

Bill Pampe Oral History Interview

JOHN FARGO: My name is John Fargo, and I am a volunteer at the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas. Today I am interviewing Colonel Bill Pampe concerning his experiences during World War II. This interview is taking place in Mr. Pampe's home in Austin, Texas. This interview is in support of the Educational and Research Center for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission for the Preservation of Historical Information related to World War II. OK, with that out of the way, Bill, let's get started here. Tell me a little bit about your background: where were you born and when?

BILL PAMPE: Well I was born on a farm about 75 miles east of St. Louis, Missouri, and about 75 miles west of Vincennes, Indiana. In other words, south part of Illinois. I was born on a farm and we lived about a mile or so from a small town called Parkersburg, Illinois, about 180 people, they said. And so that's where I went to school, and would have to either walk on a dirt road or, if it was dry enough, I could ride a bicycle and then they -- one room, there was just four grades of students, and we had first, second, third, and fourth rows. In another room, they had five,

sixth, seventh, and eighth, and then three years of high school. And so --

JF: All in the same building?

BP: All in the same building. We didn't have a gymnasium at that time, and so some of us played a little basketball out on a dirt court. We were right by the Illinois Central Railroad, and to get another, my senior degree, I had to go to Olney, Illinois, which was about ten miles away. Simply walk out and get on a bus to go up to Olney, and there's where I was a senior before I could graduate, and I played basketball there --

JF: You spent one year in that school?

BP: One year in that high school in Olney, Illinois. Yes.

JF: What was your birth date?

BP: December the 5th, 1923.

JF: OK. So, after -- let me ask you about your father's occupation.

BP: He was a rural mail carrier for 44 years. He had 30 miles of dirt road and in the winter time, he had to drive horses and a buggy or something to deliver the mail, and he had to report over to Parkersburg, Illinois, at seven o'clock every morning, so during the winter time, it took him all day, till about four in the afternoon, to make the circuit, and in the summertime, he drove a Model A Ford and got back

at noon, and so in the summertime, when my job was to do work around the farm, and in the afternoons, when he got back, then I would go fishing at a small stream close by, or squirrel hunting out in the woods behind our house. We had a large garden and no television. We had a radio we that got turned on every Saturday night -- it was the Grand Ole Opry -- and if we wanted to go to a movie, we had to drive to Olney, ten miles away, and Saturday night movies were a dime each, and a nickel for the popcorn, and that was pretty neat. And then when we drove up there, we'd all go to the barbershop or get some groceries, although we had three little grocery stores in Parkersburg and a small bank, and then the post office. And so it was just -- everybody knew everybody in the town. But once I graduated from high school --

JF: What year was that?

BP: Nineteen-forty.

JF: Have any brothers and sisters?

BP: Had a brother -- an older brother -- three years older, and a ten year young sister. My brother was only 60 and he and his wife were walking across the yard, and he just fell over dead like that. And my sister lives just across in Illinois from St. Louis, and she's still around.

JF: She's still alive.

BP: She's still alive, so just that. And then we had four grandchildren, three of them living here in Austin.

JF: Oh, is that right?

BP: The other one in Arizona -- he's going to work. And so we get to see them and so forth, but then the fact that our -- I go to my son for doctor's work.

JF: Is he in Austin?

BP: Yeah, he has a family practice here in Austin. Has been -- after he got old enough, he went to medical school in Fort Worth with, and graduated; came up here and opened up his -
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JF: So he has the same last name as you?

BP: Uh-huh. His name is Eugene David. He goes by E. David. So then I started to college in 1940. In those days --

JF: What college was that?

BP: University of Illinois.

JF: Started in 1940?

BP: Right. And went to be in ROTC for two years -- that was required if you physically could be. Well, I could be, and then became a sergeant in the reserve, ROTC. And then, at that time, you could go ahead and continue junior and senior year in the ROTC, and then you'd get your commission when you got out. Well, I had -- in the first two years, I became a sergeant -- this was [sort of?] normal -- and so I

[stayed with?] my junior year, and at the end of that, they said, "No, we're going to call you up for active duty."

JF: So you spent three years?

BP: I finished three years. Yeah. I was ordered to active duty on the 18th of June, 1943, and they -- and this is listed on here. They sent me to Camp Grant, Illinois for just six days -- in other words, filling out all the applications and everything for active duty. Then on the 25th of June, they sent me to Camp McQuaide, California. That's about 60 miles south of Monterey -- I mean, San Francisco, just right adjacent of Monterey, and at that time we had what was called a "coast artillery" -- training for that -- in which the big guns and -- our job there at the camp was to -- well, at least every week -- not every week, but once in a while, different units would sit on the shore line day and night, making sure there wasn't any Japanese ships out there. So that actually was our opposition. I stayed (pause) there until September, 1943, and then they -- still a sergeant --

JF: I thought that when they called you to active duty, you became a second lieutenant.

BP: No. I had to finish the four years to become a second lieutenant, but I had just finished three, so I was still a sergeant. Well then, between September 1943 and March of

1944, I was back at the University -- or the University of Illinois had an army specialized training program. Well, that was over in March of 1944. They decided that they didn't need coast artillery officers, but they needed infantry officers, so I was sent to Fort Benning, Georgia.

JF: At that time, were you commissioned?

BP: March -- no, I was just a corporal in the army reserves. And I was there from March of '44 till June of '44, and was commissioned then --

JF: Commissioned when?

BP: On the 20th of June -- let's see. No, actually, the 6th of September, '45, I believe it was. And I was assigned to a headquarters of the third battalion, 290th regiment of the 75th infantry division. This was at Camp Breckenridge, Kentucky.

JF: Back up a minute --

BP: After Fort Benning, I became a second lieutenant.

JF: OK, after you went through the Fort Benning training and so on, then you were commissioned, and that was in September of '45?

BP: Uh-huh. And --

JF: September of '44, maybe.

BP: No, from 20th of June '44 to the 6th of September '45 was the time I spent at Camp Breckinridge and became a second

lieutenant, and I was assigned to what was called the ammunition and pioneer platoon as an ammunition officer. Well, that was -- we were trained about looking for ammunition, being able lay a minefield -- in other words, it was not getting on the line and shooting at somebody, we had this job of doing these different things, in other words, like after going over to -- as a munitions officer, they called us -- that kind of work.

JF: Was that -- were you --

BP: This was in the Battle of the Bulge, now.

JF: What before that, though? When did you join the 75th division?

BP: That was -- well, 20th of June, right after I was at Fort Benning. I was sent over Camp Breckinridge. In other words, I went through infantry OCS, graduated from that as a second lieutenant, 19th of June, '44. Then I was assigned to Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky, because I was 75th infantry division. And so that's when they made me an ammunition and pioneer platoon leader. As I say, we had ammunition for some of the lighter guns and so forth. All we had was a couple of trucks and so forth. Just like one of the jobs when we were there in the Battle of the Bulge would go out in front of our lines and lay a minefield. That's our thing. And then we'd have some artillery people behind us,

shooting over at the Germans. But this was part of the one to set up a minefield, so if the Germans came that way, they'd get in that minefield.

JF: So your platoon set the mines? Developed the minefield?

BP: Yes. So we had things like that. Didn't have to come in contact with any of the Germans, or anything, but there was -- in the Bulge there was different divisions -- two or three divisions there fighting, and so (pause) that was the battle. Well actually, we left Camp Breckinridge, we went to Camp Shanks, New Jersey, and shipped overseas.

JF: Camp Shanks, New Jersey? I'm from New Jersey, and I've never heard of that!

BP: That was on October the 22nd, 1944. And then once -- then actually, after the Bulge, we were sent down to southern France and let me get... (pause) This was the sequence of the 75th infantry division after the Battle of the Bulge down in southern France.

JF: Let's not leave the Battle of the Bulge, OK? Tell me a little bit about the Battle of the Bulge. You were a munitions officer during that whole time you were there?

BP: Yes. We just had this one platoon within the regiment, [comprehensive?] regiment.

JF: (inaudible) company to 290.

BP: I can -- this was 290th infantry division, which I told you, and I was in the headquarters of the third battalion, and as an ammunition pioneer platoon leader, as I mentioned, and so, during the Bulge, at that time, the snow was about three feet deep. We couldn't even dig a foxhole because it was frozen ground, and so we slept around a tree or do something once in a while, and we had no food -- in other words, there was no place to -- we had to go back to regimental headquarters to get a meal, which we were not sent back there to do, so they just sent us sandwiches --

JF: They brought it up to you?

BP: They brought us, and we didn't get our Christmas dinner until the middle of January! And so we just simply put up with it, and did what -- if they had, as I say, we'd have ammunition for some of the men if they needed it, or something like that. And it was -- other than the fact it was very unpleasant to be there, it was not under fire from the Germans -- in fact, at the Battle of the Bulge. So we survived it, and then --

JF: OK -- I want to talk a little bit about the Battle of the Bulge. How many men in your platoon?

BP: Oh, I think there was about 30.

JF: About 30? Did they come from the US with you to France?

BP: Yeah. That was part of it. In other words, when we left -
- got out of Fort Benning and then they assigned me to the
75th infantry division, that's when I was assigned the
people who was assigned to go in my platoon. It was at
that time.

JF: Were they pretty well trained at this stage?

BP: Oh, I think so, from what we need to accomplish, as far as
I remember. We didn't get into any trouble.

JF: How did the platoon react in your first stages of combat?

BP: Oh, I don't think other than the fact that -- like me --
they were a little scared; the Germans might have started
trying to come through, start shooting at us and so forth,
but other than that, why, we just did our job, which was
not a whole lot to do, really, because of the -- other than
we had to lay a minefield, or go out and get one or
something like that.

JF: Now did Germans mine that terrain at all?

BP: No.

JF: No. So you didn't have to worry about clearing a
minefield.

BP: No, so that worked out OK that way.

JF: Were you exposed to any of the German infiltration?

BP: No.

JF: You didn't see any of that?

BP: Not -- I'm not sure any of the other divisions in the Bulge. I don't think there was any in there at all. But then, before we got through, well, we went down to this southern part assignment instead of going across into Germany at the river valley, and then we finished that and sent us back up to northern Belgium, and it was at that point -- because we didn't have to do anything, really -- that we had air force going over us and so forth, and our platoon -- actually, I'm not sure it was more than company, I can't remember -- we actually went into Germany. But there was no fighting. The Germans had already been defeated and so forth. And so once we got through with that, I (pause) now let's see. On the 6th of September, '45 -- of course, the Battle of the Bulge, they said the first day was over the 1st of January, '45, and they sent me to Camp Philadelphia in France.

JF: Camp Philadelphia?

BP: At that time I was a first lieutenant -- I'd been promoted -- and I stayed there until the 3rd of January of '46.

JF: What was your job?

BP: OK, this was a redeployment camp of redeploying troops back home who had enough time in, and they made me the athletic officer. I was in charge of basketball and that sort of thing. A real tough job. And then from the 4th of January

till the 15th of August of '46, I was assigned to the 122nd ordnance ammunition company where we had ammunition there that was left over, and I was just simply in charge of it, and getting some of it taken and sent back to the United States. And then, 16th of August, 1946, until the 10th of October, 1948, I was an inactive reserve. And then (pause) from '48, well to -- by the time the 22nd of October, 1942 [sic], I was promoted to captain in the US army reserves, and then January 3rd of 1957 till 11th of June 1948 [sic], I assigned to a control group and state, and that is a major until September 16th, 1965, then I was promoted to lieutenant colonel, just a USAC. And then the 3rd of August, 1972, I was promoted to colonel and placed in the retired reserves the 10th of July, 1977, and retired December of 1983. So I started in -- well -- ROTC in 1942, and retired in 1983. But actually as far as active duty was concerned, 18th of June, 1943 until 5th of December, 1983. So that would be a total of 40 years active duty, redeployment camp, and so forth.

JF: So you retired as a full colonel?

BP: Yes. And down in Beaumont, they -- we just had weekly duties, or weekly meetings. There was only about six or eight of us, and I was eligible for being promoted to a general, they said, but the one who was the general there

didn't want to retire, so he's -- the best I could be was just a full colonel.

JF: Well, full colonel --

BP: Started out ROTC --

JF: From second lieutenant to full colonel, that's pretty good!

BP: Became -- yeah, see I was sergeant when I first got out of ROTC, and then when I went to Fort Benning, I was a corporal, because I was in officer's infantry, officer's school -- command school. And then I was promoted to second lieutenant in the 20th of June '44, and so from that time -- June of '44 to December of '83 -- I was an officer of some kind. So -- anyway, it was quite an experience, and I was lucky I survived it, and -- well -- we didn't have any -- lose anybody getting killed or shot --

JF: Yeah, there were no casualties?

BP: No casualties.

JF: During the whole time from landing in France till you left Germany?

BP: Right. No casualties. And it was easy compared to the regular infantry officers who had to -- you know -- have their ammunition -- machine guns and all this other stuff ready for something like that. They were on duty, you know, at -- if we had to go out and do something in front of the minefields or whatever, then they knew that, but we

didn't have any -- apparently any German troops across the river, and so we were just fortunate to be at that position as far as the Battle of the Bulge was concerned. We lucked out, and in fact other divisions that were around us -- about three -- there was just no artillery shell into them or anybody invading, or anything like that. So it was -- Battle of the Bulge, we were ready, but we just didn't have to get involved in the real battle!

JF: It was through you -- the Germans didn't even try to go through you guys.

BP: No. About that time, there were -- they thought they would try to come on through, but they didn't, for whatever the reason. Because there were so many troops up along the river there that they didn't -- and they didn't try even the southern part where the river valley and the northern part of Belgium, so really we just got there after the hardest part, which was when the Germans were in France and that sort of thing. Anyway, we lucked out.

JF: Let me ask you about the German artillery -- the big 88 guns. Now everything I read about the Germans during this period: that was one of the really devastating things that the GIs had to put up with was the artillery.

BP: Well, yes. Of course, that was when the Germans were in France and so forth. That's when they used. But as far as

where we were concerned there was no artillery coming into our -- the whole Battle of the Bulge, I can remember that I heard of.

JF: But yet, part of the 75th division got hit pretty hard from what I read. Lot of casualties.

BP: Well --

JF: Nothing that -- you saw, eh?

BP: Not in our -- not anything like -- well, I agree with you, because it was a big area, the whole division, and we were usually -- I remember us hearing about -- I'm sure we did -- about some of it, but I don't recall, because there was none in my company -- in my platoon or in my company -- that was involved in that. So my memory just doesn't go back that far to get anything more than that out of it!

JF: Anybody suffer from frostbite?

BP: No -- we had enough clothes on to stay warm, but there was nobody got sick and that sort of thing. So --

JF: But you were living in foxholes during that time --

BP: Well, no we were not in foxholes -- we couldn't even dig them! We were just living under trees or -- and we had a couple of trucks -- two or three of us get in those, that sort of thing, because we'd take the ammunition out and that sort of thing, so we were able to survive it. And one time I went back to regimental headquarters to the mess

hall -- business in the mess hall -- I said, "What you got back here is different than what we had!" "Oh," he said, "I can make you a peanut butter and jelly sandwich to take with you!" Because before it was regular canned food that we had, so -- anyway, I survived it, and was glad to get back and get through and start to work.

JF: Did you -- can you tell me any stories about this period that might be of interest?

BP: No -- I sure can't. Because I can't remember anything that happening, other than just daily duty.

JF: By war's end, which was May 1945, roughly -- your rank was what, captain?

BP: No. I was just a first lieutenant.

JF: First lieutenant.

BP: When -- well, 16th of August of '46, in the inactive reserves, I was a first lieutenant, and I was promoted. That was in '46, but then I serve in reserves and so forth, and I didn't get promoted until 22nd of October, 1952. At that time, I had gone to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and -- so some of the places that I went -- I was assigned to -- were in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Fort Sill, and so forth, and -- so that was basically it. I became a major in '57, January. Lieutenant colonel in September of '65 -- so I was there -- and promoted to colonel in 3rd of March, 1972. So that's

about five years each before I was retired to something else. And of course, that was fine, because I get a little military retirement pay.

JF: Sure. After Germany surrendered, you were over there in Germany for a certain period of time?

BP: No, I was back in France -- in other words, in the first -- well, the Battle of the Bulge supposedly ended the 1st of January, 1945, but then I was sent to -- well, actually, we just -- after the Battle of the Bulge, that's when I went down to these other two spots, southern France and also northern France, and so I was assigned to Camp Philadelphia -- redeployment camp -- 6th of September, 1945.

JF: Tell me what you did there?

BP: I was the athletic officer, and all I did was -- these were troops being sent home, and so I organized a baseball team, and a basketball team, and got involved in just playing with them! And that was my job: having them do -- of course, a lot of them were not there too long. They had to do paperwork and wait till they get enough time in before they were sent home.

JF: What was the average time they were there?

BP: Gee, I don't remember.

JF: Couple of weeks? A week or so?

BP: Probably longer than that -- I would guess probably a month.

JF: About a month?

BP: And I was there 6th of September, '45 through the 3rd of January, 1946, and then I was sent to the 122nd ordinance ammunition company from January of '46 to 15th of August, '46, and my job there -- we went around -- there was ammunition scattered in all the roads around there that had not been sent -- had been sent there for the war, and we were sort of responsible of checking out and getting it so that we could send some of it back -- in other words, trucks would take it away. So that was our job, really, as a --

JF: Was this an ordinance that was laying on the ground? For whatever reason, it was just left there?

BP: Just left there, yeah.

JF: I see.

BP: Just strung along the highways, the roads and so forth. It was just on the ground. And so we had to check out how much we had and where it was and so forth, and then they would come and truck some of it away.

JF: Was that dangerous?

BP: No, didn't seem to be.

JF: Were these things --

BP: No, nothing was exploding or anything like that. They just loaded it on the trucks and take it away.

JF: I see.

BP: And then take it to some place on the coast to send it -- or I don't know, they may have just donated it to France or someplace, I don't know. It was just our responsibility of being there over it, making sure it was alright. That was the last real job I did, other than coming back to the --

JF: And France, that was the last job you had?

BP: France, yeah. And so by that time, I had enough overseas duty to be sent back home, because you had to have so much overseas time. Of course, I didn't go over there until (pause) oh about --

JF: January of '44.

BP: Or June of '44 -- let's see. I shipped from Camp Shanks second -- October 22nd, 1944. And so from that point till 1946, it took me that long from October 22nd, '44 till the 15th of August, '46 to do enough time month by month -- in other words, get a retirement -- enough time to get some points to send me back home. And that's when I went out.

JF: Where did you arrive in the States when you got home?

BP: Oh gosh...

JF: You come home by ship? By troop ship?

BP: Yeah. We went over from New Jersey -- I think we came back to New York, I believe.

JF: New York? OK.

BP: So -- details -- I don't remember any of the other details other than what I've covered. Not exotic like some of these troops, you know, that fought in this battle and fought in that battle and got shot at and that sort of stuff like you see in the movies and so forth. I was lucky I didn't have to do that or have to go to Korea or Vietnam.

JF: You were quite fortunate that -- you know -- the division itself as I read -- my research -- had quite a number of casualties during the Ardennes campaign. I've got it here, myself.

BP: I'd have to read it again. It's been a long time.

JF: But so there must have been other areas of the line that was hit pretty hard.

BP: Yeah. And we just didn't have any way of hearing about that -- at least -- just telephones.

JF: How was your company commander? What kind of guy was he during the Ardennes campaign? Do you remember?

BP: No, I don't remember, because we hardly -- well, we may have had some meeting or something. I don't even remember details about him.

JF: You didn't have much interaction with him? Or the colonel?
The Italian commander? You didn't have any? OK.

BP: So we didn't get into any trouble or anything like that or
have anything going on.

JF: But your troops -- these were well-qualified guys, they'd
been well-trained in the United States to do their job by
the time they'd got over the France and you didn't have any
trouble with them either, huh?

BP: We landed in France and then got on the trucks and so forth
to go through to get up to Belgium, and we'd stop -- just
our platoon -- we'd stop in these little towns to spend the
night, that sort of thing, and you'd get little -- of
course, we were just camping out, and we'd stop -- somebody
would stop one of the farmers and ask them if they had
anything to eat or drink or whatever, and then one time we
went in -- of course, we'd go into these towns and then
check out if everything was alright, and one time went down
into this basement, and they had been making wine with
poison in it --

JF: Poison!

BP: And you could get -- you could have it and so forth, and we
found out -- not me personally, but one of the troops --
and so they'd say, "Well, I want to test this type of
wine," or something like that, and -- but that stopped

them. They weren't going to drink anything anybody offered them after that!

JF: What did you do to those people? The French -- or the Belgian?

BP: I think we turned them over to the local authorities, let them deal with it.

JF: But your troops were smart enough not to drink any of that?

BP: Yep. Before it got there, at one place we stopped, they had wine to taste if you wanted it, or some of the other liquors I wasn't familiar with. I never did drink anything so I didn't taste it. But then -- in other words, that was just one of the things, you just went through with it and survived, got up to where you were supposed to be on the battlegrounds. So not very experienced so far as active duty and that sort of thing. I was lucky I survived it, but then a lot of other guys did too, but it was just one of those things.

JF: Well that was your f--

BP: I could have gotten sick or something like that, you never know.

JF: That was your first experience in commanding troops, correct?

BP: Yeah. I had three squads with different assignments we had to do, so that was my first experience with the troops.

JF: Did you enjoy that?

BP: Yeah, I guess. It was my duty, so I had to do it, and I got along with the troops OK, and that was -- I think we had a good platoon to do it, and did our job, whatever our battalion commander told us to do.

JF: Did you have an experience of the platoon sergeant?

BP: I don't think so, because everybody went over there at the same time. Nobody -- no, we didn't get anybody reassigned to us, or anything like that -- no -- because we didn't have any casualties. Not very experienced, compared to some of the marines or some of the infantry that went to Vietnam, or that sort of thing. I'm just glad we didn't have to, but to say we were available within a two week summer camp just at different posts, like at Fort Sill and so forth, and that was -- I guess -- watch the troops, and there wasn't anything important going on. We were just there.

JF: So you were at Fort Sill during the Korean War days?

BP: When was --

JF: Korean War started in 1950.

BP: Yeah, well -- in fact, they -- 6th of November, 1950, I was assigned to Fort Sill and that's all --

JF: On active duty?

BP: I was reserves. Inactive reserves, yeah. Well, I say enough?

JF: So during the Korean and Vietnam years, you were in the inactive reserves or the organized reserves during some of that time, correct?

BP: Just really inactive reserves, but then we spent two weeks of summer camp some place, and I was assigned to various ones, even up towards Washington one summer, and Fort Sill a couple of times. So anyway -- we were just assigned, and you didn't do anything, just went and [made milling?], met a couple of the officers there you were in contact with. But anyway, it was OK, because that's what they told us to do. You want to stay inactive reserves, you get your reserve duty in.

JF: Was there any talk during those years of activating you and sending you over to --

BP: Never heard about it. Why, just say with two weeks of summer camp, we had weekly meetings to discuss various things, but then nothing important or nothing exciting about it.

JF: So in Korea, for example, they called up the organized reserves -- even the inactive reserves -- because the marine corps didn't have enough troops to send over to Korea.

BP: Well, we just were lucky: didn't get called up! So --

JF: OK, so you actually retired in 1983 as a full colonel.

What did you do in civilian life?

BP: Well, after World War II, I went back, and since I had only gotten in three years in the school, I went back and forth -- another year, and I got my bachelor's degree in geology, and then stayed on and got my master's degree in geology --

JF: University of Illinois?

BP: University of Illinois, yeah. And then, since it was a geology degree and also having to do with the oil companies, I was sent to Tulsa, Oklahoma, to work with what was called the old Pure Oil company, and they sent me after about three or four months down to Ardmore, Oklahoma -- southern Oklahoma -- and I was responsible for checking on the wells, what they were doing, whether I wanted to recommend that they release some property, and that sort of thing. And so, I spent, there, four years, and back in Tulsa too. They sent me to Denver, and then the company decided to sell out -- became Chevron. And so they didn't want me in that position or anything like that, so I went to -- I went to Berkeley for a year, and then couldn't get the fossil studies that I wanted, and I went to University of Nebraska, and then to school working, and so (pause) when I got through, I went to Nebraska and got my PhD, and

went to a meeting -- geological meeting -- down in Kansas -
- Kansas City, I believe it was, and have to meet the head
of the geology department at [Lamar?] University in
Beaumont, and he said, "Well, we need somebody to teach
paleontology -- fossils -- if you're interested." I said,
"Well, I'm interested, because my other possible jobs was
in Massachusetts or in Wisconsin, and it's cold up there,
so I'll go to southern Texas down there to Beaumont!" And
so I went there, and I was there for 25 years before I
retired, and Lamar University only have ten thousand
students -- roughly that -- instead of 50 thousand, like UT
and some of the bigger schools, and so at that time, when I
first started at '66, there were still some of the oil
companies hiring people, if I'd get somebody to graduate,
they got a job, and so I enjoyed that, and then the summer,
for about six weeks or a month, we'd go fossil hunting out
in Colorado or someplace like that. Just on weekends, we'd
just go out there in central Texas -- that was part of the
job. But anyway, when I got in the '89, well then, I
decided to retire, and my wife at that time was a little
bit older, and she said -- well -- she was ready to retire,
and so --

JF: What was she doing?

BP: She was working with Texas A&M out at [Hill?] Station, doing secretarial work, just outside of Beaumont, about two or three miles -- for Texas A&M. And so our other son lived in Oakland, San Francisco area. We didn't want to go out there, so we came up here, simply because my son was a doctor at that time and this was -- we didn't want to stay down in Beaumont, we just came up here, and so, been up here, you know, 25 years almost.

JF: Twenty-five years in Austin? OK.

BP: Yeah, we came up in March of '90.

JF: So you were a full colonel, and a full professor. That's a fine -- fine accomplishments, Bill.

BP: Well -- I enjoyed teaching college kids.

JF: Did you?

BP: Very much so. I only had 98 students in freshman geology -- most of the students had to take a year of -- if they were in liberal arts -- they had to take a year of science, either geology, chemistry, or physics. Well, they didn't want to take physics and chemistry, so they take geology because it was supposed to be easier, so I'd have them two semesters -- a lot of them -- and got to know them, and I got to see the students on the campus and so forth, and know a (inaudible) and made me head of one of the sororities, and so on. Anyway, I enjoyed the college kids.

I'd see them on campus, and so forth, and then summer, well, we'd -- I spent one summer working on my PhD, collecting fossils in Colorado, and so after we got to Beaumont, Lamar, and so forth, why, we'd come up to southern Colorado, and I'd go trout fishing for a couple of weeks, and that was always fun, so. I then got to the point where just couldn't drive up to do that anymore.

JF: Well, I appreciate --

BP: Life can be boring --

JF: -- the time that you gave me, and I want to thank you for your service --

END OF AUDIO FILE