

National Museum of the Pacific War

Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

Telephone Interview with

Mr. Lindsey Zeb Wilcox

Date of Interview: October 22, 2009

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Telephone Interview in progress.

Mark Cunningham: This is Mark Cunningham; today is October 22, 2009. I am preparing to interview Mr. Lindsey Z. [Zeb] Wilcox. Mr...Mr. Wilcox is at his home in Baytown and this is a telephone interview. Mr. Wilcox is one of three hundred and nineteen survivors of the sinking of the USS Indianapolis on July 30, 1945. At this particular time, there are only seventy-nine survivors left. First off, Mr. Wilcox, I want to thank you for doing the interview with us. On behalf of the Museum, I think it's...I think it's...I think it's great. Let's start from the beginning; when...when and where were you born?

Mr. Wilcox: I was born in De...DeQuincy, Louisiana, February the 14, 1925.

Mark Cunningham: Okay, and you were a young sailor when you went in then.

Mr. Wilcox: I was seventeen.

Mark Cunningham: Alright.

Mr. Wilcox: I went in on the *Kiddie Cruise*.

Mark Cunningham: What's that?

Mr. Wilcox: If you...it...where you go in at seventeen, your enlistment is up on your twenty-first birthday.

Mark Cunningham: No matter what?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh, no matter what.

Mark Cunningham: Alright, okay. Now who were your parents; what were their names?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh, my mother was Lindsey...wait a minute, I don't know...they...golly, you made me forget her first name, but her maiden name is Lindsey.

Mark Cunningham: And that's where your name comes from?

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah, and my dad's name was Howard Hampton Wilcox.

Mark Cunningham: Okay and...and you grew up in Louisiana?

Mr. Wilcox: I sure did.

Mark Cunningham: And where were you when the war broke out?

Mr. Wilcox: I was working at a...apprenticeship for the...at the Missouri Pacific Railroad there in DeQuincy.

Mark Cunningham: Okay, and...and was that on...what...what do you remember about Pearl Harbor day?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, on Pearl Harbor day...well, we heard a little bit over the radio and then the next day President Roosevelt was going to make a...a speech at...pretty close to twelve o'clock and so they blew a whistle and everybody went to the tool room about...standing outside of the tool room...it...with this radio where we declared war on Japan.

Mark Cunningham: And you were working for the railroad?

Mr. Wilcox: That's right.

Mark Cunningham: Alright.

Mr. Wilcox: My apprenticeship was about...took about six years to finish it.

Mark Cunningham: Okay, now when did you...when did you actually enlist in the Navy?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, I don't know the exact date, but I had my papers and everything and I had to go before...my...my...while I was seventeen, and I...I would say it was in November of 1942.

Mark Cunningham: So you were in about...it...it was about a...about a year after the war started?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh, yes.

Mark Cunningham: Yeah, okay. Now where did you...where did you...where'd you take your, and...well back up a minute...else...what made you decide on the Navy?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, everybody wanted to go back there in those days.

Mark Cunningham: I know but why...why'd you pick the Navy spe...specific over the Army or the...?

Mr. Wilcox: Oh, well, I...I figured I'd be more comfortable...

Mark Cunningham: (Chuckles).

Mr. Wilcox: ...being in the Navy...

Mark Cunningham: Little did you know, huh?

Mr. Wilcox: ...than digging a foxhole.

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Wilcox: And, too, if I got a big ship, they just can't tie up anywhere!

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Wilcox: And I...I knew it would be somewhere like maybe New Orleans or the San Francisco or San Diego or something like that.

Mark Cunningham: Alright.

Mr. Wilcox: And...

Mark Cunningham: Now where did you enlist?

Mr. Wilcox: At New Orleans.

Mark Cunningham: Alright and then...and where did you take your boot camp?

Mr. Wilcox: San Diego.

Mark Cunningham: How'd you get out there?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh, what they did...they...they swore us in and then we got on the Southern Pacific train that night and headed for San Diego, California; it took four days to go, and I was in...my unit was...192.

Mark Cunningham: Okay, six-nine-two; I need to write that down because that's one of the questions I have here. Uh, Unit 692...was it a squadron or something?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh yeah, yeah.

Mark Cunningham: It was a Squadron 69...

Mr. Wilcox: And each time they'd get a new squadron, they'd just give it a...another number.

Mark Cunningham: ...and 692?

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah.

Mark Cunningham: Alright now how did you...you went out on a troop train, right?

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah.

Mark Cunningham: How long did it take you to get there?

Mr. Wilcox: Four days.

Mark Cunningham: How...how was that?

Mr. Wilcox: Well (chuckle), we were just young kids; we didn't know any better.

Mark Cunningham: Yeah.

Mr. Wilcox: You know, everything was...*adventure* (chuckles).

Mark Cunningham: Right. How'd they feed you on that train?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, you had tickets for box lunches and stuff like that.

Mark Cunningham: Oh okay. Alright, and so when you got to San Diego, what...what was your introduce...introduction to boot camp?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh, well...we direct...started receiving orders; learning what the...the enlisted men...like...who was in charge and different things like that. And, of course, you called every...whoever the Chief was that was training you...he was...went by the name of "*Mister.*" And we had bed inspections and...personnel inspections and...stuff like that; we marched *quite* a bit.

Mark Cunningham: Now...what did...aft...after boot camp what'd you do?

Mr. Wilcox: Well after boot camp they marched us up to...Balboa Park at San Diego, and we were...given a health inspection and the next day we were starting to...go to schools. And so I got the...school at Treasure Island in San Francisco.

Mark Cunningham: That's pretty nice duty, wasn't it?

Mr. Wilcox: Oh it...it was!

Mark Cunningham: And what...what kind of school was it?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, in the day...in the morning we would...being in the...Machinist Craft, we would...they would take us into Samuel Gompers Trade School. And then we ran lathes; made tapers; left-hand, right-hand threads; SAE

threads and all of that, and had a project. And...and in the evenings we would go to school on the base; we would leave...Samuel Gompers to get about...at chow time at Tea Is...at Treasure Island.

Mark Cunningham: And how long did the school last?

Mr. Wilcox: Oh, let's see here. Uh, (pause) I'd say it lasted about three months.

Mark Cunningham: Okay. And...after...after your training where were you assigned?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, after the training, I was sent up to...on Treasure Island they had a...where you would embark on ship...on ships and stuff like that, and I was assigned to the USS Indianapolis.

Mark Cunningham: Boy, you got on there early, didn't you?

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah. Now I...now I'm...not getting on there right now, but while I was waiting I...I got sick and I went to sick bay and, of course, all your records go with you, and when I was over...over that they put us on...put us on a train...not a...not a large group; there must have been three or four that was going different places, and I...they sent me to Bremington [s/b Bremerton], Washington. At Bremerton, Washington I was assigned as a Fire Watch.

Mark Cunningham: And what...what kind of job is that?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh, well, they are...converting these...flat...into flat tops where...small carriers...

Mark Cunningham: Escort carriers?

Mr. Wilcox: Yes.

Mark Cunningham: Yeah.

Mr. Wilcox: Well, planes can fly over...off of them, and they were, more or less, big ships that we had for freight. And they were building some of them, and so I was there a couple of months.

Mark Cunningham: Then what happened to you?

Mr. Wilcox: Alright, then we went...I went back to Seattle and we was going...to...be sent to...(pause) sent to Alaska. And so I thought the Navy was *really* going to be easy because I was assigned to a stateroom with the outside view! (chuckles)

Mark Cunningham: (Laughter).

Mr. Wilcox: And, of course, he would...the old boy'd come around; ring the chimes in the morning; first call to breakfast.

Mark Cunningham: Now this was on...aboard a ship, right?

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah.

Mark Cunningham: What ship was that?

Mr. Wilcox: SS Alaska.

Mark Cunningham: So you're sailing to Alaska?

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah, and I'm going to Dutch Harbor.

Mark Cunningham: And what kind of ship?

Mr. Wilcox: Oh, it was a passenger ship!

Mark Cunningham: (Chuckles).

Mr. Wilcox: I was high class!

Mark Cunningham: Boy, you did make it out alright, didn't you?

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah (chuckles).

Mark Cunningham: (Laughter).

Mr. Wilcox: And...I enjoyed that! And, of course, it had a...all...all...it was loaded with passengers and some of them, they ate down below decks, but we had a dining room that they...we ordered from a menu and...and stuff like that, and...I...I just thought, "Glory!"

Mark Cunningham: Alright, so you got to Alaska, and what were you doing in Alaska?

Mr. Wilcox: Okay, at Dutch Harbor...I'm going to tell you about where it's; it's in...on Alaska and it's...if you notice some of these sea stories that they have on...on his...on the History Channel...that where these crab boats go out once a year...

Mark Cunningham: Yes.

Mr. Wilcox: ...okay, that's where they tie up...right down at Dutch Harbor.

Mark Cunningham: Wow. So that's heavy...that's heavy seas up in that area, too.

Mr. Wilcox: Oh (chuckle), it was a...and the seas were so heavy that when...a fog came come up and it's just like a blanket; somebody's going to cover you up and you can't sleep. An, of course, these...a lot of these cruisers had...pontoon planes that would fly and...kind of more or less evaluate what...they were going through, and...and but soon as that fog would hit they'd start hitting the water to get on somebody's ship; they didn't care whether it was theirs or not.

Mark Cunningham: Now how long were you in Dutch Harbor?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, uh, I'd say maybe three weeks.

Mark Cunningham: Alright. Okay now when did you re...regroup with the Indianapolis?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, from there I went to...an island...it's either Adak or Kiska, and the island was...nothing but fogged in ash. And before we got there they said there was a girl behind every tree.

Mark Cunningham: (Laughter).

Mr. Wilcox: But they...they didn't have any trees!

Mark Cunningham: (Laughter).

Mr. Wilcox: Not even tree one!

Mark Cunningham: (Laughter).

Mr. Wilcox: And...and so I...I got off there and it was an air base, uh, most likely at one time, but they still had P-38s and then they had...looked like the P-51. I...I may have a mistake on what type of plane they were, but they was the type the Flying Tigers had from China...

Mark Cunningham: Uh hum.

Mr. Wilcox: ...and they would just...pile up this ash; they'd make two piles and then a plane would come in between, so it would knock the wind off. And everywhere you went, you had to walk on a wood walkway, and they...wooden walkway was about...they were made out of two by twelves and all nailed together, and it was...it wasn't freezing, but it was cold enough that (chuckle) they didn't have refrigerators and everything...and like some of the meats they kept outside.

Mark Cunningham: (Chuckles), great place!

Mr. Wilcox: (Chuckle), yeah, great place!

Mark Cunningham: Now is that where you connected with the Indianapolis?

Mr. Wilcox: That's right, I...

Mark Cunningham: And when was that, do you remember?

Mr. Wilcox: Let's see here (pause), no...but I'd say this going to be in...(pause)...January or February...

Mark Cunningham: Alright.

Mr. Wilcox: ...it'll be before...

Mark Cunningham: Of '43?

Mr. Wilcox: ...uh, yes.

Mark Cunningham: '43.

Mr. Wilcox: It's the early part of the year.

Mark Cunningham: Okay, now were you with...were you on the Indianapolis from that point on?

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah.

Mark Cunningham: I...

Mr. Wilcox: I was in nine major engagements.

Mark Cunningham: Alright, now I'm going to ask you...I want to ask you about some of those. Let me get...well, you...it sounds like you only missed one then because this says that the Indianapolis had ten battle stars and each battle star...

Mr. Wilcox: (Unintelligible), that's right...

Mark Cunningham: ...represents an engagement.

Mr. Wilcox: ...that first one was in 1942.

Mark Cunningham: Okay, that was Bougainville.

Mr. Wilcox: Bougainville.

Mark Cunningham: You missed that one.

Mr. Wilcox: And the next one was...in the Aleutians.

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Wilcox: And that's what I...when I was up there...

Mark Cunningham: So you saw heavy-duty action in all of those?

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah.

Mark Cunningham: That's the Aleutians, the Gilbert Islands, the Marshall Islands...

Mr. Wilcox: Right.

Mark Cunningham: ...the Marianas...

Mr. Wilcox: Right.

Mark Cunningham: ...Tinian...

Mr. Wilcox: Right.

Mark Cunningham: ...Western Carolina...and the Japanese home islands and Okinawa.

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah.

Mark Cunningham: Wow!

Mr. Wilcox: We fired on the Japanese home islands several times; we...be in a fleet of ships...

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Wilcox: ...and we'd steam over there and then...unload our ammunition and then turn back (chuckles) and *run* and then we'd...couple of days we'd go back again.

Mark Cunningham: But you were a...you were a...you were a hard-core veteran of the Indianapolis?

Mr. Wilcox: Oh, I'd say yes.

Mark Cunningham: I'd say yes! Now when...in...in...on the battle stars, do you guys get some kind of decoration for each campaign you're in?

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah.

Mark Cunningham: So you got nine battle stars?

Mr. Wilcox: Yes.

Mark Cunningham: Wow! And what was your job on the Indianapolis?

Mr. Wilcox: My job was in number two fire room. We sup...our...we...had four bars and they was two in four different areas but they were all connected...like in (unintelligible) series or...however you want to run them; you had a choice there, and it took seven people to run one of those fire rooms.

Mark Cunningham: So you...you were operating below deck...keep...in...

Mr. Wilcox: (Unintelligible).

Mark Cunningham: ...operating the boilers?

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah, and it was about a hundred and ten.

Mark Cunningham: Degrees?

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah.

Mark Cunningham: Good grief!

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah, the fire room was under...air pressure, and it...the pressure would go through the burners and then out the stack for combustion.

Mark Cunningham: Now, in all of those campaigns did...did the Indianapolis get hit?

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah, we got...we took...uh, we took in...a...a suicide plane and it went through on the port side through the chow hall, the chow hall deck, the sleeping quarters, the sleeping quarters deck and it hit the screw on the way out when it exploded.

Mark Cunningham: (*Phew* sound), how come it didn't sink then?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, that wasn't enough damage to sink that ship.

Mark Cunningham: Okay.

Mr. Wilcox: And so, what...what they did...we...we were out of evaporators to make the water to fire the boilers and drinking and stuff like that because they allowed you about...then twenty-one...each man...twenty-one gallons of water...that's what his usage was.

Mark Cunningham: Per day?

Mr. Wilcox: Per day. Now that drinking, eating...

Mark Cunningham: Bathing?

Mr. Wilcox: Yes.

Mark Cunningham: Yes.

Mr. Wilcox: Yes.

Mark Cunningham: Alright which...which campaign was that in that you guys got hit?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh, just...uh, I...I'd say it's going to be around...I...I...Ok...Okinawa campaign.

Mark Cunningham: Okay.

Mr. Wilcox: Because what we did...we pulled in an island and the USS Salvage, it's a repair, sea-going tug, they put a...a water...under-water patch on our...ship

and then they pumped out the water and oil and everything in the...compartments and we started back to the United States.

Mark Cunningham: Where did you go to get repairs?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh, Mare Island.

Mark Cunningham: Where's that?

Mr. Wilcox: That's at...San Francisco.

Mark Cunningham: Okay, now how long were you there?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, it...it...may be about...two months or more. Now we look...now we're looking at...May of 1945.

Mark Cunningham: Alright.

Mr. Wilcox: Because I...I was married May the 22nd.

Mark Cunningham: So that's...that...you got married while you were home on leave...

Mr. Wilcox: Oh yeah (unintelligible).

Mark Cunningham: ...while the ship was getting repaired?

Mr. Wilcox: And we got...made the repairs there, and then we got the order of this special project that we was going to take which ended up to be the atomic bomb.

Mark Cunningham: Alright, I want to ask you...okay, now when did Captain McVay come aboard as your Captain?

Mr. Wilcox: Oh,...

Mark Cunningham: Was he with you at Okinawa?

Mr. Wilcox: Yes.

Mark Cunningham: So he'd been on...he'd been Skipper of the ship for awhile, huh?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, we had quite a few scat...Captains during the...that short time and I was looking at, I don't know where I saw it, but normally they was on there about a...a year...or less, and he's the one...the last one that came on.

Mark Cunningham: Okay. When you sailed back with the atomic bomb, now you guys didn't know what you were carrying, did you?

Mr. Wilcox: No, but...

Mark Cunningham: Did you...did you have any indication it was something special?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh, scented toilet paper for (unintelligible words).

Mark Cunningham: (Laughter), holy mackerel! So you sailed to Tinian?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh, yes. Now we...we knew something was big because the project had lots of protection when they...we loaded the bomb over at Hunter's...at Hunter's Point in San Francisco, and they had told us...but they didn't tell us, but they told the Skipper that whatever time...any...the...on the time that we could save would shorten the war by that much. And so when we pulled out of San Francisco it was on the day that they tested the Manhattan Project and we were on our way. And we had two scientists over there that, in their talking, they observed the east and they could tell that the bomb was a...success. And then we went to Pearl Harbor; refueled and went to Tinian; unloaded the bomb and then that night we sailed to Guam.

Mark Cunningham: Alright. Did you...you did not make Guam?

Mr. Wilcox: Yes.

Mark Cunningham: Oh, you did make Guam?

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah, that was...that was CINPAC then for all the orders. That's where we went to receive the orders for our next assignment.

Mark Cunningham: Which was?

Mr. Wilcox: Which...well,...

Mark Cunningham: You...you were sailing for...when you left Guan were you sailing for the Philippines?

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah. We...had the...we had the flag ship, Spruance, Admiral Spruance, and he had a flag aboard there and when we...left San Francisco we had the record for the shortest time between San Francisco and Pearl Harbor...not by much, but a little. And...the...we were going...after getting out of the...repair yard, we had never had time to check...test the guns 'cause they updated quite a few of them, and we were going to Leyte to have a...firing practice; I think it was with the [USS] Iowa, a battleship.

Mark Cunningham: Okay, alright, so you're under sail now from Guam?

Mr. Wilcox: Oh yeah!

Mark Cunningham: Alright. July 30, 1945...

Mr. Wilcox: That's right.

Mark Cunningham: ...alright, tell me what happened that night?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, I was...in number two fire room which is forward and I got off of watch and, of course, when you're down there the...the only place you can sleep is topside on the deck with a blanket and you use your shoes for a pillow. And I had no more than laid down...I...I'd say it's midnight

'cause I...I had the...the eight p.m. to midnight shift, and...and I had no more laid down...maybe five minutes or less, and we...had a loud explosion and I slept on the...portside air...aircraft hangar, and on the second explosion I could see the fire come down through the passageways of the ship. And I...I felt like something was really lo...wrong.

Mark Cunningham: Now let me ask you one question. Had you been below at your...at your station where you were working, would you have survived?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh, no sir.

Mark Cunningham: Yeah.

Mr. Wilcox: It either hit that fire room or...or the magazine...for an eight inch.

Mark Cunningham: Alright, now...that...it didn't take long for that ship to go down did it?

Mr. Wilcox: I'd say it...maybe twelve minutes.

Mark Cunningham: Yeah, yeah. What...what did you do?

Mr. Wilcox: Well...

Mark Cunningham: And...and then were...were you with a group of guys or what?

Mr. Wilcox: Oh, no, no, no. It's all kinds of confusion; it's just dark.

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Wilcox: And...but...in the hangar there, I could see a doctor giving first aid to some of the crew that was burned in...in that passageway up there. And so...I didn't have my life jacket and I walked back to my...where I...my sleeping quarters and got my life jacket and put it...I used one of these...rubber types; that's a belt and...because we worked below the

decks and with those old Kapoks you...you couldn't even go down some of the stairs with it on, and...I'm...the ladders; Navy calls them ladders. And so, I got my...my life jacket and as I was leaving there was a...guy...his watch was at a table where he wears...headphones and...they...he's always in communication with everybody that has a pair on that ship, and there were...there are going to be several pair, and I asked him could he get anybody and he said, "No," and the ship was starting to list. And I told...I told him, I said, "Now this thing is going down and you better come go with me!" And...but he never did, and so I worked my way out which is...aft and a little...midships. And so when I got up to topside it had already listed...quite a bit and before I knew it, I was standing on the portside...of the eight inch gun turret and...I stepped into the starboard side of the water; it was going down that fast. And then I swam off and...I knew it was going to...maybe have a suction as we were taugt, and I had...I...I don't know whether I blew up the...life jacket or waited till after the ship went down. And so, I turned around and watched the ship as it...went down 'cause when I got off I imagine there was about twenty-five or thirty feet left on it.

Mark Cunningham: Now did the ship roll or what?

Mr. Wilcox: No, it filled up on the way going down and...and all there was...just a bunch of air bubbles. Now some of these guys said we had a suction, but I don't think we did.

Mark Cunningham: Yeah. Alright, how many people got off of that ship...to start with?

Mr. Wilcox: Oh, it was...it would be a guess...

Mark Cunningham: Yeah.

Mr. Wilcox: ...for that. You hear anywhere from five hundred to...nine hundred.

Mark Cunningham: Alright, now once you got into the water, what happened then?

Mr. Wilcox: Well...

Mark Cunningham: Now, and this is around midnight, right?

Mr. Wilcox: Yes, yes.

Mark Cunningham: So it's...was the moon out or was there any light or was it just pitch bl...black?

Mr. Wilcox: Oh, it's dark...

Mark Cunningham: Yeah.

Mr. Wilcox: ...it's dark. And after allow...blowing up my life jacket, I...came upon a raft and I got on it and then it kept on drifting...and then there was two rafts, and then these...

Mark Cunningham: Now were there any other guys on the raft?

Mr. Wilcox: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. This was...the one I was on, I was the only one on it until I...the raft bumped in against another one and then we had several cargo nets that we had.

Mark Cunningham: Now did those things float?

Mr. Wilcox: They float, but they float about...there's little squares...I'd say eight, eighteen inches and you've them on the side of ships as you passed.

Mark Cunningham: Right (cough).

Mr. Wilcox: And...they...don't float on the top of the water, but they may if you didn't have anybody in there...in one of them, but normally, with all eyes sitting there, all the survivors, uh, they...they were about...maybe twelve inches below the water. And then on your life jacket...all that stuck out of the water was your head.

Mark Cunningham: Right, did...and you kept your life jacket with you on...all the time, right?

Mr. Wilcox: Oh (chuckle), *definitely!*

Mark Cunningham: Right. Now those things aren't made for...long-term floating, are they?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, that's true, and they told us then they were good for seventy-two hours which is...

Mark Cunningham: Three days.

Mr. Wilcox: ...three days, and some of them didn't make the seventy-two. But when someone would die...from drink...and drinking salt water or some something like that, we would take his life jacket off and say a prayer...

Mark Cunningham: Oh my god.

Mr. Wilcox: ...and bury him right at sea. And then we'd that life jacket to someone that needed it.

Mark Cunningham: Right. Now a lot of those guys couldn't swim, too, right?

Mr. Wilcox: I really don't know.

Mark Cunningham: Uhm. How...

Mr. Wilcox: (Unintelligible)...out...out of the group...that went through boot camp...there was just one that never learned how to swim.

Mark Cunningham: Oh okay. Now that first night, that must have been an awfully long night.

Mr. Wilcox: Well, it was a questionable night. It...got an SOS off or...something like that.

Mark Cunningham: Now...were guys forming up together or were...were there strays or what?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh, well, in my group there was a hundred and...I'd say an estimate of a hundred and fifty...

Mark Cunningham: Okay.

Mr. Wilcox: ...when we started.

Mark Cunningham: Now was the Captain with you?

Mr. Wilcox: No, we were scattered in ten square miles.

Mark Cunningham: Wow! Alright, now what about the doctor; did you have a doctor?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh, not in our...our group.

Mark Cunningham: So now how about the guys that were burned badly; what did you do?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, they had emergency kits...(unintelligible); they wasn't waterproof and some of them had...took on water...just like the drinking water; it was all salty, and we didn't have...we had a few malt tablets. I think each man in that four days...he...he received three tablets. But...

Mark Cunningham: Now what...what kind of tablets?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh, they're malt tablets – m-a-l-t.

Mark Cunningham: And what...what does that do?

Mr. Wilcox: Why, I...I guess...I...I really don't know.

Mark Cunningham: Yeah, okay. Alright, so what happened when daybreak...finally made it?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, on the first morning...we did get a...SOS off; the Navy received the SOS. Well, what they usually do...they...say the base that received it sends another SOS back to confirm it.

Mark Cunningham: And they never got a confirmation?

Mr. Wilcox: We never got it because, well...

Mark Cunningham: Okay, now how did you know the SOS got out; did you know that morning; was somebody there that knew he'd sent it or what?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh, no, we had men on watch and...and it was so quick that they went ahead and sent one.

Mark Cunningham: Okay.

Mr. Wilcox: And...but the comment (unintelligible)...over the years...there was several SOSs received. One place that received one...it was a sea-going tug, and they sent some out that night to look for us. And the next morning when the Captain or Commander of the base came in...which he didn't sleep on the base or anything, he called the sub...uh, the tugs back, and I...I don't know, they were well on their way to get us. Then there was a guy...on a bombing run; I don't know where it was...where it was at...what...which island, but when...on his return...off his starboard side...he saw this bright flash in the air and when he landed...in the Philippines, he reported it.

Mark Cunningham: And what was the flash, oh, he...he saw the...he saw the explosion from the...of the ship?

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah, and the next night when he started out he...he asked them, "Did they find anything about the explosion," and they just told him, "We're working on it."

Mark Cunningham: Uhm!

Mr. Wilcox: What they had...they had two groups. They had one group of incoming ships that's going to arrive and then they had a...was aboard of outgoing ships, but neither department talked to each other. Kind of like politics we have today.

Mark Cunningham: Yeah. Okay, now the first day...what...did you get any type of sleep or rest at all?

Mr. Wilcox: Oh no, you...you do get to take naps, you know, what...not what you would think, 'cause the first day wasn't too bad; I...I wasn't hurt anyway, and when we was going through boot cam...camp they...told us how to survive something like this. And the first thing, the main thing, is to conserve your energy 'cause you don't know how long you're going to be there.

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Wilcox: And the next thing is...don't drink the salt water 'cause it's going to kill you. And then the next thing is...don't be a swimmer. Now what they talked about that...you get the illusions you can see an island, and you take...you start off swimming to it. Now on...drinking the salt water, you get illusions that we are still on the ship and you'll submerge and go down to the chow hall for chow and come back up...and you...they asked

you...what...they'd ask you...different things to eat and they would tell you, and that kind of messed up your mind also. And then...

Mark Cunningham: Now did you...did you...how did you keep from drinking the salt water? I mean if you're bobbing around, you almost always taste some.

Mr. Wilcox: No, you...it's...it's possible not to, but when I would taste it, I would split like hell!

Mark Cunningham: Yeah. Now were you close to or on a raft or what happened; did you...

Mr. Wilcox: Okay, with these two rafts and this cargo net, I imagine when...in our group there was around a hundred and fifty. And...the first day wasn't too bad, and the next day...some of them started drinking the salt water and...it would just be a short while...I...I really don't know in hours, but...it would be awhile before...your throat would swell up and he would...he would die.

Mark Cunningham: Suffocate?

Mr. Wilcox: That's right. And then, if you have a guy...that...is going to be a swimmer, uh, you...you can tell it...by looking at him. He is talking to himself; you can't understand him...he's talking to himself and what he's going to do...if he's in the middle of that...floater net, he's going to get out or start working his way...to the outer edge, and when he gets to the outer edge, he's going to swim off. And I...I had a friend that I knew in the fire room, and...I'd say one morning...I just happened to look across the floater net, and I could see him talking to himself, and then he...during that day he started working his way over to me. And then when he gets

in that square next to you...about the only thing you can do is...put your arms around him and conserve your energy. And...but if he wants to swim, you just let him go 'cause he'll fight you.

Mark Cunningham: Did he swim?

Mr. Wilcox: Oh yeah, yeah.

Mark Cunningham: Did...did you ever see him again?

Mr. Wilcox: Oh, you never see them.

Mark Cunningham: How far do they swim?

Mr. Wilcox: Oh...

Mark Cunningham: Out of sight, I guess, huh?

Mr. Wilcox: Yes, yes. Well, out of sight can be thirty...

(end of tape 1, side A)

Mark Cunningham: Okay, we're back on the recorder. This is...this is side 2; interview with Mr. Lindsey Zeb Wilcox. Okay so the...the...you made it through the first day; tell me about the second day.

Mr. Wilcox: Well,...

Mark Cunningham: Or were all the days alike?

Mr. Wilcox: All the days are not alike.

Mark Cunningham: Alright.

Mr. Wilcox: I think we just went through the second day...this last conversation we had.

Mark Cunningham: Okay.

Mr. Wilcox: And...and people are starting...starting to swim away; I don't know when or anything, but...I...you could tell that the group is getting smaller. And on the third day, it was pretty bad.

Mark Cunningham: Now is that when the sharks came in?

Mr. Wilcox: Oh, they...the...the morning of the first day, the sharks are with you.

Mark Cunningham: Oh, I didn't realize that.

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah! You can just look down between your legs and they...they're swimming around down there!

Mark Cunningham: Now did they attack the...the dead or did they attack the live as well?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, they attacked the...a couple of the live ones, but they were able to recover from their bite. But on the...second...on the third day, uh, there was a few of them that passed away and we buried them at sea. And so that night somehow or another I always thought the safest place in this net was on the very last square to the outside, and somehow or another I got out of that square and I...I was asleep and I...I...something hit me and my nose went down into the water and I woke up. And then when I raised up...there's two sharks laying there...on the ground...uh, on...on the water...right at the top, and...they must have been four to five feet apart. And if you imagine...your head just sticking out of the water and in a three hundred and sixty de...degree circle...everything is against you and getting out. But it so happened...as I was talking to these sharks, "You don't bother me, and I won't bother you," kind of like a Cajun, you know?

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Wilcox: And...and...you...as I was looking, I could see one head...at...it was at the end of a swell and the beginning of another swell there was...you could see a little further in distance, and I...swam right between these two sharks and, of course, they're going to follow you, and as they turned, they brushed the side of my legs, and...

Mark Cunningham: But they did not attack you?

Mr. Wilcox: They did not attack. What I think they did...if you ever had your dad take you fishing when you was...real small and they give you that little string line and put bread on the end of it, and you just see if you can...catch a...a minnow or something like that. But if you throw that bread in there, that minnow will come up and bump that, and that's what I think they did, and then the next time around they're going to get you. And they was...just checking me out to see...if I was living...because...I...I feel like...uh, the...the sharks didn't attack us because they never got hungry enough. You know they were always claiming people that had died.

Mark Cunningham: Okay.

Mr. Wilcox: And...I swam back to the net and...but, of course, in this...ordeal we had...not knowing now...how long it would take. They was...a lot of them prepared their lives...to die, you know, 'cause everything you...you've done wrong...your whole life passes in front of you...from a kid on up. And so, I felt like, and you do a lot of praying, I felt like I could last seven days.

Mark Cunningham: Now why did you feel like that?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, I just felt that way... 'cause I've gone...before and I'm going to read you a statement that a doctor said...about that...at the end. Uh, you know, you just...I never got thirsty; I kept...I didn't lose control of my...my mind and you can lose control of your mind...say at a certain time...

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Wilcox: ...and then regain your mind back!

Mark Cunningham: Well, now would you say that that's the reason you survived; was that your attitude?

Mr. Wilcox: Oh yes!

Mark Cunningham: Now how about...the...there must have been a lot of other ones like you then.

Mr. Wilcox: Oh yes! Oh yes! Oh, yes sir!

Mark Cunningham: Now how much did your training play in this?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, on the survival...all of it...was the training. I never did lose my...mind or...or anything like that. But we had some...like one time I was...on the third day...I...took a little nap in the afternoon and one of the officers was...in the square next to me...because people are moving about these squares all the time...

Mark Cunningham: I guess I didn't realize...I never realized that you had the nets; how big were these nets?

Mr. Wilcox: Oh, I...I...(pause)...I...don't know...

Mark Cunningham: Sounds like they're pretty big, huh?

Mr. Wilcox: ...what one would hold, but looking at some of these ships...we had more than one.

Mark Cunningham: Okay. Now were they attached to the rafts?

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah, well you have to attach them to the raft.

Mark Cunningham: Okay.

Mr. Wilcox: And...

Mark Cunningham: So how many rafts did you have?

Mr. Wilcox: We...we...we had two.

Mark Cunningham: Okay. So the two that you originally found when you...

Mr. Wilcox: At, no, at the...at the first...we had three, but we had two...to decide with...it was okay that they were going to try to find another island, and of course, I don't know who these are; who the men were or...or whether they made it or any...anything like that.

Mark Cunningham: Uhm!

Mr. Wilcox: But on the fourth day when they found us, uh...

Mark Cunningham: Oh, they found you on the fourth day?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, yes. It's late in the afternoon on the fourth day. There was a...a general...uh, an officer...by the name of...Chuck Gwen (sp?), and...he had been making a run...I think it's a PV-1, and they was testing out a new antennae and as he drug it in, the cable broke on the first one. They went back to their base and he said that there was enough daylight that they could make another run. And so they flew out and, so help me, when they started to reel it in...it hung up; he let the...his co-pilot...have the

plane and he went to the back and...and they had bomb bay doors on it because they could bomb a sub...(unintelligible).

Mark Cunningham: So this was...this was a...this was a bomber?

Mr. Wilcox: No, it wasn't a bomber; it's just a...

Mark Cunningham: PBY?

Mr. Wilcox: No, no, a PV-1...

Mark Cunningham: PV...

Mr. Wilcox: ...has to land...on land.

Mark Cunningham: Oh okay.

Mr. Wilcox: And so...when they passed over this oil slick, he says..., "I thought the first thing I thought we may get us a sub out this time." And so he told them to fly the ship at two hundred feet...off of the sea and when he did he could see it was...sailors, and he sent out the word...for help. Now the first one that came out...was a...PBY; its pilot was Adrian Marks and he took on sixty-five survivors just laying on...on the ship – wings...and they had a little water and...

Mark Cunningham: That was in...now when did he get there though?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh, I would say that...the evening of the fourth day.

Mark Cunningham: Oh he was...so he...you spent the night...they...they spent...they spent the night with you on the water?

Mr. Wilcox: Oh yeah, oh yeah, yeah. Well, on his PBY, there's no way it would...could fly itself...out...out of there...the type he had. And so the [USS] Doyle came out...was one of the ships that was the...the first

one...that was there...and...they picked up the survivors off of this PBY and that morning...uh, he went before quarterdeck and asked permission to destroy his plane and...and they destroyed it right there.

Mark Cunningham: Okay, now that...you saw that?

Mr. Wilcox: Oh no, no! We never did even see the plane.

Mark Cunningham: Oh okay, well when did you guys get picked up?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, I...they...parachuted a motor launch off of the belly of a B...something. And then it...it had three parachutes on it to get it...and so there was a bunch of them swam out to get it and I...I could see the number was great, and so I came back in to where...to the cargo nets. And then...when...when they...they had a water making machine aboard this yacht, but...they didn't have any fuel for the engine. Here we are, our legs hanging down in the water, and that boat now there on top is floating away...twice as fast as we are moving. And so there was a 47,C-47, flew over and he threw his life raft out the window. It's just a little two-man deal, and I swam out to get it. And they, of course, when you swim out, all you have to do is look over your shoulder, and those sharks were right there on top coming with you. And the emergency package I picked up...it was green, and I thought it was Kool-aid, but it was dye marker.

Mark Cunningham: You didn't drink that, did you?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, I...I put it in my mouth!

Mark Cunningham: (Laughter).

Mr. Wilcox: But I immediately...spit it out! And so, I...took it back and there was one of the officers in charge said, "Wilcox, you got a case of beer and if you don't bring it over here, we gonna court-martial you!" But, all it was...was one can of water, and I tell you what...he didn't get it.

Mark Cunningham: (Laughter).

Mr. Wilcox: But I did divide it amongst the men in our group.

Mark Cunningham: Yeah.

Mr. Wilcox: And...then...

Mark Cunningham: Now this is the fifth day, right?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh, no, we're still on the fourth day.

Mark Cunningham: Oh goodness!

Mr. Wilcox: And then...I...I got this life raft and it's still daylight, but I'd say it's getting on...getting on *late* in the afternoon. And another guy swam...uh, went with me, and we went to this motor launch and got water and brought it back to the group. And then, well, we was going to go back and get more. Well, daylight come...and we're exhausted, and I mean, daylight ended and we're...we're exhausted and I'd say...at four o'clock in the morning...we...the other guy...the other is still on the other end of that life raft, oh, he fell in. I...I don't know who he was or anything like that; I had someone put his right hand on my shoulder...and he said, "Sailor, are you alright?" And I said, "I am now!" And I got over into this boat with him; this was ones that they land Marines on...the beach...that kind.

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Wilcox: And they took me back to the [USS] Bassett, USS Bassett, and then that morning, we went to Samar in the Philippines to the hospital and we stayed there...several...I don't know...over a week. And then they flew us to Guam; then we caught a...aircraft carrier, [USS] Hollandia. We had priority one to come back on planes, but this is the time...they rescued the shoulders on this bata...Bataan march.

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Wilcox: And so, they gave them priority. Of course, everybody agreed...that it was okay. Of course, they didn't ask you anyway, but it...it was okay. So we figured that they needed it more than we did.

Mark Cunningham: Now when did you hear that the bomb had been dropped?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh, after we got out of the hospital.

Mark Cunningham: Yeah.

Mr. Wilcox: Everybody else knew it but me...uh, us!

Mark Cunningham: Now what about...uh, how long were you in after you got...well, look, okay, after you got out of the hospital...what happened then?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, after we got out of the hospital...my wife lived at Kingsville, and I...I went down there and...on my survivor's leave, and then...I had enough points to get out. I don't...I think it was a hundred points or more, and we could pick whatever receiving ship we wanted to go to. And so I picked that one in...Galveston. After I get to Galveston, I realized, I'm in

the wrong receiving ship...'cause everybody in there was waiting for a bad conduct discharge!

Mark Cunningham: (Laughter)...(cough).

Mr. Wilcox: So they sent me to New Orleans...at the Naval Air Station.

Mark Cunningham: And that's where you got out of the service?

Mr. Wilcox: That's where I got out of...out of the service.

Mark Cunningham: And when was that?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh, well...twenty-one, it would be '46.

Mark Cunningham: '46.

Mr. Wilcox: In February.

Mark Cunningham: Okay, about six months after the war ended?

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah. And...when the group that went with me...there was five of us...

Mark Cunningham: All Indianapolis guys?

Mr. Wilcox: No! And then we never saw each other again...after the...boot training.

And there was a gentleman in there of...by the name of Woodard; he was one that we joined alto...everybody went...uh, that went with this group and he and I rode the *same* bus back hom.

Mark Cunningham: What was his first name?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh, (pause)...

Mark Cunningham: Wouldn't have been Nick, would it?

Mr. Wilcox: No.

Mark Cunningham: Oh okay.

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah, I am kin to him by marriage and I can't think of...L.A.

Mark Cunningham: L.A.

Mr. Wilcox: L.A. Woodard.

Mark Cunningham: Uh, so you...you did not see any of the...the...your Indianapolis shipmates after you got out of the hospital; is that it?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh, that's right.

Mark Cunningham: And when was the first time you guys got back together?

Mr. Wilcox: Well, we was...he was in one group that was being discharged, and I was in the second group. They...they...when they discharged them down there, they'd discharge them in groups, and they may be three or four groups. And when they called his name, I looked over there and by golly, there he is!

Mark Cunningham: Wow! Let me ask you a little deeper question. How have you reconciled all of this; did you...did you have problems with flashbacks and nightmares and stuff like that?

Mr. Wilcox: Oh, you have them all the time.

Mark Cunningham: You still have them?

Mr. Wilcox: Yes still. I don't know...that was sharks chasing you; you never get rid of it.

Mark Cunningham: I wouldn't think so.

Mr. Wilcox: Well, no.

Mark Cunningham: Now, after the war there was quite a bit of publicity about...the Captain and they court-martialed the guy, right?

Mr. Wilcox: Right.

Mark Cunningham: But you guys...kind of stuck up for him...pretty good as far as I could see.

Mr. Wilcox: Well, we haven't let Washington rest, and even now.

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Wilcox: But, back in the '50s, well...I joined the reserve, and when you join the reserve, it's a six-year deal, and when the Korean War came up I got my call to go to Houston, big assignment, and they sent...and I passed; then they sent me...train tickets; meal tickets and orders to go to...San Diego, California. Well, the headquarters for this district is in New Orleans, and of course, working for the railroad, I could ride the train free. So I got on the train that night about twelve forty and went down to...New Orleans and I sortied in at this naval building that...where you have to go...you pass several different groups before you go...you get to a board of three officers which they will decide. And so I was going through this group and I guess about the fourth one that interviewed me...he just looked and he said, "I...I know all about you guys," and then what they did to my Captain...they took a hundred points off of his rank to where he would never command another ship. Now we had...we lost...forty...four hundred ships; he's the only Captain...that has ever been court-martialed. That's impossible! And I can name a few of them that they...could, and so he says, "Now I want you to call him," and I said, "Well, he doesn't want to talk to...talk to me." He says, "Yes he does."

Mark Cunningham: Now this Captain McVay we're talking about.

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah, and so this...Chief...he just roll...he knew his telephone number and he just wrote it down there on a piece of paper and put it in my pocket, and he said they did him awful. They made him Rear Admiral and sent him to New Orleans, and then they slapped his hands every time he'd go around because this called for a real large investigation. And the reason it was started...there was a man that lost his son on the east coast; very prominent, and Admiral King didn't like the McVays because the McVays were the commanding officer of the Naval Academy – great grandfather and father, and of course, he'd been reprimanded thirty or forty times in...when he was in China for doing different things wrong, and I...I just think it was a grudge against a family...that they wanted to get even.

Mark Cunningham: Alright, now who commuted that...that sentence?

Mr. Wilcox: Huh?

Mark Cunningham: One...a Pres...one of the Presidents commuted that sentence – McVay; they exonerated him.

Mr. Wilcox: Well (chuckle), it was more or less...

Mark Cunningham: But it was...it was after he had passed on.

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah. Anyway, I'm...let me tell you about our visit. So...the Navy...I went in front of the board, but sitting out there on the bench there was a submarine commander came out; he introduced himself and he said, "Wilcox, I don't think you should have to go," but he says, "there's two more votes in there." And so I went in there and they asked me why'd

I...didn't want to go and I said, "Well, I just got a...foreman's job on the railroad and when I come back I'm not going to get that job back because they'll fill it with somebody else, and here I was young and I had a lot to learn." And he says, "Well, you're going to have to go," he says, "but if you'll do this for us, we'll give you a deferment." So they sent over to Algiers to take a test. And I went in there to take the test, of course, the test wasn't about what I did on the ship whatsoever; it's all about damage control and this...things that went on...on topside.

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Wilcox: And...I maybe asked a few questions and I handed my papers to him; I said, "I can't handle this, and I...I'm going to stop." And he says, "Well, you sit down over there," and he went in another room and he come back; he says, "You're going to get your deferment; you passed!" And I thought, "Well, he passed me; I didn't." And...so I went back over and I told Captain McVay. At that time Captain McVay was working for the Wainwright Insurance Company of Texas and...and that was...he was a general. And so we went out to the officers quarters at Naval Air Station; it's a receiving station where I was at, and he...he bought a few drinks and we sit there and...and he wanted me to go in business with him...selling insurance. He could take the officers and I'd take the enlisted men, and I told him, I say, "Captain, I can't do that; I just got a good job." And...anyway, in driving back to the Naval Air Station to the Roosevelt Hotel where he li...he picked me up, we was going through the

French Quarters and he was telling me...it wasn't losing the ship that bothered him, it's the people that he associated with that...told...several of them told me...that...their wives accused me of killing their husband...of that ship going down.

Mark Cunningham: Uhm!

Mr. Wilcox: And...so...we stopped; there's a signal light there and he said, "Wilcox, what do you see?" I said, "Well, there's people crossing the street there and there's the signal light there, and there's the metro bus right behind us." And he says, "What in the hell do you see?" I said, "That's about it, Captain!" He said, "Now look over there at that building," and there was three guys; they had took showers with their clothes on...somewhere, and they had long hair. He...he says, "Wilcox, you and I are kind that will die to save this country," and we...we went on. And then I...went back down to New Orleans and he was working for a...a company that rented cranes and stuff like that, and I had always kept in communicating with his fam...his...his daughter...and...and...no, his sons. In fact, there's one son living in Washington D.C. and the other one lived in Honolulu passed away and his wife had M.S. and she...she just passed away. And I...uh, that, you know, I don't think...he committed suicide over that ship.

Mark Cunningham: It was over the...the accu...

Mr. Wilcox: I...I...in the book, [Only] 317 Survived!, I...hold on...I...I got...had written this down...and then I'm going to...(pause)...I think I did. I...I...in my part in that book, I put, "Captain McVay was a person, (unintelligible),

neat as a father in growing up to manhood in today's world. My opinion and mine alone. The loss of the Unite...USS Indianapolis did not cause him to take his own life." And I talked to his daughter-in-law and she'll...she's agrees...agrees with me. And let me get you this on what the doctor said.

Mark Cunningham: Now which doctor was this?

Mr. Wilcox: Uh, in...in San Diego why we...why we made it.

Mark Cunningham: Oh, why you survived?

Mr. Wilcox: Yeah.

Mark Cunningham: Yeah.

Mr. Wilcox: (Pause)...I'm going to put the phone down (unintelligible).

Mark Cunningham: Okay, I'm going to stop the tape and then I'll cut it back on. (recording temporarily stopped.)

Mr. Wilcox: I'd been out quite a few tim...quite a few years, and there was a...lady interviewed me from Los Angeles for a big magazine company. In fact, that magazine sold for twenty-five dollars. And (cough)...years later, I had an interview with a magazine company from Los Angeles, California regarding how I survived the tragedy and sharks. Also present was Dr. Martin N-e-m-i-r-o-f-f...Nemiroff, Chief Health Services at the Coast Guard Training Station. His answer for survival was that, "It is the will to live and that is hard to measure. It transcends lack of food and water. It overcomes body size; health condition; lacks of skill and an intangible

basically the message that you give your brain – I am a survivor.” Every word of that is true.

Mark Cunningham: Wow!

Mr. Wilcox: Anyway, I got my deferment, and when they give me the deferment from the...Korean War, they sent me a letter, “Mr. Wilcox, you have less than nine months to serve and if you want to voluntarily join, just go ahead and come on, but if not, you want to send your meal tickets; train fare and everything to...the...back to them.” And so I...I immediately sent them back the next day. And then we rock along there and President Truman...extends our enlistment one more year, so I was in the reserves seven years and then the other time I was in the regular Navy. And my company had tried twice to get me on, and they just finally wrote me a letter, “You going to have to go.” And so...after I sent them the deferment, I...the main office here in Houston, the old Union Station, where we had our main office...the clerk there that did the writing he called me. He says, “Wilcox, with your luck, I wouldn’t even join a church!” (laughter)

Mark Cunningham: (Laughter). Oh man!

Mr. Wilcox: That...that’s about it unless you got some more questions.

Mark Cunningham: No, that...I think that has really...that’s quite a story, wow! I’ll listen to it and I may have some more questions for you, but wow! I’d like to come down and meet you personally one of these days and I’m probably going to do that.

Mr. Wilcox: Well, we'll sure go to the Lions Club.

Mark Cunningham: Okay. This is the conclusion of the interview and I just wanted to say thanks to Mr. Wilcox on behalf of the...Mus...well, myself for just the personal experience and my...and for the...for the Museum.

(end of interview)

FINAL copy
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