you with some of your training in the Marine Corps?

Mr. Moise: Not a thing. Not a bit.

Mr. Cox: OK.

Mr. Moise: No, when you are joining the Corps you learn the Corps way.

Mr. Cox: So you probably went in, then I'm guessing, there about the 9th of December.

Mr. Moise: It was the 10th of December. My Father was off that day and could go down and sign for me.

Mr. Cox: Now you were how old that day?

Mr. Moise: Eighteen.

Mr. Cox: Eighteen.

Mr. Moise: When my Father was signing the papers the Sgt asked, "when do you want to go?" I said, "When is the next train leaving?" He said, "tonight." I said, "tonight." So we left on the night of the 10th.

Mr. Cox: Did you take very many clothes with you?

Mr. Moise: Of course Mother said you got to take clean skivvies.

Mr. Cox: Mothers say things like that.

Mr. Moise: That's right.

Mr. Cox: Where did you travel to on the train?

Mr. Moise: To San Diego.

Mr. Cox: How long did it take you to get there?

Mr. Moise: About three days.

Mr. Cox: Was there a train load of people?

Mr. Moise: There were twenty of us that left New Orleans. I don't remember any

others getting on. I assume they did. The train was filled with a lot of civilians also. The twenty of us, when we arrived in San Diego, there was a bus waiting for us and a Marine in Blues. Very sweet, very nice, very gentle, saying “Well here’s your bus.” We got on the bus, went to the San Diego base and disembarked, and they said, “Now get in lines of three,” and we did. “And face this way, and start walking.” We started and this fellow, this Sgt hollered, “Rear Halt,” and we weren’t twenty feet in the gate and he reached in and grabbed a little guy and he picked him up, and he said, “are you chewing gum?” I heard nothing, but I could hear him say, ‘swallow it’ Well we all chewed gum in those days so my two sticks of slightly used peppermint went down my throat.

Mr. Cox: Did you chew gum after that?

Mr. Moise: Not in Boot Camp. That was the start of something big.

Mr. Cox: What was the first thing they did? Did they have questionnaires, or did you get a uniform?

Mr. Moise: No, no, the first thing they did. It was early evening most probably when we got there. I can’t remember what exactly we did. I know we got a hair cut. I know we got clothes, etc., but I can’t remember the time element because I didn’t own a watch, and if I had I wouldn’t be looking to see what time it was anyway. But, we got to our tents. By the way, we were in two-man tents at that time. We got to our tents at I don’t know what time, but here’s your tent from now on. We were joined with a group from Chicago, and they lined us up by size, by height, and I ended up with a fellow by the name of Wally

Nigren from Chicago. It was one of the nicest things that could have happened to me because he was a guy of about 21 years old, two years of college and very, very nice.

Mr. Cox: Do you still maintain contact with him?

Mr. Moise: You bet your sweet bippy I do.

Mr. Cox: OK.

Mr. Moise: He lives up in Seattle now. Not Seattle, I'm sorry, Portland.

Mr. Cox: How many days or weeks of training did you have there?

Mr. Moise: I would say ten weeks. Eight-ten weeks. I really couldn't tell you exactly.

Mr. Cox: Was there a lot of physical training and exercise?

Mr. Moise: The physical didn't phase me. I was 18 years old and I could do twice as much as they wanted. Mental, they wanted to train you to "Hey, this is the way we do it in the Corps." It wasn't hard for me either, but some of these poor guys that were 28 and 30 years old could hardly keep up with us, and it was hard on them. I sailed through Boot Camp easy.

Mr. Cox: When you to bed at night did you think of home?

Mr. Moise: Oh, of course. Well, we were in San Diego, so this was just before Christmas if you'll remember. You could look up and see all these houses and decorations and lights. You'd think of home, of course.

Mr. Cox: You'd get a little sentimental?

Mr. Moise: Not particularly so because these were on hills, and New Orleans was very flat, but I thought of home naturally.

Mr. Cox: Did you have a girl friend back in New Orleans?

Mr. Moise: Oh yes.

Mr. Cox: Did you maintain that

Mr. Moise: Yes, for a long time.

Mr. Cox: OK. Was there a particular type of training in the Marine Corps that had to do with weaponry?

Mr. Moise: Yes.

Mr. Cox: Was it extensive?

Mr. Moise: The bayonet, and of course we went to the firing range to fire the 03's. We had 03's, and by the way, I shot highest in the platoon by five points.

Mr. Cox: So this was a marksmanship

Mr. Moise: Yes. Right.

Mr. Cox: What was the title of that marksmanship?

Mr. Moise: It was sharp shooter. I missed "expert" by three points.

Mr. Cox: So this was at different yardage on the targets?

Mr. Moise: Oh yes. Well the whole thing gathered together. You shot 50 rounds I guess it was. If I remember correctly it was 50. At different, 200, 300, 500 yards. Standing, prone, etc. My only deuce of the day, which was the three points that I needed was the last shot I had and I could feel some breeze, but I didn't pay attention to it and I shot anyway.

Mr. Cox: Was it 500 yards, or on that order?

Mr. Moise: It was about 500 yards, yes. I think it was 500.

Mr. Cox: It moves off the target pretty quick.

Mr. Moise: With a little breeze. I learned that on that shot.

Mr. Cox: Did you have any training on flame throwers or grenades?

Mr. Moise: No. Oh well they talked to us about grenades and how you should throw them, etc. Straight arm, which I didn't believe. I had my own ideas, but didn't mention them to them at the time.

Mr. Cox: OK. Now did you go to any specialty schools once you finished there?

Mr. Moise: Yes, I went to Marline Spike's Seamanship and Rigging at the Naval Station just next door to the Marine Base because after Boot Camp I was attached to the Am tracks. Then we were on ship to shore, etc.

Mr. Cox: Would you describe what kind of a vehicle an Am track is?

Mr. Moise: It is an amphibious tractor with a metal container that had cleats on tracks that would be cups like hands as you swim and as these cleats moved around it would peddle you along in the water.

Mr. Cox: It was kind like a tank tread except

Mr. Moise: Like tank tread only it was cleated where it could paddle the water. This was invented by Donald Robling, in Florida, for going into the swamp land to make rescues, etc. The Marine corps came up and said hey this might be a good military deal so that is when they started working on the idea of making them for the Corps. The only difference, Robling's was aluminum, and these were sheet metal.

Mr. Cox: Fairly heavy?

Mr. Moise: Very thin sheet metal. Speaking of Donald Robling, his father was the inventor or the engineer that constructed the Brooklyn Bridge. So they had

a lot of brains in the family.

Mr. Cox: What was your duties on the Am track?

Mr. Moise: Originally I was one of the crewmen, and a driver, etc. But, after Guadalcanal, I was made a crew chief, which you are in charge of the Am track.

Mr. Cox: Total, how many was a crew?

Mr. Moise: Two.

Mr. Cox: Two.

Mr. Moise: Two and myself.

Mr. Cox: OK. What was it used for?

Mr. Moise: Well, at Guadalcanal, during the landing our Am Tracks were.... They didn't realize what an Am track could do at the time, the senior people. Our Am tracks did not leave the hull of the ship. Two reasons -- One was that I think they thought it was just a "play toy." The other, after we had landed the morning of the 8th, the next morning of the 10th the Japanese came in and sank four cruisers. The Japanese Admiral in charge of that was berated because he didn't stay and sink everything. I was on the Jackson at the time. I had gun duty that night, 50 caliber machine gun, and this fellow, Boots Lemm, from Spring, Texas, and myself had been up for a long time, 20 hours, etc. So he said, "Why don't you lay down on the ammunition box and I'll wake you in an hour or so and then I will sleep." So I laid down, and soon as my head was down, he said, "What's that?" We looked up and it was a flare and then lights came on from the ship, and then all hell broke loose. We

were watching a battle between the Japanese and ourselves. We didn't really know what side was winning because we didn't know which one was hit. I do now. I realize now because the Japanese had turned on their lights and spotted our ships and fired that way. We lost four cruisers that night. The Vincenz, the Quincy, Cambora, and I'm sorry I can't name the fourth one right now. Anyway, four cruisers were lost. One of our greatest Naval losses and here I am on a 50 caliber machine gun aboard the Jackson. Well, you can't do anything but watch, you are several miles away. However, the Japs as I mentioned, the Japanese Admiral got a little nervous being around there and left. They thought they would be able to catch him the next day with planes. Unfortunately our carrier had left and gone south several hundred miles. It wasn't anywhere around. However, the Jackson never had general quarters, and didn't pull anchor. The Jackson is part of what they call the "Unholy Four." The Jackson, the Crescent City, the Harrison, and here I am again only naming three out of the four. Sorry about that.

Mr. Cox: Were these light cruisers, heavy cruisers?

Mr. Moise: No, they are transports.

Mr. Cox: Transports.

Mr. Moise: Yes, but they called themselves the "Unholy Four." And they did that before we left the States. Ironically enough they write now, when they write a letter, they say, "The Unholy Four -- From Guadalcanal to Tokyo without a scratch." Never were they hit. And yet they could have been sunk the first time. Hayes, Harrison, Jackson, Crescent City. OK. Well,

anyway, the battle is over, the sea battle is over. The troops have landed at Talagi, Gavutu, Tannenbogo, and Guadalcanal. Also on Florida Island to prevent the Japs from getting onto Florida Island from Talagi, which was very close. The ships pulled anchor then and sailed as fast as they could down to New Hebrides and we disembarked there. We were there, maybe three weeks, and they picked our platoon from our Company to go back with Am tracks, plus other groups, I presume they picked a platoon or company from them. We went back on the Jackson up to Guadalcanal, unloaded, and landed there. Of course, landed very peacefully because where we landed was already taken. We parked the Am tracks and that is the last we saw of them because Admiral Turner turned us into provincial raiders, which we then went to the front lines and manned machine guns, etc.

Mr. Cox: Now was that a Company size or Battalion size unit?

Mr. Moise: Platoon size.

Mr. Cox: Platoon size.

Mr. Moise: Yes. Thirty of us.

Mr. Cox: You had machine guns?

Mr. Moise: Yes, but the machine gun emplacements were there already. We carried our 03's and we did duty along the Tenaru River. Supposedly the Japs were right across the river from us. Fortunately I don't think they were because one night Felix Perko from Pueblo, Colorado, wanted to explain to me how steel was made in the steel mills of Pueblo, and he started telling me, "and we

grab the steel from here, and we put it over there [spoken loudly].” All night long I would say, “Felix sh.” My story about that is either there were no Japs over there or they were so intrigued by how to make steel they listened all night long to us. But we came out with nothing that night so that was fine. We spent six months in the Solomons, mostly on Talagi and Gavutu and left the Solomons about February 1st of ‘43 and went down to New Zealand to meet our full battalion.

Mr. Cox: So there is some additional training in New Zealand or...

Mr. Moise: New Zealand, training, no. We knew how to run Am tracks, we knew how to put gas in the tanks, we knew how to operate them. The one thing we did down there was they changed us from just amphibian tractors to attack tractors. The next landing we would be first, second, third waves, etc, bringing people into the beach.

Mr. Cox: Did they put additional armament?

Mr. Moise: Right on the front we had three square portholes and they put a layer of sheet metal across these with slits in them. This was very good because those portholes made excellent targets, but it was very minor because the rest of it was built with very, very thin material. To float we had to be thin.

Mr. Cox: So when you did use these craft. Did you transport material, men, or both?

Mr. Moise: Both in the original landing. The original people were brought in on the landing at Tarawa. The Am tracks brought in the original groups, the first, second and third waves. And frankly most of them made it in all right. My Am track was, I had 80mm mortars on it and I don't know what time I was

going in, but as they put me off the ship I went right into the island alone. You know, I wasn't in a formation of any form. We had certain places where we were supposed to land. Mine was in the cove.

Mr. Cox: Well you transported some 81mm mortars in?

Mr. Moise: In my Am track, yes, I had them in there.

Mr. Cox: It wasn't part of your equipment to shoot back or anything?

Mr. Moise: Oh no, I had three machine guns, two in the front and one back, aft. The 50 and the 30 were in front and a 30 in the back. Do you want me to go into that?

Mr. Cox: Just whatever you feel like telling.

Mr. Moise: Well, what I said up in front before.

Mr. Cox: I'm trying to find out how your equipment was and that sort of thing. That is the reason I asked that question about the 81mm mortars because I thought that was a transport in. Now, I'm going to ask you a question here in regard to there was a front ramp on those?

Mr. Moise: No sir. No ramp, we went over the sides.

Mr. Cox: Went over the side. That is with the climbing ropes or the nets.

Mr. Moise: No. You are speaking about our Am tracks?

Mr. Cox: Yes sir.

Mr. Moise: They were about as long as an automobile, maybe a little longer, maybe a little wider, but that's it. We could fit fifteen, I always said 12, but the history says 15, personnel with equipment on in the cargo compartment. You had a driver's compartment, the cargo compartment, but you had to back out going

over the sides, and the motor compartment, which was in the rear. It was very small. You had a bigger idea on this thing being larger than what it was, but that is not so. We could bring in anything. Well, the reason we used Am tracks, and this is the main reason Am tracks were used, was that Tarawa had a reef that went out 700-800 feet from the island. So a Higgins boat going in could not go through this reef, although if the water was high enough, 4-5 feet, they could have done it, but it wasn't. Just didn't have that. If they would have had to let them off 800 yards from the island they would have to walk in 800 yards from this reef, but we could crawl over the reef and go right on into the land itself. You see you had water and land. You could just keep on climbing like a tractor.

Mr. Cox: So Tarawa was the first time that those were used?

Mr. Moise: The first time they were used as attack Amphib's.

Mr. Cox: When they did the landings at Tarawa, were you in the front wave?

Mr. Moise: No, I had mortars. So I don't know when they dropped me off. I had a watch, but I had taken it off and put it in a waterproof container and put it in one of my pontoons, thinking I'm going to save this watch, yet several days later I thought, "now that is kind of silly," because if I was going to die, I might as well die with the watch on. If I'm not going to be hit, why not be wearing the watch. So I don't know what time it was, but it was after, of course, the first and second waves had gone in.

Mr. Cox: When you did come in over the reef was there a lot of other vehicles like yours that were inside the atoll?

Mr. Moise: Only one I saw

Mr. Cox: Toward the beach?

Mr. Moise: Only one. I landed right on the far northeast corner of the beach. It was the Bird's Peak. I was supposed to go in the cove next to the peak, but there was nothing there. So I went in right on the peak because I saw one Am track and about 20 men, so I pulled on the east side of him and I jumped out and mentioned that I had 81mm mortars, and I'm very, very fortunate. The Good Lord led me there because all of a sudden several guys got up and started unloading them and within two minutes they were firing mortars because they had a mortar and everything. The mortar people were there.

Mr. Cox: The reason I asked that question is it is my understanding that there was kind of stacking up in "big time" on the earlier assaults.

Mr. Moise: That was at the dock. We had very few people.

Mr. Cox: When they would land they didn't have enough room to go on in and they started circling.

Mr. Moise: Well, I don't know about that. I'd prefer saying, where I landed there were around 20 Marines and this is where Mike Ryan took people and reformed them and took the East coast, the entire east coast and then started moving inland.

Mr. Cox: If you were involved in it I wanted to find out, you know, what your reaction was.

Mr. Moise: No, we weren't stacked up. There were just very few on the tip, but as they unloaded I gave my two forward machine guns to them and loaded with wounded. I put wounded in, or I had them put wounded in. As I was about to move out I was going to take them back to the Higgins boats and get something else and bring it in. As I was about to do this a Marine comes up to me and asks me if we have any water. We had two 5-gallon cans of potable water. I looked at that kid, and I bet he didn't look 12 years old. Of course, with the helmet and so forth, he looked just too young, so I gave him both cans of water. I wished him luck and told him we'd be back. Well I started out and I manned the back machine gun, the one in the rear looking for any fire that we might receive. We received none. We were about 300 yards out, I'm repeating what I said out in front. We were about 300 yards out and I broke out a pack of cigarettes and passed them to the first fellow, and they started passing them around, and I said to myself, "now hear this, the smoking lamp is now lit," you know like they say aboard ship. About 600 yards out I saw a flash at the south end of the island and a big splash next to me. I knew one of the beach guns was trying to get me. The second splash was to the side and I reached for my driver's shoulder to grab his right shoulder to have him turn, which would put us north of the island where this beach gun couldn't hit us because the island would have protected us. I didn't get to his shoulder. They hit us and the blast splattered me. The first thing I thought, since I said I was either going to come out without a scratch or die, so I said, "this is death." "It is not so

bad.” But I was, of course, half unconscious when I was saying this, to myself that is. Then I started coming around and the first thing I heard scuffling around me for some time. By the time I opened my eyes I’m staring at a part of a head. It is the left temple and part of the eye socket of someone’s head. I couldn’t see out of my left eye and blood was running down the side of my face. So I said, “If that’s mine I’m really dead.” So I reached up and I felt my temple, and said, “No, that’s not mine.” I stood up and blood was gushing up into my throat. I had been wounded on the side. Blood was dripping down my leg. My pants were torn, etc. The first thing I did I checked the family jewels and everything was fine there too. So my back was to the driver’s compartment and my driver hollered at me. He said, “Help me,” and it made me mad for him to say that because he had always been gun ho, cool, etc., never in action, but still I expected him to be that way. I hollered, caught my breath as best I could, I said, “Oh shut up.” I turned around and I could see why he was hollering. His body was in the cargo compartment, his seat was still on the seat of the driver’s compartment, and his legs were in the front of him. So I went over and straddled his body and reached in, being left handed, I reached in to pick him up with my left arm, but I didn’t have any control over it. It kept on moving from side to side. I looked at him and I said, “Hey, Bro, I’m wounded.” He said something about ...is that true? Of course he didn’t say, “is that true?” Sarcastically, so he was back to his normal person. Did I say the tank was on fire? Out starboard tank was on fire, above him,

so he could have been having drops of gasoline drop on him. So I pulled him out of the driver's compartment. Standing in front of me, I looked up, and there is a kid, the only one left in the Am track along with us was a kid that we had seen aboard the Middleton. We had nicknamed him "Freckles." That is how I remembered him. He didn't have his helmet on, etc. So I had Freckles help me get Brodowski over the side and then I told Freckles to get over and I took one last look at the head part and I looked back and Freckles was still staring, looking at me. So I cursed him and told him to get off and this time he did. By the time I climbed out most of them were 50-75 yards north of me going onto the boats. Someone helped Brodowski out there and he was paralyzed from the waist down. I didn't want to go out to the boats. And yet going back to the beach was kind stupid and impractical too because that was 600-700 yards now. I started letting the tide move me to the west. The tide was coming from the east. Machine gun bullets hit to my side, about a foot from me. They were coming from the back of me. I turned around and here they came again, but right at me. I waited until they were hitting maybe 30 yards in front of me on the water and then I threw my right arm up and twisted and fell. I wanted them to think I was really hit. I stood up again and started walking and fell in the water again intentionally. Came up with just my head facing east and I couldn't tell where they came from. A old destroyer or a gun boat came precariously close to the reef, coming in, and fired from their one forward turret and it hit this old scuttled ship, rusty, scuttled ship

that was in this bay. A big ball of flame went up and I said to myself, “Ship, ship,” then I realized four times I had gotten machine fire and all four times it came from that bastard ship. I cursed myself out for being so stupid, but I also said in a very way, “Thanks Navy.”

Mr. Cox: It was a Japanese ship?

Mr. Moise: No, I learned later it was a British ship. No, just a transport I guess. So I started roaming again in the water, still going west. My Bible floated out of my side pocket and I picked it up and put back in the same pocket. It floated out again. I took off my helmet, turned it upside down, put the Bible in it and I watched it float away. I looked out and I could see the Maryland. I could tell by a silhouette who she was. Way out there, 10-12 miles, I don’t know how far. I just pictured a sailor standing on the deck drinking a cup of coffee, watch the smoke rise from the island. I said, “Man I’d give a month’s pay for a good cup of coffee right now.”

Mr. Cox: You could almost smell it.

Mr. Moise: That’s right. I could just see that guy. About this time the Am track that was on the beach started out, and really high tailing it because I guess they watched us and saw that we were hit. They were really moving as fast as they could. By the way, our full speed was no more than 8 knots an hour, maybe 7 in the water. So he was high tailing it, but he was making the

same mistake I did. He was going to the west. It might have been the tide drifting him over also. In fact, more than mine was, he was going over. He passed me, oh he was 25-30 feet away and a splash came up in back of him. The same gun was trying to get him. So I was going to die anyway. I said, "Oh man, what a way to go." So I tried to get between the gun and the Am track. I thought I was and I up and waved my hand above my head, looking at the beach, and I saw the flash and heard a big thump in the back of me. The thump might have been because the bullet might have gone into the water and go under and hit the Am track, but the Amtrak was side-ways by the time I turned around and looked. Two men got out, one helping the other. I guess one had been wounded and they started out for the boats. Well, this one unlike mine wasn't on fire. So I got to it, and as I say I couldn't see out of my left eye, so before I climbed aboard I looked at one of the stairs and I got real close and closed my right eye, and it was hazy, just a film like, but if I got close enough I could see the steps, so my eye had been injured, but maybe not that bad. So I climbed aboard and I laid down and as soon as I did I realized I couldn't do that. Couldn't stay there because blood came up into my throat. So I sat with my back toward the cargo compartment by the driver's compartment and I was comfortable. I actually felt good because I knew now I'd be found. You know, I'd be dead, but I'd be found and they'd know everything was fine. I don't know how long I was there. I know I must have passed out. I could say slept, but it was a "pass out" situation I'm sure. Several times and I don't know

how long it was when another guy climbs aboard. Now this kid, stocky kid, reddish brown hair, a skivvy shirt or jacket on, no dog tags. He climbed aboard and he laid in the front of me and his shoulder blade, his left shoulder blade was gone and I could see all sorts of things in there. One I could tell which one it was because his heart beating, you know I could see it moving, and he asked me, "Did I have any water?" I looked in the driver's compartment and I saw a can of grapefruit juice and a canteen. I reached for the canteen with my right arm and pushed it over to him and he drank it and thanked me. I don't know how long we were there again. Probably an hour or two. Then I heard a voice say, "Is there anybody in that tractor?" I didn't answer them because the Japanese that I had seen at Guadalcanal spoke very good English. So I kept quiet. Then a voice said, "Couldn't be anybody in thar." Said, "Look at the condition of that thing." I knew it was somebody that wasn't Japanese so I yelled out and the fellows came on. Some talked about the condition of the tractor and others were trying to figure out how they could get us on, and the same sweet voice that I heard before, said, "Hey, its Moe." He said, "Here, give me a hand with him." Well I looked up to see who the sweet voice was and it was Pete Earhart from Plains, Montana, an old Marine buddy before Guadalcanal. So Pete got into the Higgins boat and sat down on the deck and took me in his arms and held me. He said "Poor Moe." I think he was crying, but they gave me a shot of morphine and immediately there was no pain and I felt giddy. So much so that I held the blood in my mouth and then I aimed

at Pete's leg and I spit on him and giggled to myself. The fellow that I was with, they put on the engine hatch cover. (Side Two of the Tape) We mentioned that the other person that was in the tractor they put on the engine hatch cover of the Higgins Boat, and we started out (I thought) to one of the transports. Again, I passed out few times. In fact, I didn't think we'd ever make it to the transport, but when we did, I didn't know it at the time, I learned later that it was the Harry Lee, the transport Harry Lee. The people onboard hollered down to send the fellow on the hatch up first, but they hollered up to them, "No, he's dead." So that kid died. I don't know how he lived that long. He might have been dead when they picked him up. So they put me up and put me in the stretcher and took me up to the deck and put me next to the bulkhead. They covered me with a blanket and gave me another shot of morphine. Again I felt pretty good and I used my right arm as a pillow and I watched the scurrying sailors going back and forth and I made eye contact with one of them and smiled. He looked back at me with the fiercest fright of anything I think I've ever seen. My face scared the hell out of him. I guess the blood between my teeth and everything. It embarrassed me. So much so that I took the blanket and I covered my head. Then I said, "Hey wait a minute, they'll think I'm already dead." So I took it off my head. I think my head was covered maybe a tenth of a second. They finally took me into sick bay and they said, "Where do you hurt?" I said, "It is a pain in the ass." They cut my skivvy shirt off of me and jacket, took off my pants and shoes and socks.

They turned me over to my side and they said, “To hell with you ass, your back will keep us busy long enough,” so they started pulling shrapnel out. Now this is the ones they could see, and that was not fun. That was really not fun. Anyway, they finally put a bandage on my back and my arm, and the leg wound was so insignificant. It had a hit, but it was ignored, which I can understand why. They had a lot to do. They put me in a compartment off of the main sick bay, which had four bunks, two below and two above. I was in the below bunk where I could look out of the hatchway to the other ward. The bunk that I could see there was an old Marine buddy of ours, salty old dog by the name of Gunner King, A. D. King, an old time Marine. He was one of our Am track people, one of our alligators. So I laid there a little while and the Doctors came in. Of course I guess they talked about it out there, that my wound was in my arm, etc., and they said, “Can you move your arm? Do you have any control over your arm?” Well I was able to twist my hand this way and close and open my hand, and they looked at each other like it was crazy. So they walked over to King’s bunk, outside, and had a consultation. Then they came back and said, “We’re going to run a pin through your arm by the elbow, a little bit, and then we are going to go through and they we are going to pull it down so it try to heal properly.” So they came with their paraphernalia, and started this drill through my arm. I don’t know how far they got in there, but it twisted. I could feel the twisting and it broke, so they pulled that one out and started with another one. About the same deal, I could feel the same thing

happening, that it was twisting and I told them, “It is twisting again.” They said, “No, now wait,” and it broke again. Well, they pulled that one out and before they started with a third one I had a few thing to say to them. There were a lot of cuss words in it, and I’m sure I mentioned “quacks” a few times.

Mr. Cox: Now were these doctors?

Mr. Moise: Doctors. Well, I presume one or two doctors and the rest were corpsmen. There were about four or five there trying to get it through. They finally started the third one, and it did go through my arm and the wires were put on there and the tension going down to my feet. I laid there, oh I guess, sometime, and a Doctor came in to check on me. He said, “How you doing?” I didn’t answer him on that, but I said, “How they doing on the beach?” He says, “Now don’t you worry about the beach any more, you are out of it, you just get that off of your mind.” I kicked at him and said, “Damn it, don’t you even care?” Well he got kind of a crazy expression, first surprise, then embarrassment, and he left. I know in the next couple of days I ate and I slept, but I can’t remember doing so. I was thinking about the beach and my friends, and I kept on saying, now how can I go home to my Dad and say I was in the first battle that the Marine corps ever lost. I was thinking of words I could use that could over and that is the only thoughts that I had. Finally, this Doctor that I had berated, stuck his head in the door and pretended to be frightened. He got in and he put his back against the bulkhead, as far away from me as possible. He said, “The

battle is over. The Marines have taken the island.” I thanked him and he came over and he tousled my hair and we shook hands, and he left. I went into a very deep and peaceful sleep.

Mr. Cox: I don’t think he probably realized the particular emotions that you were thinking.

Mr. Moise: Well he did at the time though. He nearly apologized. I loved that.

Mr. Cox: He caught on after that.

Mr. Moise: Yes.

Mr. Cox: So you went from this -- was it hospital ship?

Mr. Moise: No, it was the Harry Lee. The Liston Lee I learned later they called it because it was always on the list.

Mr. Cox: When were you transferred from there back?

Mr. Moise: About five days later I was transferred over to the Hospital Ship Solace and the Doctors there didn’t like this pin situation so they removed that and put me in a cast with my arm up this way. This arm of course. In a body cast with the arm out this way and I was more comfortable that way. The Solace took us to Hawaii and I was put into Aida Heights Hospital there. It has a new name now. I was there maybe a week when they came to me and said they were going to transfer me to Oakland, San Francisco. I said, “Oh boy, how many are going,” and he said, “five of you.” I said, “Only five of us?” Oh, I want to add something before I go. Let’s go back just a little bit. I’m in Aida Heights Hospital and here comes one of my friends, named Otis Hawn, from Georgia. He was one of our Am track people and he spots me and he

comes over. He had been wounded, but he is ambulatory and able to get around. We talked a little bit and he says, "I'm going to take you to see Gunner King, I know where he is." You know, the one that was in the bunk that I could see.

Mr. Cox: He is the old Gunny?

Mr. Moise: Yeah. So he goes out and comes back with a wheel chair. It is the first time I had sat up in a long time, so here I am in the wheelchair. We go into a hallway that is a block long at least, a hundred yards, two hundred yards maybe, and Otis says,, "You know, if I give you a good push I bet you can get all the way to the other end." I could see my arm hitting the wall and everything else. I thought about it later and I said, "You know, Otis I guess if I were pushing you I would have said the same darn thing." Anyway, he took me to see Gunner King and he says, "Oh, you are looking great." By the way, I had weighed maybe 195 at the time and when they weighed me at the hospital I weighed 150 something. I had a 20 pound cast on, so I was down to 130 something. The Gunner says, "Oh, you are looking good, you look better than you did at the Harry Lee." He says, "You know they were going to cut off your arm." Well that made me happy there too, you know, positively dizzy.

Mr. Cox: He probably didn't know that.

Mr. Moise: No, he told me that because they had their consultation by his bunk, see.

Mr. Cox: OK.

Mr. Moise: He was able to hear all of this stuff that they were talking about.

Mr. Cox: Wasn't just a sense of humor.

Mr. Moise: Oh no, no, not like Otis. We talked a little while and Otis took me back. Then they came in, said we are going to send you to San Francisco or Oakland. I said, "How many of us are going?" They said, "Five." I said, "What?" They said, "Yeah, there's only five in this sick bay on this Dutch ship, Kotagooin. It was a Dutch Transport and they are going to send home 2500 Army and 5 Marines.

Mr. Cox: That kind of balanced it out didn't it?

Mr. Moise: Very much so. So we were in the hospital room. It took us 10-11 days to get back and one time we changed pajamas. They gave us clean pajamas and there was a colored guy, colored Army guy, that stayed around on his own, he volunteered for this I guess, because he wasn't given any orders, but he stayed in the Sick Bay with us taking care of us. He was from Mississippi or Alabama. I knew his name at the time, but I can't recall it now.

Mr. Cox: Was he one of kind of the wounded?

Mr. Moise: Oh yes, he had pajamas on, but he wasn't wounded.

Mr. Cox: He became an Orderly.

Mr. Moise: He became a volunteer Orderly. He took care of us and I mean it was beautiful the way he took care of us. None of the Army were wounded. They had heart trouble and ulcers, etc. At least that is what I was told and we saw no wounded. I am remiss not to remember what this fellow's name was. Well I didn't have anything to write it down at the time, but I really should have tried to remember harder than I did. So when we got to Oakland. Maybe we

pulled into San Francisco, I don't know because I was laying down and taken by ambulance to the hospital, but I assume it was Oakland. They came aboard and covered me with a white Navy blanket and started carrying me out. I was the first one they were pulling out and when we got to the gangplank they put us down because this Army Major was checking us off, checking people off that were going off. He comes to me, and he says, "Name?" I told him. He says, "OK, all right, you can take him." They lifted me up and started, and he said, "wait a minute, wait a minute he is wearing our pajamas. He can't take our pajamas."

Mr. Cox: Quartermaster.

Mr. Moise: I said, "That's pretty good." So I told the Corpsmen that were carrying me, I said, "Get me out of these God Damn pajamas." While they were doing it I called that son-of-a-bitch, that guy everything that I could possibly call him. All his men were standing around just smiling up a storm.

Mr. Cox: And this is the Dutch ship?

Mr. Moise: A Dutch ship, but it is Army Major that is telling this. I just cursed him. I did everything I possibly could to make him put me on report, or whatever he wanted to do because I could see myself in front of the Courts Martial saying, "he is taking my pajamas away from me." I had them take my pajamas off and cover me with the blanket and I was a little disappointed that these Army guys standing around didn't applaud when I finished. But they didn't. However, they were smiling. They took me down and that was the second time I entered the United States nude. The first time is when I was born.

Mr. Cox: OK. Very good.

Mr. Moise: But they took me to the hospital and when I got there, oh man, I don't know how many it was, but to me it was 50 nurses standing around waiting to help me. I said, "If you ladies will back off and let these guys take care of me, I think everything will be all right." One of the corpsman said, "Yeah, they took his damn pajamas." So, of course, they got some new pajamas for me, Navy pajamas. That is my story up to then. It was about the 23rd of December.

Mr. Cox: So we've covered an interval then

Mr. Moise: Nearly a month.

Mr. Cox: From December '41 to December of '43 now?

Mr. Moise: Yes, but what I'm saying, when I was wounded it was maybe a month when I hit the States. It was a little more than a month. It was a month and three days.

Mr. Cox: Shipboard to Hawaii

Mr. Moise: Shipboard from the Lee to the Hospital Ship to Hawaii to home.

Mr. Cox: I am going to ask you a question because you have been through some pretty dramatic points here. All during those experiences, was there a particular point that you really felt the lowest?

Mr. Moise: Yeah. When I was on the Hospital Ship. I went through, what do you call it?

Mr. Cox: Well now they have a specialty name for it?

Mr. Moise: Well, whatever it was I actually couldn't catch my breath one night. I kept

on telling the Corpsman. I said, "I can't breath." He was doing whatever he could for me. I think he gave me something to drink one time, but I still couldn't breath, but finally I went to sleep. So I presume, you go through a phase and the Doctor came the next morning. For some reason every time he came to me he called me Professor. Why I haven't the slightest idea, but he gave me that nickname. And he leaned on the top bunk and looked down at me in his bloodshot eyes. He had been up, God knows how long he had been up and working. I'm sure the corpsman had told him and the group that he was with that I had had a bad night, a restless night. So he says, "What's wrong with you Professor?" I was over it and I said, "There isn't a damn thing wrong with me." They all just laughed up a storm.

Mr. Cox: Then I'm going to ask a question, in all of those experiences can you think of a time which you were the most elated. I mean your most "up" point?

Mr. Moise: Oh, when the Doctor told me we had won the battle.

Mr. Cox: OK.

Mr. Moise: Oh yes.

Mr. Cox: I thought you would say that.

Mr. Moise: Because, I mean that relieved me of the idea of going home to Dad and saying I was in the battle the Marines lost. I could have never faced people and said, "Oh yeah, I was in the battle, you know that we lost." I couldn't have done that.

Mr. Cox: OK. So at some point I'm assuming you were released from Oakland Hospital and you probably went back to New Orleans, or

Mr. Moise: No sir, nine months later. I was in Oakland for nine months. I asked to be transferred back to Am tracks, which they did and I got released from the hospital. By the way, I asked to be. I should have done it before I did it because I think I was well enough, but I just didn't. I couldn't use my left arm.

Mr. Cox: At the point that you went.

Mr. Moise: Oh no, it was healed. It broke, OK. It was all the way up at the shoulder and it healed back like this. So its about an inch and a half shorter and this is the way it healed back. All the outside muscles were gone so I can't lift it this way. They didn't try to tie them back up because they said, "If we go in there," now this is 50 years ago, "if we go in there we might cause an infection and you might lose your arm." I said, "fine." Whatever they did I thought was the right thing. I can still write. I was left handed. Still could eat, etc., so I'm happy. But I asked to be transferred to go back to Am tracks. They let me. They said OK. So I went back to Pendleton, a Boat Basin at that time. I went into the Commanding Officer's office. Didn't know him from Adam. Still don't remember his name, but he said, "yeah, yeah, you were in "A" Company." I said, "yes sir." "What was your Commanding Officer's name?" I said, "Thomas O'Neil." "Right, right, O'Neil." I didn't tell him that we called him Hut. I didn't tell him that he was a Captain now. He was a Lieutenant when we left. He said, "right." About that time his door opens in back of me, and this voice says, "I want this guy in my outfit." I turned

around, who is it, Gunner King. We started, “Hey, it is good seeing you,” and all that. I finally heard the colonel say, “You got him Gunner.” So Gunner King told me I should go to this particular barracks and find some people there because there is a couple of old friends there. He says, “Take the rest of the day off.” It was about 4 o’clock. He said, “I want to see you down at the boat house at 7 in the morning.” I looked at him like this “You are out of your mind.” So I went to this barracks that he told me to and I walked in and I find Doc Adams, from Rankin, Texas, Willie Reader from Tennessee, Earhart from Plains, Montana, Hammond, I forgot where Hammond was from, and there were several others. Right now that will give you an idea that my old buddies were there.

Mr. Cox: Had they all been wounded?

Mr. Moise: Some slightly. Some not. I might add this right now, Willie Reader was a Private. He had been graduated with honors from the University of Tennessee, etc. When he came back he was a PFC and he met a girl in Los Angeles that said, “Look, I love you, but I can’t marry an enlisted man.” So he goes to the office and says, “I want to put in for Officers’ Training.” They said, “Well, what’s your qualifications?” Well I graduated with honors from the University of Tennessee at such and such a time. “Well, where in the hell have you been?” So they make him Lieutenant. So he gets married and that was it. But, I tell you, not really because we called Willie the dictionary overseas because anybody would hear a word and you say, “How do you spell so and so?” Willie would know. Brilliant. He gave talks about how

great Churchill was and things like that. He was an older man by the way. Willie was in his late-30's I guess when he joined the Corps. Willie was quite a guy.

Mr. Cox: But he had enlisted. He was in the Marines, but he enlisted.

Mr. Moise: As a Private, and stayed a private because he showed no incentive to do anything. Just do his duty. Pete Earhart was there as I mentioned. We sat around, and I said, "By the way, Pete, remember when you were holding me in the Higgins boat?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "I felt so giddy right then and I had all the blood in my mouth and I spit on your leg and I laughed. I did it as a joke." Well, everybody laughed. Not Pete. Pete said, "I still don't think it is a damn bit funny." All of these guys are there. I remember when we finally finished talking and it was about time to go to bed, I said, "I gotta be down with Gunner King at 7 in the morning he tells me, so will anybody give me a call about 6:30." One of them said, "Oh sure, tea and toast?" Another one said, "Oh, we all got to be down there at that time." So we started working with amphibs and talking to the new recruits coming in and working with them.

Mr. Cox: So you were in kind of a training phase then?

Mr. Moise: I was put in training people that came into the Marine Corps.

Mr. Cox: This was at Camp Pendleton?

Mr. Moise: At the Boat Basin at Camp Pendleton. Camp Pendleton goes back 20, 30, 40 miles in the hills. Boat Basin is on the beach.

Mr. Cox: Were the vehicles that you were training on then new? Had they been

updated?

Mr. Moise: Buffalos. That was the next step up and they might have done something with Buffalos.

Mr. Cox: Were Buffalos larger?

Mr. Moise: A little bit slimmer. I really didn't study them that much. We talked about maneuvering, etc. The one thing that got me there was I learned that the group I had all the men had been drafted into the Marine Corps. I said that is an oxymoron if ever there was one. Marines drafted. But anyway, they were good people because they had gone through boot camp. Oh man, they were great.

Mr. Cox: There were a certain many of them when they needed to fill the ranks they would draft them.

Mr. Moise: But the idea.

Mr. Cox: They didn't just take them. They had their pick.

Mr. Moise: Yeah. Well I didn't know. I was told they were all drafted. But they were good kids. They would go through boot camps, and they were Marines period. The one problem we had there was keeping them at a distance because we had purple heart, three battles, the Presidential Unit Citation with two stars, all that sort of stuff. If they knew that we were pushovers it would have been hell. They would have made us just like them.

Mr. Cox: They had the respect though.

Mr. Moise: But we kept it that way.

Mr. Cox: Yes.

Mr. Moise: Because, hell, we wanted to be friendly, but if you were, all of a sudden decorum would go out the window.

Mr. Cox: You were not really a DI?

Mr. Moise: No, no.

Mr. Cox: When you took your basic Marine training then, did the guy that was a trainer did they wear the campaign hats just like they wear now.

Mr. Moise: Right.

Mr. Cox: Now did they yell in your face just like you see now?

Mr. Moise: Yeah, and they carried swagger sticks and hit you on the head, and you had a big mark here because your hat would hit you. We wore pith helmets in boot camp by the way. The emblem would dig into your forehead. They weren't as smart as the GI's today.

Mr. Cox: I want to repeat what I think you said because the pith helmet had the Marine emblem up here and it stuck into your forehead on the back side.

Mr. Moise: That's right.

Mr. Cox: You think they had a significance in a point there that you would never forget?

Mr. Moise: Fortunately I didn't get hit, but I saw a couple of guys that did. And I could see that would hurt. No, going back to our training through. We just tried to be gruff, and keep the kids at a distance.

Mr. Cox: Now how much older were you than they were?

Mr. Moise: I don't know how old they were. I was 20 years old then, no wait, it was '44 so I was 21.

Mr. Cox: OK, and so they were 18.

Mr. Moise: And I was 21. I thought I was an old man when we went to Tarawa too.

I was 20, but my driver and my crew were 18, so you know, punk kids.

Mr. Cox: How many years did you continue in the Marines then?

Mr. Moise: The total amount of time was 3 years and 3 months.

Mr. Cox: OK and then you were discharged.

Mr. Moise: I was training on Am tracks with these good people maybe three or four

months and Headquarters Marine Corps passed a ruling that anybody that

could not serve in the Marine Corps overseas had to be out of there, doing

what I was doing, and put into guard troops and so forth. So I was shipped

to Bremerton, Washington, to a Naval Ammunition Depot and I did guard

duty there as a Corporal. I despised it because everyone there, at that time

when I got there, they were either boots, you know never overseas, and the

Commanding Officer was a man by the name of Hardy, Colonel Hardy, and

he was in his late 60's and had been called back in. Oh, was he GI. The hair

cut, socks had to be stacked in such a way, etc. I said, "oh man, this is bad." **Mr.**

Cox: How old a man was he?

Mr. Moise: He was in his 60's.

Mr. Cox: OK. He was probably World War I?

Mr. Moise: Yeah, most probably. At this particular time he was stuck in this Guard

Company or whatever it was at the Ammunition Depot. I had a little

encounter with him. I was up there for two weeks or so, and they said you

have to write in for a weekend pass. So I put my name in for a weekend

pass. Then I realized Hardy looked at each and every one of them. So I went to get it back and the Sergeant said, "No, they are on his desk already." So he calls me in and says, "You want a weekend pass." I said, "Yes sir." He says, "Why?" I said, "Well I've never seen Seattle and I'd like to go over there and enjoy its food and so forth." He looks at me and says, "Are you standing at attention?" I said, "Yes sir." He says, "Your left shoulder is lower than your right." I said, "That is because I was wounded sir." I said, "It is a little screwed up." He walked around his desk and he felt my shoulder. He went and sat down and tears came. He was crying. He says, "What did you ask for?" I said, "a weekend pass." He said, "Granted!" He was hiding his eyes.

Mr. Cox: Embarrassed.

Mr. Moise: Well, like he wanted to be there too, you know. So I got my weekend pass. Well they took X-rays, etc., of me. Maybe a week had passed and I'm walking in the hallway to my living quarters and I hear him say, "Corporal Moise." I knew it was him. I turned around and stood at attention. He comes up and he says, "I saw your X-rays." Shook his head and he walked away. Whew! Another time. So I didn't get in any trouble with Colonel Hardy. That was my experience there. Then they had checked me out and decided I could be transferred out of the Corps. I do have a very touching situation right at the end. I went to Colonel Hardy's office and he gives me the discharge and he says, "It is really a pleasure to know you and you are going to do fine in the outside," and shaking hands and the likes. So I left and got

my sea bag and one I've heard that. So I got to Sergeant at Arms was He looked at my papers reached down to get my sea bag and I heard him say, "Attention, Salute," and these two guys saluted and

all the guys said, "Have a good time," and "You are the only about being discharged without being dead," and stuff like the gate and there were two men on guard duty and the there, or rather the Sergeant of the Day was there. and said, "OK," and I put my papers away and I bag and I heard him say, "Attention, Salute," and he did too. I thought that was very touching.

Mr. Cox: Yes.

Mr. Moise: And I saluted back and thanked them. With charged emotions and watery eyes, I climbed aboard the bus to take me home.

Mr. Cox: Just out of curiosity, what uniform did you have on?

Mr. Moise: My greens. I never had any blues.

Mr. Cox: Never had any blues.

Mr. Moise: Greens.

Mr. Cox: Greens. OK.

Mr. Moise: No, no, just greens.

Mr. Cox: OK.

Mr. Moise: We felt very dressed up in greens. Blues would have been out of place with us. In fact, greens were nearly out of place, like -- Where are you going tonight?

Mr. Cox: I didn't know what time of year it was, whether you were in Khakis or

Mr. Moise: No.

Mr. Cox: You went then back to New Orleans.

Mr. Moise: To New Orleans and went to Tulane.

Mr. Cox: How did you travel back to New Orleans?

Mr. Moise: By train to Chicago, and down from Chicago to New Orleans.

Mr. Cox: About how many days was that trip?

Mr. Moise: Well, I can tell you exactly. I got out on the 22nd of March and I landed in New Orleans April 1st. You know, for April Fools Day. So it was about 10 days.

Mr. Cox: So this was from California

Mr. Moise: To Chicago and then down to New Orleans.

Mr. Cox: So was the train loaded with a lot of troops and people?

Mr. Moise: I didn't notice it at that time.

Mr. Cox: Did you have just a chair?

Mr. Moise: Yes, just a chair.

Mr. Cox: You didn't have a

Mr. Moise: Oh no, just a chair.

Mr. Cox: You ate meals onboard the train?

Mr. Moise: Yeah.

Mr. Cox: Then Chicago to New Orleans.

Mr. Moise: I felt a little embarrassed because I had my 2nd Division patch on my left arm, but on the right one when you are discharged they give you a white diamond to put on that. I hated wearing that and everybody saying "what's that?" I'm discharged. I'm not a Marine anymore. That was how I came home.

Mr. Cox: So you went to school at Tulane?

Mr. Moise: Yes.

Mr. Cox: What did you study at Tulane?

Mr. Moise: Studied Law. I was going for an LLD. I approached it terribly wrong. I took 21 hours and we were on an accelerated program, three semesters a year, which I did. After six semesters I just was worn out.

Mr. Cox: Your plate runneth over.

Mr. Moise: Not only than, but I had a job in the afternoon. Thought I could do all of this, you know. But I was offered a very fine job with a guy, which didn't work out, but I finished my junior year at Tulane and went with him. That didn't work out since he had me doing some manual work. It was around tug boats and barges, and the likes. Did some paper work, but I was also required to do other things. I just couldn't do it, so I had to quit. Then I worked with a building material company for about two years, and then this fellow came over and said, "I'd like for you be a salesman for American LeFrance in Corpus Christi." We talked about it and I said, "No, but if you ever have Houston open, call me." Thirty days later he called and said, "Houston is open." So I came over. By the way, he told me, he said, "Oh man, you'll make \$1,000 easy a month, simple." Now this is in 1950. So I said, "That's good." So I came over and I represented and I made over \$1,000 a month. He was shocked. He said, "Gee, I thought you were only going to make \$500." So I did quite well.

Mr. Cox: \$500 at that time was good money.

Mr. Moise: Oh you bet it was. I was living "high off the hog." I represented

American LeFrance there in that area from 1950 through 1960.

Mr. Cox: Explain to us who American LeFrance is.

Mr. Moise: They were the largest fire equipment company in the world. Sold all the way from little fire extinguishers to fire trucks. And systems for refineries and formite. Formite was to put out the oil tank fires.

Mr. Cox: That was especially good in Houston because of the refineries.

Mr. Moise: Very much so. In fact, my customers swore up and down that I had an arson division that went out and started fires on rigs.

Mr. Cox: There had to be some other interesting experiences along in there some place. I asked you a question earlier if you corresponded back maybe with a girl friend, and you kind of mentioned that you did.

Mr. Moise: Oh, that's true. Well she was a very nice gal. A lovely gal. We are still friends. We write. She is an artist and now living with her daughter up in Connecticut. She is well known.

Mr. Cox: So another angel must have shown up in there some place.

Mr. Moise: I wasn't good enough for her. She was too good for me. I felt that I would not have been the husband that she wanted. Now I know I could have been, but at the time I didn't think it would be good. But she is a lovely gal and she lives up in Connecticut. Sent me, two weeks ago I got a letter from her with some photos of her paintings. She won an award, some big deal. She does pastels.

Mr. Cox: I was going to ask what media she works in.

Mr. Moise: Yes, she works with pastels and everything is light and feminine like. She

had this one that she sent

Mr. Cox: Pinks, and blues, and

Mr. Moise: Blues and light blues and pinks, etc. She sent me a copy of this one, that was actually wonderful and I wanted to give it to a friend of mine for a child's room and this friend got a little perturbed. She said, "No, I want the original." I said, "I want the original," and she said, "My daughter won't let me sell any of my things." So I said, "Well any time you are ready to sell one of them you just holler and I'll buy them."

Mr. Cox: OK. Well I notice here though that it does say that you have three children and two grandchildren.

Mr. Moise: OK. Met and married while I was in Tulane. I met a gal from Bogalusa, Louisiana. Very lovely, beautiful woman and we married in February of '46. No children for ten years. When we got into Houston, I was in Houston, well, let's see I came to Houston in '50, so we were six years in Houston. We adopted a girl from Faith Home in Houston and then we put in for another child and we had a meeting with 29 couples. The gal holding the meeting said, "Now you realize only two of you couples are going to be able to have a child." Out of this 29. So I held up my hand. She said, "Yes." I said, "I want to know who the other couple is." And we got a boy. Just a year and half later we had our own little girl. So we had three children, two are adopted.

Mr. Cox: Do they live around the Houston area?

Mr. Moise: Two of them do. The boy and the youngest girl. The other girl lives in

Tyler, Texas. She is married and she has the two children, two girls.

Mr. Cox: Since your wife was from Bogalusa, as I recall, that is down in more or less Southern Louisiana.

Mr. Moise: Oh yes.

Mr. Cox: Is she your “swamp angel?”

Mr. Moise: I never thought of that.

Mr. Cox: I said that as a nice way.

Mr. Moise: I didn’t consider her a Creole because we people from south of highway 10 are Creoles. Everything north is Yankee.

Mr. Cox: OK. She is not from New Orleans then.

Mr. Moise: That’s right. Yeah, we always kid people. Like I have a friend from Alexandria. He says, “I’m from Louisiana.” I say, “Yeah, but you are from North Louisiana.”

Mr. Cox: You get to be a little English when you get so far up.

Mr. Moise: That’s right.

Mr. Cox: Is there anything else you’d like to add?

Mr. Moise: Oh, my wife died in ‘76, and I raised the children. I didn’t get married again. **Mr. Cox:** I tried to touch in there without asking that.

Mr. Moise: I raised the children. Let’s see, when I got them they were 13, 10 and 8. And I raised them by myself.

Transcribed by:

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