



National Educational Technology Solutions LLC
 1524 Eubank NE, Suite 3
 Albuquerque, NM 87112
 Phone: 505/271-1333 Fax: 505/271-1334
 Alt: 505/350-1433
 Email: CCallan@netsamerica.com
 http://www.NETSAmerica.com

Oak Ridge Form 5: Oral History, Deed of Gift Release for Interviewee

DEED OF GIFT RELEASE FOR INTERVIEWEE
 K-25 ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
 U.S DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

I, Hal Williams (Name of interviewee) residing at 264 South Dillard
 (Address of interviewee) do hereby permanently give, convey and assign to the United States Department of
 Energy (DOE) my interviews (or oral memoirs), and the recordings, tapes (audio and or video), and any
 transcripts of my interviews conducted on 5/17/05 (date) at 104 Inn Ln. #113
 (location).

In doing so, I understand that my interviews (or oral memoirs) will be made available to researchers and the public
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I, Jennifer Thonhoff, (Name of interviewer or agent for or duly
 appointed representative of DOE), accept the interview (or oral memoir) with
Hal Williams (Name of interviewee) for inclusion into the DOE Oral History Program.

Signature of DOE or its Representative: [Signature]
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 Date: 5/17/05

Signature of Interviewer: [Signature]
 Date: 5/17/05

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K-25 Oral History Interview

Date: 5/17/05

Interviewee: Hal Williams

Interviewer: Jennifer Thonhoff

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William, Hal

[1:01:07]

Williams, H.:

Hal William.

Thonhoff, J.:

And spell it for me.

Williams, H.:

H-A-L W-I-L-L-I-A-R-D. Hal William.

Thonhoff, J.:

And it's A-R-D?

Williams, H.:

Yeah. Hal, H-A-L W-I-L-L-A-R-D.

Thonhoff, J.:

Okay, so it's Hal Willard?

Williams, H.:

Yeah, Hal William, Hal William.

Thonhoff, J.:

Okay. Where were you born?

Williams, H.:

I was born in Mississippi. I don't know whether you been in Mississippi or not.

Thonhoff, J.:

No, I haven't. Where in Mississippi?

Williams, H.:

Well, the place is called -- name of the town is Talahasakany (phonetic sp.) and Yallowbuskany (phonetic sp.). It's two many together. That's about 50 miles out of Memphis. You know where Memphis, Tennessee is?

Thonhoff, J.:

Uh-huh (affirmative).

Williams, H.:

Well that's the big south, mighty Memphis. I used to ride -- I used to get in a (indiscernible) with my grandfather once a week. My home was out of Memphis and come up. In fact, back then (indiscernible), drive wide away, 18 miles, wagging them mules.

Thonhoff, J.:

Oh gosh.

Williams, H.:

And now I ask them what happened to that -- that sign reads 14 miles.

Thonhoff, J.:

Whoa!

Williams, H.:

So something (indiscernible). They got closer to Memphis or Memphis got closer to them, one.

Thonhoff, J.:

Yeah, (indiscernible) spread out.

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Williams, H.:

Yeah, that's what I said.

Thonhoff, J.:

Where were you living prior to working at K-25?

Williams, H.:

We built some -- they had hooks. I got (indiscernible) here.

Thonhoff, J.:

You know what? You have pictures over there?

Williams, H.:

Yeah.

Thonhoff, J.:

Let's go ahead and at the end, we'll have Josiah take some still pictures of it.

Williams, H.:

What I figured is you would want to see some part of it. I got plenty of it whenever you guys are ready. (indiscernible).

Thonhoff, J.:

We'll do that at the end.

[1:03:32]

Williams, H.:

Some of the things, the hutment things, what we lived in.

Thonhoff, J.:

The hutments?

Williams, H.:

Yeah. Yeah.

Thonhoff, J.:

Could you describe those?

Williams, H.:

Yeah, they just a bunch of little huts. I mean, four to a hut down there. And they had men's and women's. And after we moved from K-25 area, right over at (indiscernible) Road was the hutment (indiscernible) telling build them houses in there. It was a pen they called right over -- across the road there. The women stayed in and it had a fence around it. And the women stayed in it and men stayed -- well they was on our side. But right there -- right into Avery where it started, where we lived, all up through there and all the way across. That's what (indiscernible) and up through there. I stayed in what they called Flat Top, all the way from right there, all the way up through there, across to the (indiscernible) pipes. Flat top house.

Thonhoff, J.:

Houses stopped at (indiscernible). That's where they -- all of the area was?

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- Williams, H.:** Yeah, that's where the people live and you went from here to them plants every day riding busses. But that's where they lived at. Yup.
- Thonhoff, J.:** And you said you were doing construction before working at K-25?
- Williams, H.:** Well, I built K-25. I was the first job, the concrete pour. I got a thing -- well, I'll get it. I got pictures of when they started.
- Thonhoff, J.:** We'll, go ahead and do all of the pictures and everything afterwards. What we'll do -- the green screen behind you, the reason why that is, is so we can get pictures in if need be. So when you describe the hutments and the things -- the pictures that you have, they can be popped up on the screen behind.
- Williams, H.:** Yeah, well, there's a book thing now. (indiscernible)
- [1:05:35]
- Thonhoff, J.:** Well that's great. That's stuff that we need. And you said that you built K-25.
- Williams, H.:** Saw the first yard of concrete poured on that -- down there in that area, down there. That first long steel building -- building down -- covered 59 acres. At that time, that was the biggest building in the United States all in one building. Since that, they done got themselves a little more because we built one in Portland, Ohio, the other -- cover more ground, they do now.
- [1:06:21]
- Thonhoff, J.:** Could you describe for me the construction of the building and what kind of labor went into that?
- Williams, H.:** Well, yeah, steel and concrete and block mostly, brick around the side, the outside of it. That's what they put them up. Concrete floors. Roof built (indiscernible). You see buildings just like out here. Old flat building with a power roof (indiscernible). So that's what we put in. I mean, anything to get something up. But it's higher steel, three stories, that's three of them 90 foot high now.
- Thonhoff, J.:** And how many people would you say you had working with you doing that?

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Williams, H.: Oh, it was thousands and thousands of people. But in the crew what I worked in, there was about 250.

Thonhoff, J.: And how did you guys interact with each other? What was it like to work with the people you worked with?

[1:07:28]

Williams, H.: Oh, we worried about the job and that's what they were there for to do, do the job. There wasn't nothing else to do.

Thonhoff, J.: And did you form like friendships and bonds with the people that you worked with?

Williams, H.: Oh yeah because I -- beyond (indiscernible) with them. Because everybody had to be doing the same thing and know their job. Yeah.

Thonhoff, J.: How would you describe the feeling of was it like a community type of thing?

Williams, H.: Well yeah. Well you take the fellas I was working with, they were union fellas. We was all in the same union, and so this was no problem because we all belonged to the same union. And they know their job and the person had to know their job to be in the union. So we just -- so that's the way it was, just like every fella, he know what he's supposed to do when he got on the job every day and so he did his job.

[1:08:38]

Thonhoff, J.: What were the hours like?

Williams, H.: Huh?

Thonhoff, J.: What were the house like?

Williams, H.: Well, there wasn't no end to that. You went to work 7 o'clock in the morning. I might be the next morning when you get off. So that was (indiscernible).

Thonhoff, J.: Wow!

Williams, H.: So we didn't have no limit to getting off. You got that job to finish. (indiscernible) you done, you had to stay there till you finished. It might be two days. So, that's -- we didn't have no time to my

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hours. Oh, you know you working by the hour but it wasn't no certain time at that time to get off because the war has -- it got worse after the war started. And that's just the way it was.

Thonhoff, J.: Did you feel pressured or rushed to do those things?

Williams, H.: Oh no. I didn't feel pressure. I know my job. And I know that I had to do it because that's what they was paying me. So there was no problem. That's what I was getting paid to do. Do my weight.

[1:9:50]

Thonhoff, J.: Do you feel like you were treated different as far as being African-American? Were you treated differently?

Williams, H.: Yeah. I mean, say, come down to that part, segregation. Just like I would -- working now with a white fella all day beside him. Well when quittin time come, they went to their shack and changed clothes and (indiscernible). I went to mine. That's a different world. Been out there all day. We didn't even clock out on the same clock out there.

Thonhoff, J.: So there was definitely segregation?

Williams, H.: Oh yeah. That's (indiscernible). And then went to eat, they had a cafeteria and that's where the colored went. The white went to the other one.

Thonhoff, J.: What else was segregated?

Williams, H.: Everything here segregated. [laughs]

Thonhoff, J.: How did you deal with that?

Williams, H.: Well there wasn't no problem. You know what you -- you know your job, so that was no problem. [laughs] Thing segregated, it was no problem for you to deal with it when you know what -- and (indiscernible) and they didn't get it (indiscernible) I reckon about '59 or '60-something. (indiscernible) plant right there, where I worked at, after I left the (indiscernible), working for Carbide inside there. Still the same thing. We went to our cafeteria and eat. White had (indiscernible). Till finally one day, I was working and they changed how we had -- finally one day they come out there and (indiscernible) all in and says, "Y'all got to move." And so, didn't nobody ever stand up (indiscernible) didn't know what was going on. That's the way it was then.

[1:12:05]

(indiscernible) we was over there and we had to move in here, in the change house, where the white was. And start to change the whole -- and they put black right there and the white next black. Yeah, that's the way they started. That's the way they did it (indiscernible).

Then they got that cafeteria, they turned (indiscernible). You went in the cafeteria where (indiscernible) a fella could get used to that. You went in the same line and sat down and eat.

So that's the way it was. It was working, doing the same thing the white person. We got the same pay, but when quittin time come, I went to my place and they went to theirs, changed clothes, and all like that. (indiscernible) Y-12 (indiscernible) the end of segregation, end (indiscernible) and back to steel going back to the same change house they were going. They didn't want to leave that. They set the thing on fire so they didn't have no other choice before -- where they wanted them to go.

So (indiscernible) with the white (indiscernible).

Thonhoff, J.: Were the living conditions different --

Williams, H.: Huh?

Thonhoff, J.: Were the living conditions different for you as opposed to the white people? Did you guys live differently?

Williams, H.: Well, yeah, it was different. I mean to say it's -- until they changed all that living thing because we was staying in a place called huts or it's a thing. Then when the government come and sat in the house, then I bought my house and I guess -- and where the white person -- I'd buy one next door. See, that's changed it.

Thonhoff, J.: So it changed a little bit?

Williams, H.: [laughs] Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Thonhoff, J.: Did you ever have any friends that were white?

Williams, H.: Oh God, yeah. Dear friend of mind had a hard time. I worked with them every day and they treated me just as good, but they just -- when night come, they went to their place and I went to mine.

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Thonhoff, J.:

Did you have --

[1:14:54]

Williams, H.:

I got a friend, white, now he -- worked with him every day. We made the same amount of pay, but when quitting time come, they went to the change house where they changed clothes. I went to mine.

Thonhoff, J.:

And what did you do recreationally, for fun?

Williams, H.:

Well they had the same thing. We had the same thing the white had for recreational -- rec halls, like pool, anything you want to go to, theaters, movies. Darn went upstairs, the white were downstairs till they changed it and put them all in one thing. You had the same thing.

[1:15:46]

Thonhoff, J.:

So you guys all went to the same places? It was just different in the place that you went to?

Williams, H.:

Yeah. Oh yeah until they -- they had a theater, a skyway, about (indiscernible) right before this building you see out here, across there, to where old (indiscernible) store. It was called a Skyway Theater for folks drive in in their cars. You drive up there. Well, it was a long time before a black could drive his car there to it. He could come out there and sit up in the ground and listen to the movies, sure look at it. But he couldn't drive up there like the white did. And they put a mic in there and you could hear what's going on. You know, off the screen thing. All the theaters was (indiscernible). Go to the movie if they have a show, you went upstairs there and they were downstairs. So it was segregated just like it was everywhere else, just like it was when I come here from Mississippi, segregated.

So, (indiscernible) Atlanta -- Atlanta, Georgia. I remember I wanted to eat at -- Atlanta Georgia, (indiscernible). And I always thought that -- well there's always been the bus, the back seat, that's the most place where they'd cut a row in that back seat back there when I was on -- coming in from Atlanta, Georgia. And the back seat was empty. And where the white people were standing in the aisle. We went on back and sat down like we used to do it and a guy come back there and said, "Get up." Said, "You don't sit down

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as long as there is a white person standing up." And that was in the back of the bus. And I had never had that to happen.

Thonhoff, J.: (indiscernible)

Williams, H.: [laughs]

Thonhoff, J.: I never heard that before.

Williams, H.: Well, I'm (indiscernible), but it happened to me. And I couldn't figure that out because that's always been. That's what I rode every day for weeks and weeks, sitting at the back seat, about four or five (indiscernible). And so, I left -- I worked on till that Friday, and I had two days awake. I never did get them yet. I left there. See cause I never had that to happen. I always used to sitting on that back seat, but they told me I couldn't, white (indiscernible).

And so that's the way things been cuz I saw it all.

Thonhoff, J.: And what were your homes like? Your huts? Can you describe those for me?

[1:19:05]

Williams, H.: Yeah. Just four -- regular. Well I tell you. I got the pictures of them here in this thing here. Just a round hut, yeah. Just four persons stayed in there with little old cots. So that's where we stayed in until I got mad and then it went to (indiscernible). You can make a bet that (indiscernible) folk got mad and then fixed it for your wife and kids and things for -- wives and things here, living here. Because at that time, hut thing -- if you had a wife, you couldn't stay with her. She stayed in one place and you stayed in the other.

Thonhoff, J.: That doesn't sound like a lot of fun.

Williams, H.: Well, that's the way it was. [laughs] That's the way it was. Yeah.

Thonhoff, J.: I'm going to back up just a little bit. Where did you go to school?

Williams, H.: I went to school -- when, I went to school -- when I went to it was in Mississippi and then after I come out and I went to one over there that -- the high school at night, over here at Oak Ridge High School at night. Then I went to school down at the plant. Teachers would come out there twice a week, and we go to class out there.

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[1:20:47]

Thonhoff, J.:

And what did you learn in those classes?

Williams, H.:

Well, I learned things I hadn't -- didn't know. Risk taking things I had (indiscernible). So that's why they give us opportunity to go to school to get me a (indiscernible) thing, (indiscernible) my job opportunity.

Thonhoff, J.:

So they would teach you in those classes at K-25 about your job?

Williams, H.:

Yeah. X-10 out here. That's (indiscernible). That's where you learn more about what you were doing. That was the purpose of it.

Thonhoff, J.:

Okay. And what did you like the most about working at K-25?

Williams, H.:

Well, I didn't work at K-25 a whole lot because I was on restriction working out there at K-25. Then I changed over to Carbide. And then they (indiscernible) laying off and I went back out (indiscernible). And I had (indiscernible) the -- working up there (indiscernible). See I always been my life -- I work -- construction work on concrete fencing. That's what I did, lay bricks and things. And they -- out there -- then they wouldn't give me a job in there at the plant that day I could get on (indiscernible) side. See that was (indiscernible) until later. And I could get the job. And I put in for it. (indiscernible) for it and then they -- the labor relationship board -- the department head of whatever it was, they turned me down.

So he called me up and said, "You more qualified the job than anybody they got there on it." And so, he said, "You go file a grievance on him." And I did it. Well that brought the rain out Washington, D.C. here. And he looked at my thing and how long I had been doing the work and my union card. He said, "This man here more qualified than they got anybody out there." And then one of the mans -- head man, he said, "I didn't even know the man was here." And in a day or two, they called me over and said, "It's your job." So I took over.

[1:23:54]

Thonhoff, J.:

Good job!

Williams, H.:

[laughs] And see that's -- use your -- he said, "If you want it, it's yours."

William, Hal

Thonhoff, J.:

Wow!

Williams, H.:

And I went all the way to the top for what they were paying when I left there.

Thonhoff, J.:

That's great.

Williams, H.:

Yeah.

[1:24:14]

And after I left. I got hurt at that (indiscernible). And they had called me and asked me if I would come back and train younger people because their older ones had gone. I told them no. I was done with it.

Thonhoff, J.:

Wow! So, as far as working there at K-25, was there anything in particular -- I know you said you didn't work there for very long, but was there anything that stuck out in your head that you liked about being there?

Williams, H.:

Well, yeah. I mean, I enjoyed my work. I was done with my work and getting (indiscernible) because K-25 was the place I started it. But now I work on construction jobs more so that -- then when I changed over, I had a problem there, of course. I wouldn't -- had (indiscernible) waiting for the company now.

I remember one day we were done and getting ready to do some work. And I went up there and asked the man for a (indiscernible). I refused to do it because the cement we were dumping, and that stuff would come right up your nose. I wanted a (indiscernible) thing to go up my nose. The boss wouldn't give it to me. I told him, "Well, I ain't doin that." He came down there for me to get fired. Told the man he was going to run me off. The man took him back there and said, "(indiscernible) talk about it." They didn't -- they knowed I was right. They didn't know. So about two days later, the big man, he wouldn't come when he thought you's mad. He gonna wait. Finally one day, he come around and he said, "What happened that day the man come bringing you all down there?" I told him, "All I want is something to keep all that stuff from going up my nose and head." He says, "That's what it was?" I said, "Yes."

[1:26:22]

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So they get us a whole suit and everything to protect yourself. But if I hadn't had did that day I know (indiscernible). He said, "Y'all get that." And they run him off for not doing it. (indiscernible) out there.

Thonhoff, J.: Good! You stick up for yourself. Good for you!

Williams, H.: [laughs] Yeah. I didn't care about going out the gate. I just wasn't gonna be exposed to that filth when I know what it was doing (indiscernible).

Thonhoff, J.: That's good. And what would you say that you did like the most about your experience at K-25?

Williams, H.: Well, I mean, (indiscernible). It was the same thing all over the area, and so it wasn't no more the K-25 than it was out there at X-10 or Y-12. (indiscernible) or anywhere else in Oak Ridge. It was just -- so it was no more different. So at that time you worked your place. When lunchtime come, you went to where you were supposed to eat at. White went to theirs. Same way it was. Change -- (indiscernible) out.

[1:27:46]

K-25 was no more different than it was out there at Y-12 or X-10 because I worked at all three of them.

Thonhoff, J.: How did you communicate with your co-workers and your people?

Williams, H.: What?

Thonhoff, J.: As far as it being like a secret community, how did you guys communicate with each other?

Williams, H.: Well, we know there's a sign. You know what to talk about. You do, so it was no problem.

Thonhoff, J.: How did they classify what you could talk about and what you could not talk about?

Williams, H.: Well, you knowed that that wasn't a problem because whatever you done, you didn't know about it. And they had a sign everywhere you went, "Know nothing and ask nothing." So you didn't -- that's (indiscernible) labored. If you didn't know it, don't ask nothing, nobody, what they were doing. So, [laughs] there was no -- when you know that, you didn't (indiscernible) nothing for you to do.

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Just go on and do your job and don't worry about what you're doing.

Thonhoff, J.: Just take care of business.

[1:29:02]

Williams, H.: Take care of business. That's all they was paying you for, to do your job. And that's what you did.

Thonhoff, J.: And you had family outside of K-25, correct?

Williams, H.: Yeah. No, I married when I come in. My wife was living and working at K-25. She worked -- yeah. She worked there. Everybody lived inside this plant here. (indiscernible) the wife because they did not -- there was no kids, just the wife and things and that's how (indiscernible), that she had a job to do just like I did.

[crew talk]

[End of Tape 1]

[2:00:05]

Thonhoff, J.: And then also you made it here finally, and then we landed in Nashville and from Nashville we drove --

Williams, H.: You drove from Nashville?

Thonhoff, J.: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Williams, H.: How long you been here?

Thonhoff, J.: Since last night. We got in last night about 11:30.

Williams, H.: Yeah. You the one -- you talked to me the other day from -- you was in Colorado when you talked to me?

Thonhoff, J.: No, I was in New Mexico

Williams, H.: Oh. Well I know you went somewhere, you told me.

Thonhoff, J.: I was going to Vegas for my sister's graduation.

Williams, H.: Yeah, I know some other place you told me was going to.

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Thonhoff, J.: Yeah. You said you met your wife there?

Williams, H.: I met my wife here.

Thonhoff, J.: Yeah, at K-25?

Williams, H.: Yeah.

Thonhoff, J.: And then did you guys have children?

Williams, H.: Yeah.

Thonhoff, J.: And how was it raising a family?

[2:01:04]

Williams, H.: Well, that was -- I mean, we had one daughter. She was born in 1951. She is out there, and when she went to college, somebody saw my wife waiting at K-25 down there in the office cleaning up. And she graduated. And they get her a job at K-25. And they get -- put her in the office with her mama, cleaning up. They -- she cleaned up the office there and they put her in that office. Said -- put your office in there with your mother, cleaning up after she was born, because after she was born at that time, one -- they had a rule that kids -- they couldn't go back to work, not there. Now they got it where you can go back. But at that time, you couldn't.

Thonhoff, J.: As soon as you get pregnant, you're gone.

Williams, H.: Yeah, you gone. [laughs]

Thonhoff, J.: No maternity leave.

Williams, H.: No maternity -- no. But now they changed all that policy and you can go back. So my daughter went through college. She graduated (indiscernible) and get her that job. And she (indiscernible) out there, only at Y-12. Last (indiscernible), my younger granddaughter graduated. Monday morning, she went to work out there at H-10.

Thonhoff, J.: Wow!

Williams, H.: [laughs] And the oldest one, she already got a job at the University of Tennessee. She's the one that -- she's a dean now. She went eight years. And so my daughter -- her sister had to come by every

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-- she had to go to the University in Tennessee, Memphis, Nashville, and Chattanooga when they get ready to graduate, she's the one that they got to go through her.

[2:03:26]

Thonhoff, J.: What an honor.

Williams, H.: Yeah.

Thonhoff, J.: You were talking about when you were working how everybody knew their job. Do you feel like everybody pulled their weight as far as working?

Williams, H.: Well, I mean, (indiscernible) out here. Yeah. Everybody did their job. You had to do it, if you want to stay there.

Thonhoff, J.: Right.

Williams, H.: [laughs] and do his part.

Thonhoff, J.: Were there any particular rules that were important to follow?

Williams, H.: No. I mean, you know the (indiscernible). That's the main part, that you know (indiscernible). And I'm the one person who knows mine. I know it from day one. And they prove it when I leave here. They come and give me -- said there's nobody never have been here that know what they did the way -- that know what you know. And that's why they wanted me to come back to train somebody, but I wouldn't do it.

Thonhoff, J.: Why didn't you want to do it?

Williams, H.: I just figured I done (indiscernible) enough.

[2:04:38]

Thonhoff, J.: That's it.

Williams, H.: Yeah.

Thonhoff, J.: What were the health facilities? Were there any health facilities available for you?

Williams, H.: Help?

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Thonhoff, J.:

Health? Medical?

Williams, H.:

Oh, yeah. Oh, we had plenty -- that wasn't no problem because you got hit with a headache or whatever, they send you to the (indiscernible) there and then they can do emergency. Who would they call -- like who's your family doctor. And that way you was gone. And you didn't go back to work until that doctor said.

Thonhoff, J.:

So you felt like you were pretty taken care of?

Williams, H.:

Oh yeah. Oh yeah. That ain't no problem. That was took care of, well done.

Thonhoff, J.:

Do you feel like your supervisor focussed enough on safety and being careful?

Williams, H.:

Well, it wasn't -- right there where I worked at, everybody had to depend on safety because they had safety men that wasn't your supervisor. The other fella was safety, and you did what they said, not what the supervisor said. And they come down and they saw you up on the scaffold or something and didn't look good to them, you coming down. The boss couldn't tell you to stay up there.

Thonhoff, J.:

So you felt really safe?

Williams, H.:

Yeah, oh yeah. Yeah.

Thonhoff, J.:

And were you ever hurt while you were working at K-25?

Williams, H.:

Yeah. I got hurt out there at X-10. Fell and messed that nerve up. You can't (indiscernible) back down now, you'd see where I was operated on.

Thonhoff, J.:

What happened when -- at the time of the event?

Williams, H.:

Well, when it hurt, when it went on, I didn't think nothing about it. I done thought I was that thing that pulled that nerve, messed that nerve up. So I went up still working and worked. And then they started sending me to the (indiscernible), but they (indiscernible). And seen it wasn't done no good. So they had one of them doctor that (indiscernible) to look at it. And they sent me to him and he took -- because he had worked on over 100 people's. They sent me to him. And he said, "That man -- that nerve messed up. He's going to have to go in the hospital to have a operation." So that's what they done.

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Thonhoff, J.: And so they helped take care of all of that?

Williams, H.: Oh yeah. Yeah, (indiscernible) all of that. So they -- because you was hurt on the job. (indiscernible) cost me not a Penny.

[2:07:20]

Thonhoff, J.: And when you were building K-25, did you know what it was being built for?

Williams, H.: No. No. Most of that -- there was signs everywhere you look that said, "Ask no questions or know nothing." "Know nothing, ask nothing." So, (indiscernible) putting in -- working. We didn't know what it was going to be because that was the sign you read, and you did what you were told.

Thonhoff, J.: When did you realize what the building was being built for?

Williams, H.: Well, when they dropped that atomic bomb, that's when I know what I had been doing, that's what we had been doing. When that was dropped.

Thonhoff, J.: What was your reaction?

Williams, H.: Well, I guess if that's what they -- that's what we'd be doing. When they dropped that thing, (indiscernible) test out yonder in New Mexico. Yeah, what's that New Mexico where they test the first one?

Thonhoff, J.: Los Alamos.

Williams, H.: Yeah. And it all (indiscernible). When they told us what -- they just told it was good. Then the next thing I know they dropped it on them Japs. Now working right there for that (indiscernible). Then they said the war is over.

Thonhoff, J.: What was your response to that? How did that make you feel?

Williams, H.: Well, I didn't think a whole lot about it. I said well, the only thing I said that was I was part of it. Well that's history. [laughs] That's the (indiscernible).

Thonhoff, J.: How do you think that history will view the Manhattan Project and its outcome?

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Williams, H.:

Well, I mean, it's viewed now from what it was back, then when I come in, it's a lot different, a lot different.

[2:09:26]

Because I never would have thought that I'd been around here to see that change that (indiscernible).

Thonhoff, J.:

Could you describe that change?

Williams, H.:

Well, it's -- I mean, you got more freedom, just like I said. When I -- way back yonder, if I wanted a drink of water, and there was a water barrel cooler sitting there, if that sign said white, I had to go find one that said colored. And so, I stayed -- been here long enough to know they took them signs away and all water is the same. But that's the way it was. And if that cooler there had a sign on it that says white, if that other one was across the street over yonder, (indiscernible) I had to go over there to get a drink of water.

Thonhoff, J.:

What would have happened if you would have drank from the white water?

Williams, H.:

You would have got run off.

Thonhoff, J.:

You would have been fired?

Williams, H.:

[laughs] Yeah. Yeah. That's what happened because they had a sign that white -- they had a little old booklet put out, paper that they'd come out (indiscernible) and they'd tell you them things, tell whether you're drinking fountain or restroom or where it was. You can go to it (indiscernible) because you had time to go to it. So I walked by -- (indiscernible) by two water cooler but it says white. And my was a mile down the street, down there in the building half mile. That's why I had to go and get more water, if I wanted a drink.

[2:11:24]

That didn't bother me because I was killing time. [laughter]

Thonhoff, J.:

And how long was it like that? It stayed that way for several years and then gradually --

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Williams, H.: No, it stayed there until 1960 -- it was up in 60-something, about 1965 or something like that, from 1943. It was in the 60s before the change.

Thonhoff, J.: (indiscernible) shift?

Williams, H.: Yeah.

Thonhoff, J.: I'm going to go back to some construction questions. How quickly was the facility constructed?

Williams, H.: Oh, it was two or three years. It took us three -- some period of -- K-25 building and that thing took them at least three years to complete them buildings.

Thonhoff, J.: And do you know why the facility was named K-25?

Williams, H.: No.

[2:12:33]

No, I don't know why it is. I seen it later on, but I didn't (indiscernible) showing it to. I went to a movie and they showed them thing, but I didn't think nothing about it then (indiscernible). But when that guy come out of Washington, D.C., Joe Barone, whatever his name was, and they was laying out these plates where they were going to put the plant. And they said that now we had to get on there and call it K-25. (indiscernible) over here, over there further, we called it Oak Ridge National Lab, and then over here and they said we'll call it Y-12. I seen that on the movie. I seen that. (indiscernible) because that's what it is. (indiscernible) that's the name (indiscernible). When the government got this land and he come out and but the man told him what they were going to do. And I -- in later years I was -- heard his speech and looked at it. I didn't know what the reason was that for. Didn't know one name from another. It didn't mean nothing to me, but later on I heard a chance to see that person and he -- how he named it.

Thonhoff, J.: And do you remember how that came about?

[2:14:11]

Williams, H.: Huh?

Thonhoff, J.: Do you remember how that came about?

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Williams, H.:

Well, that was his authority and he just told him what he want -- what he named. They had to have a name for it. And so that's what he guessed it. And that's what everybody worry about.

Thonhoff, J.:

He just got to say?

Williams, H.:

Yeah.

Thonhoff, J.:

Do you remember how you got the materials? How they arrived and -- for the construction of the building?

Williams, H.:

Yeah, most of the material were like at K-25, when we built that, the sand and rock and all that stuff come on ship, boat. You see big barges (indiscernible) come out of Kentucky, Louisville, where the sand and rock come on long barges. Some times it will be three and four of them and the thing push it. And it come in between Nashville and come down the Tennessee River from Kentucky, all the way down into the -- then it hit that all the way into Chattanooga, down there. Then it turned and come on it to K-25. All that sand and rock and gravel come in on boats, ships, barges.

Thonhoff, J.:

On barges up a river?

Williams, H.:

Yeah, up the river. There wasn't no trucks. Everything coming in on -- of course, they didn't have no highway and then come at K-25 -- have you ever been down there?

Thonhoff, J.:

I went down to the site and I looked down at it. I haven't actually gone in.

Williams, H.:

Well, I said you seen that river when you're going out of K-25, going (indiscernible). You crossed that river.

Thonhoff, J.:

I don't know if I did. I'm going to have to go back.

Williams, H.:

Yeah, yeah, you crossed it. You went to K-25, you --

Thonhoff, J.:

Oh yeah.

Williams, H.:

[laughs]

Thonhoff, J.:

That big river that --

Williams, H.:

Yeah. Yeah. Well, that's the thing -- that's the river that brought in all the materials then.

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Thonhoff, J.:

Wow. And were there any difficulties getting the material from point A to point B?

Williams, H.:

No. I mean, they had all that down. Wasn't no problem to get it in because them trucks and things (indiscernible) the government took over everything and so it come in on trains. Come in freight trains, come in through all the way from wherever they ordered it, and had a place down there called Blair Road. That was train brought that stuff in and then you go there and unload it off the train, steel and everything.

[2:17:17]

Thonhoff, J.:

Well how did people in the area respond to that? Weren't there people that didn't really know what was going on?

Williams, H.:

Yeah. They did what they were told. They didn't go up by what was going on because that was -- it'll tell you, every sign you went by and looked up. You walked in the cafeteria to eat. The sign said, "Know nothing and ask nothing." So you didn't -- you went and did what you were told.

Thonhoff, J.:

So if people asked you questions, you just didn't say anything?

Williams, H.:

No. You tell them you don't know because -- there wasn't nobody gonna ask you nothing. Not the folk working here because they know the rule. You know. Wasn't nobody working here -- them 45,000 people working here, they know -- polished. So they did what they were told. And the sign said when you walked in the cafeteria, anyplace you went in. That's what the sign said. "Know nothing and ask nothing." You just do what you're told.

Thonhoff, J.:

And since you were in construction, there weren't any women working with you, were there?

[2:18:34]

Williams, H.:

No.

Thonhoff, J.:

You didn't have them.

Williams, H.:

No. [laughs] The only thing the women did. After we poured them floors, which I'll show you in a little bit, and they would go there and clean them floors after they finish and go put some -- it was some kind of sealant. They had the women spray that and

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throw that stuff out and then that floor would get shiny, and they'd sweep it up, compound.

Thonhoff, J.: And did you ever notice them being treated any differently or --

Williams, H.: No. They wasn't treated no (indiscernible). Seen like they done better than I was because they weren't doing as hard of work as I was. So, I didn't see that.

Thonhoff, J.: What do you think the future generations should remember about K-25?

Williams, H.: Well, the generation -- the young generation, they'll never learn -- know nothing about it because that's as gone (indiscernible) and so that's -- and all that's gone behind. And so it ain't coming back. So that's (indiscernible). So, all them now, and the stuff they're learning now just don't -- it don't even (indiscernible). Every year, the thing changes. So that's dead.

Thonhoff, J.: Well, what do you think they should learn to have an accurate view?

Williams, H.: Well, I -- the only thing -- they never learn if somebody just sit down and tell them what the thing, but see they don't have no where of learning nothing about it because there ain't nothing written (indiscernible) about it.

[2:20:28]

Thonhoff, J.: Right. Well, what you would say to a young person that was important about the facility? And what would you tell me that I should remember about K-25 and that's important?

Williams, H.: Well, if you wasn't there to see it, there's no way I could tell you probably and you wouldn't know what I was talking about. That's just -- it's just that simple. I could tell you all these things, what went on and things, but if you didn't see it and know about it, you wouldn't know what I was talking about. So it wouldn't even stay with you. Or you could do things what I'm saying, but you don't have no idea because you didn't see it.

Thonhoff, J.: Well, can you give me an idea so that -- you know, that's kind of what we're trying to do is get an idea of what happened so that we can accurately portray what --

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Williams, H.:

But you won't ever get that. I mean to say -- I can sit right here because you don't know, you weren't around, and you don't know the way. See, that's the different (indiscernible) my job or what I was doing. And so -- and the rest of the people. And if you didn't know that way and know that kind of way, you -- I could tell stay here till 9 tomorrow and talk about it, but you still wouldn't understand what I was saying because you didn't know about it and never seen it.

[2:21:33]

Thonhoff, J.:

Well not anybody is going to be able to see it and that's kind of what we're trying do.

Williams, H.:

No, well I say. So, you're not -- I can tell you things what I done and all like that, but you -- I don't have no way -- all you do is just take what I said.

Thonhoff, J.:

Right.

Williams, H.:

And that's a (indiscernible) because you never see it. And you ain't gonna see no movie or nothing. You might see -- go around and looking up a book. So that's something, that's what they said they were doing.

Thonhoff, J.:

Well, would you be willing to talk about that and tell me about it, even if I don't see it?

Williams, H.:

Well, it depends. That, of course, if you don't know anything about what I'm saying, I'm just throwing away time talking about it because you wouldn't know what I was saying in the first place. That's what I'm trying get you to see.

Thonhoff, J.:

So you don't feel you have the time --

Williams, H.:

No. No.

Thonhoff, J.:

-- to talk to me about it?

Williams, H.:

It just don't mean nothing to -- it wouldn't mean nothing to you because you ain't never gonna see it and you never know when I tell you, you will never understood. So it's just that simple.

Thonhoff, J.:

You want to try me?

William, Hal

Williams, H.: What I said? I don't have the time to sit down and try to tell you date -- worry about wood and (indiscernible), what we all went through. I wouldn't even try it.

Thonhoff, J.: How about in a nutshell?

Williams, H.: Well, I said what do you want to know?

Thonhoff, J.: Everything you want to tell me. I want --

[2:23:21]

Williams, H.: Well, I ain't gonna (indiscernible). If you got a particular thing you want to know from me, going around, nope I'm not even going to think about it. No.

Thonhoff, J.: No?

Williams, H.: No. [laughs]

Thonhoff, J.: Okay.

Williams, H.: [laughs]

Thonhoff, J.: I tried. [laughter]

Williams, H.: No. I ain't got that big time. I say I'd be trying to tell you here tomorrow. So I'm not going. Just like this book here. I can show you some things and you still wouldn't know what I was showing you. Here. So, that's what I was saying about.

Now there's this book. You see what that thing says there?

Thonhoff, J.: You know what? Let's get it so he can see it.

Williams, H.: The first 25 years of this city are here in this book, in this book, the first 25 years. (indiscernible) this city is in this book. And I mean to say -- I mean to say you don't under -- you talking about -- you see them things right there. That was kind of living thing that was staying here.

Thonhoff, J.: Okay. Got it.

Williams, H.: Then huts.

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Thonhoff, J.: You know what we'll do, is in just a little bit we'll get some pictures taken of these.

Williams, H.: Yeah, I can tell you everything in that book.

[2:25:10]

[End of Tape 2]

[3:00:06]

Williams, H.: -- and didn't know it. Cut the date off and didn't know it. That's a new (indiscernible), took that picture. I was standing there looking at him when he took it.

Thonhoff, J.: (indiscernible) with you?

Williams, H.: No. It's hard for you to see why -- you see them two guys standing right there?

Thonhoff, J.: Is that --

Williams, H.: That's me, the one --

Thonhoff, J.: That's you?

Williams, H.: Yeah. My job, as you see, is a pipe -- coming though you had pipe up there. You had concrete coming out of that pipe. That was my job to take that (indiscernible) go back, (indiscernible) break that pipe off when you standing on the side. Well I know there one of them fellas. We all come there together, but they (indiscernible) the first floor of K-25.

Thonhoff, J.: Wow!

[3:01:11]

We will get a picture of this in a little bit, and I'd like for you to describe that for me again, what your job was and what you did.

Williams, H.: Yeah. That's why I brought it because I had that picture. The new (indiscernible) sent me that picture about -- they had been trying to find somebody that way. And I'm the only person (indiscernible). And they called up and told me they got a picture they wanted me to see it.

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Thonhoff, J.:

And could you describe for me again what you did?

Williams, H.:

Well, I'm done. That's what we call concrete finishing. Them concrete -- they pouring concrete. (indiscernible) concrete finishing. All of us there is concrete finishing.

Thonhoff, J.:

And what was your main job? What did you do?

Williams, H.:

Finished concrete. Doing the same thing you see them fellas doing.

Thonhoff, J.:

Right.

Williams, H.:

Yeah.

Thonhoff, J.:

Could you describe the process for me?

Williams, H.:

Yeah. What I say? You can't just --

Thonhoff, J.:

You're all caught up. Actually, you know what?

Williams, H.:

Well (indiscernible) a truck in there. Them long building, truck dumps it in to a hopper and that (indiscernible) pumps it here into the building. That's what them fellas doing, pouring it. In my job - - well all of us got the same pay, but my job was right there. The two of us on one side and the other on the other side. You don't know a whole lot about that, but that concrete is coming out that end of that pipe. That pipe is -- I guess that pipe is where that concrete from. That pipe is full (indiscernible) for the (indiscernible) and pump it, dumped it into that pipe. (indiscernible) in there with the truck and that's the (indiscernible). (indiscernible) pur it. That's where you had to pour them buildings. Pump it through that a ways because could no truck get in. You just had a certain distance and then (indiscernible) machine. And that there at K-25. That first concrete poured on that first steel building down there.

[3:03:31]

Starting -- just starting, that building was a -- I think is covered 59 acres of land, that building sit on.

Thonhoff, J.:

And how much concrete was poured?

William, Hal

Williams, H.: I would even try to think about it. Thousands and thousands of yards because it was three floors in there. It took us over a year to build it.

Thonhoff, J.: To pour all the concrete?

Williams, H.: Yeah. Yeah. Close to a year. There's three floors in it.

Thonhoff, J.: And then it says something about a mono -- on the bottom corner, it says something about a --

Williams, H.: What is it?

Thonhoff, J.: Monoslab is what I think it says. Monolith.

Williams, H.: Yeah.

Thonhoff, J.: What does that mean?

Williams, H.: Well that means -- that's what I'm talking about. That's a machine.

Thonhoff, J.: That's the name of the machine?

Williams, H.: Yeah. Yeah.

Thonhoff, J.: Okay.

Williams, H.: Pumping that concrete, just a pump. And that concrete -- the truck is pumping that stuff out. It's at least a half mile from where them fellas are at. And it pumps it up there because the truck couldn't -- that's as close as they could get. Because there were three floors and they couldn't get no truck up on the second floor. So that's where they had the building built. So that's what that (indiscernible).

[3:05:15]

But later on in years, they learned a little bit different. They know how to put it in a building and back them trucks in there. But back then, they didn't know but one way. And that was to pump it through a pipe, and that pipeline be sitting (indiscernible) yonder (indiscernible) machine, where that pump it. Then you have to lay a line. That was my here, lay that pipe all the way up. It was a half mile long or what.

Thonhoff, J.: So it was average about a half mile long?

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- Williams, H.:** Yeah in some place. Might be further than that. It's all the truck could do, bring it to a hopper and back up and dump it into that hopper. And that machine start pumping through them pipe up to where they wanted it.
- Thonhoff, J.:** And you did that for over a year to build the building?
- Williams, H.:** Oh yeah. Yeah, we started on that building (indiscernible) fresh out of the country, November the 18, 1943. And about 1944, we completed that building and a new (indiscernible) because after 1945, we had them all done. We started it in 1943. In 1945, we poured the last -- by July 1945.
- Thonhoff, J.:** Wow!
- Williams, H.:** That's how long it took us. A long time.
- Thonhoff, J.:** Do you have to go over -- do you want me to hold the book and we can go over the things in the book that you have there on the floor?
- Williams, H.:** Oh yeah. I can go -- it's called the (indiscernible) on the Hill.
- Thonhoff, J.:** Okay. Do you want to go ahead and sit up and talk to me and you can --
- Williams, H.:** And so that's what they built.
- [3:07:31]
- But they done built a big (indiscernible). Let me tell you, you could (indiscernible) but that was the first church that's (indiscernible) over here.
- Thonhoff, J.:** Did you attend this church?
- Williams, H.:** Yeah. I attended and I didn't bring the picture, the one I go to. I didn't think about it. The one we built, the first one that I have. But (indiscernible) we worked that of church over but that was the name of it. (Indiscernible) took over, the people (indiscernible) because this -- people were living in there. That was their church. IT was about four churches inside of this (indiscernible), what they took -- when the government took over.
- Thonhoff, J.:** So that was here previous to K-25?

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Williams, H.:

Yeah. Yeah. Oh, yeah. K-25 and Y-12. Of course there's one down there at K-25 up there. And it was one down there (indiscernible) that old -- I know the (indiscernible) down there and I think they finally tore that church down. But people belongs to it. There was one going to X-10. It's to your left. It comes out there once a year -- I think it must be about more or less, but the government got it, fixed it up. The (indiscernible) here got it. The same old building. The government keeps it going. But they have service in that church once a year. Most of the people come from - - most of them died out, but there's still a few of them. They live in (indiscernible). And they come back there once a year and they have service.

[3:09:32]

Thonhoff, J.:

You want to describe some of this stuff for me?

Williams, H.:

Yeah, that's 1942. There was -- that what was -- (indiscernible) on that date. That was when they was getting ready to build that -- them plants down there. Right there is one of them what you call hutments. People lived in some like that. When they were working, you see the women staying here. That's what they live in.

Thonhoff, J.:

And could you tell me again, how many people would stay in a hutment?

Williams, H.:

Four. Four to a each one of them things. See them little thing in (indiscernible). There's four a hut. Put it so -- that's probably some (indiscernible). Now that man there, they the head of this DOE government, them DOE men. They were having a meeting in 1949. (indiscernible) over there where they called the flat top houses thing. And that there, well (indiscernible) different places with -- you don't know a whole lot about (indiscernible), and I couldn't tell you about where all -- whereabouts it was all at because you -- because that there was (indiscernible) DOE. Well that's the government across over there where they got all that thing, house, apartment, where they got their big office at. But that right there (indiscernible).

[3:11:41]

And that there, right there, some of the dormitory thing they stayed in.

Thonhoff, J.:

Is that the building? Or that's the demolition.

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Williams, H.: Yeah. Well after it got done, the government come (indiscernible) land for people to build houses and then they didn't need them things no more They were dormitories. Dormitories. That thing right there where you see all that smoke, that happened in 1949. What that is, they was opening the gate for the people to get in and out. Before that, the secret city, if you didn't work in here, you couldn't come in there because they was opening that gate.

Thonhoff, J.: That was a celebration then?

Williams, H.: Yeah, a celebration.

[3:12:45]

Yeah, that there was a celebration. That's when the cafeteria (indiscernible) different.

Thonhoff, J.: (indiscernible)

Williams, H.: Yeah, they had all them different things what come to be stores. What they had inside it, the (indiscernible) after they kind of made a city out of it so all of them there are names of different places with a (indiscernible). The first 25 years. Now that's the funeral home. You probably -- I don't know why (indiscernible) been here, but that's right up on the towing pipe. They call it Modern Funeral Home. (indiscernible) all the time. (indiscernible) didn't add a whole lot more to it.

Thonhoff, J.: It's still here now?

Williams, H.: Yeah. Oh, yeah. They added a whole lot to it now from what it was. But that was the first. Yeah. Now that right there what used to be a police headquarters. That's where you see all the police. I know just about all of them. That guy right there, which he dead now. He was number one police guard here in this area. Well that building is still here. But it's right up there where the gas company -- where you go pay your gas bill, that building. I know you ain't been there to pay your -- you don't live here, but that's the building sitting behind where them fellas (indiscernible) right now.

Thonhoff, J.: And what's this?

[3:14:34]

Williams, H.: That's one of -- that's why I want to get back to you. That was the farm house, right here, where you start out going over, right here,

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going (indiscernible). There were several of them things. That's where them old farmers were staying here when the government took it over. That's one of them houses.

Thonhoff, J.: So the government took over and then they took all the land and they gave them these houses?

Williams, H.: No, they tore that down. That's where they were staying until the government took it.

Thonhoff, J.: Okay.

Williams, H.: Yeah. Yeah.

Thonhoff, J.: That was their house before?

Williams, H.: Yeah. Yeah. That was their house before.

Thonhoff, J.: And that's the Wheat community?

Williams, H.: Yeah. Yeah.

[3:15:09]

Now, right there is where they (indiscernible). You see them fellas there, them guards looking in them cars? Well that's the way it had to be for you to get in here. You had to come by them fellas every time you come in and out was guards. They look at your (indiscernible). And they had four gates coming in there and that's what fella was doing. (indiscernible). They had four ways to get in here, but you had to come through by them guards to get in here.

Thonhoff, J.: Was it hard to get past the guards?

Williams, H.: Yeah. You had to have a -- see that's the same thing. That's right here where you go between (indiscernible). That's the gate.

Thonhoff, J.: That's the gate? That's the original gate? Now they have the white gate with the little --

Williams, H.: Yeah. But that -- during that time, that was for the city. But now they got the gate to where you're going into the plant. But that was coming into Oak Ridge.

Thonhoff, J.: Okay.

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Williams, H.:

Yeah, that's the gate when you had to come by them to get into Oak Ridge. And that there is a place right over there, at that time, he was a -- they sold gas. You worked at K-25, it's (indiscernible) people stayed in that (indiscernible) K-25 gas station and (indiscernible) down there.

[3:16:36]

And that there was the place right over here, (indiscernible) now. I don't know whether you been over (indiscernible). But the super center is built right where that it is. That was called Midtown. They had a couple of stores and a theater up there and things. That building right there where they working (indiscernible) put that floor in there.

Thonhoff, J.:

You built most of Oak Ridge, didn't you?

Williams, H.:

Yeah. All that (indiscernible) trailers and that's going up (indiscernible), going out (indiscernible). Now that's up there going into the plant. The plant to wait, people in line. But they (indiscernible). That there is a place called Jackson Square. That was the only shopping area. That's where you went up there to shop. And the people standing there to get on the bus that's going to different places. That's what they done right there. That's it. Jackson Square

[3:17:51]

Thonhoff, J.:

Was shopping different? Was the shopping segregated as well?

Williams, H.:

No.

Thonhoff, J.:

No?

Williams, H.:

No. Shopping wasn't.

Thonhoff, J.:

What about busses?

Williams, H.:

Well, the busses, I mean you had a bus that come into the Scarborough. And you didn't no business getting on them other busses going yonder way because you didn't live over there. And you rode the busses you worked at. (indiscernible) worked and made service in them there things (indiscernible).

Thonhoff, J.:

Did you ride separate busses to go shopping or could you ride on any bus to go --

William, Hal

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Williams, H.: Back where I live in that same area we lived in, we had a bus running every hour, coming and going back to the --

[crew talk]

Williams, H.: So that's what it was. They had busses, bus for different areas. And we had one come in here in this are down here, where we living at right now. It goes into Jackson Square, where you see all -- getting back -- every hour that bus was going back and forth. And that's the place right down there, (indiscernible) over here. That's the first election, voting. People going in there to vote in 1946.

Thonhoff, J.: And there's some of the busses right there.

[3:19:27]

Williams, H.: Yeah. That's the (indiscernible) worked on them, cleaned them busses up at night and service. Yeah. Now you see that thing there?

Thonhoff, J.: Yeah.

Williams, H.: (Indiscernible) The first time I got on that thing (indiscernible) that's where I had to come in, 1943. That (indiscernible) to come into it, Oak Ridge.

Thonhoff, J.: (indiscernible)

Williams, H.: Yeah, that's what the thing went back and forth. It was cable (indiscernible).

Thonhoff, J.: Oh.

Williams, H.: Went back and come over to this side and take you back day and night. That's what you rode in to come into work on.

[3:20:12]

That's one of them huts (indiscernible).

Thonhoff, J.: What's this?

Williams, H.: (indiscernible)

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William, Hal

Thonhoff, J.:

It's an aerial view?

Williams, H.:

Yeah. Let's see what -- that's one of them resident areas where the trailers and all that for people to live.

Thonhoff, J.:

(indiscernible) housing.

Williams, H.:

Yeah, yeah, that's more of the housing. That was when they had the -- that there -- I can't call it (indiscernible), but they was having that big opening house. They had a (indiscernible). And that was (indiscernible). Them gates was coming down, coming in the area and they put them in that and (indiscernible) the plant. They done away with them (indiscernible). And any person -- back then you could come in the city but you couldn't go in the plant. At one time, you couldn't come into the city (indiscernible).

Thonhoff, J.:

Yeah, it was a secret city.

Williams, H.:

Yeah. [laughs] So that was one of the shopping areas first up there in Jackson Square. Right now in that same place is office store. That was one of the first (indiscernible). They got whiskey (indiscernible) that thing (indiscernible).

Thonhoff, J.:

How long did it take for the -- because I know there was no alcohol allowed in the city for a long time.

Williams, H.:

Now, there wasn't. Well, it was here but see they would catch you with it and (indiscernible) bring it in day and night because they go get on the bus and go to Chattanooga and bring it in and sell it. But it wasn't legal to do it. [laughs] but they were done.

Thonhoff, J.:

So you guys had whiskey anyway?

Williams, H.:

Yeah.

Thonhoff, J.:

But this is legal whiskey?

Williams, H.:

Yeah. That's the first whiskey store. Yeah. (indiscernible) leave Chattanooga and went down there and get, oh, cases of whiskey and have it all in a coke thing. Well, when he get to the gate down there, the bus driver done sat there and washed them away with it. He's going to tell the guard. See that guy got whiskey and they pull him out. The guard will go in there and get him, take the whiskey and put him off the bus. So (indiscernible) simple.

[3:23:15]

William, Hal

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Thonhoff, J.: What was the punishment if you got caught transporting whiskey?

Williams, H.: Well it wasn't that big a fine. You just got off and if -- most of them, they just took it. They took the whiskey. There was no fine because it was legal in Chattanooga, you see. All they done (indiscernible). They didn't fine you for it.

Thonhoff, J.: So you didn't get fired if you brought in whiskey?

Williams, H.: No. No. No one just coming in the area. Now you set it up there at the plant. There was men up (indiscernible) on the job, yeah, they got fired.

Thonhoff, J.: But it was okay to bring it into the city if you didn't get caught.

Williams, H.: Yeah, if you didn't get caught. [laughs]

Thonhoff, J.: Got it.

Williams, H.: So that's what that was.

[3:24:04]

Yeah, that there that's all that. Now right there, that's the old turnpike. That -- running right through there what they call Oak Ridge towing pipe, 1946. You see all them (indiscernible), that's (indiscernible). I know you don't know a whole lot about it, but that (indiscernible) is a football field. And the high school, but that will (indiscernible) you see there at that time.

That was one of the first museums in -- way down yonder (indiscernible) over here.

That's the first -- down there now, what you call the mall, but that was the first one. Put up that mall and (indiscernible), sold again because at that time (indiscernible) get out and go in. They got to close the thing in. And working on (indiscernible), which they (indiscernible) now. They (indiscernible) in it. They can't figure out what they want to do with it. I think there's three stores. Closed the thing in and the rent went too high and every left here. (indiscernible) place. Ain't nothing down there. You got to go west town or east town (indiscernible).

[3:25:49]

William, Hal

Thonhoff, J.: What about the -- this is an old flat top?

Williams, H.: Yeah, that (indiscernible) house up what you call flat top. See how high those brown -- some of them had -- because in them places where you could be (indiscernible). And so that's what flooded the area.

[crew talk]

Williams, H.: So that there is the school (indiscernible). All of that (indiscernible). All that there is just some of the old stuff there.

Thonhoff, J.: Activities and things?

Williams, H.: Yeah. Yeah. (indiscernible) gone now. Singing or doing something. (indiscernible)

Thonhoff, J.: (indiscernible)

Williams, H.: (indiscernible)

Thonhoff, J.: That's probably about most of it, right?

Williams, H.: Yeah.

Thonhoff, J.: Most of the pictures?

Williams, H.: That was up there at the old first shopping center at Jackson Square, that sign there, 1946. (indiscernible) dormitory where people lived in up there.

Thonhoff, J.: They had Kentucky Fried Chicken.

[3:27:33]

Williams, H.: Yeah.

Thonhoff, J.: Look at that.

Williams, H.: Col. Sanders, first place he had -- I know you heard. He had a barbecue place here in 1945.

Thonhoff, J.: Wow!

William, Hal

Williams, H.: And that's where he started it, right there. And he left (indiscernible) and went on back to Kentucky and went into that (indiscernible).

Thonhoff, J.: My goodness! That's hard to believe.

Williams, H.: Yeah, but that's where he started out, right here.

Thonhoff, J.: Well.

Williams, H.: (indiscernible) apartment thing. I worked on the thing when it was being built. That's what they call the (indiscernible) department over there. I don't know whether you've seen it or been on that -- but the red cross over there and (indiscernible) I don't guess -- I bet it ain't a (indiscernible) in the thing that used to be packed. (indiscernible) moved out of there, gone, retired, because they've been there since 1945 when them things built.

[3:28:51]

(indiscernible) downtown, working on the (indiscernible).

Up there, Jackson Square. My old busses, where you got off there at the bus thing. Check the bus and get off and go to shop. (indiscernible) office. At one time, the government (indiscernible) outside the area and they went and sold that thing to a (indiscernible) a big medical thing. (indiscernible) What it used to be.

[crew talk]

[End of Tape 3, Begin Tape 4]

[4:00:09]

Williams, H.: -- that's where it used to be. (indiscernible) even nobody -- used to be all the time people go in there, busy, in and out, and they could walk through that big thing down there.

Thonhoff, J.: And where it is that again?

Williams, H.: I said that's what -- the plant, X-10, down there. The national laboratory. (indiscernible) good you go in now but not it ain't because they (indiscernible) shut down.

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- Thonhoff, J.:** Is it that little visitor's center up on the hill when you come into town and you can look over and --
- Williams, H.:** Yeah, well -- see they -- (indiscernible) got it now, you go up there. But that time when you went in there, you was inside the plant.
- Thonhoff, J.:** Okay.
- Williams, H.:** [laughs] Yeah.
- Thonhoff, J.:** That's a little different.
- Williams, H.:** Yeah, it made a difference. [laughs] Yeah, so that's what it was. They made it a little bit different. Yeah.
- Thonhoff, J.:** (indiscernible)
- Williams, H.:** Yeah. Yeah, that's the one down there. And that there Y-12, be right there. (indiscernible)
- Thonhoff, J.:** Alpha 5 building.
- Williams, H.:** Yeah, Alpha 5, yeah. Yeah, Alpha 5, that's over by Y-12. I worked in them buildings. What's it called. That's (indiscernible). (indiscernible) Bissell, that's the mayor of Oak Ridge, the first mayor. And they (indiscernible) building, I don't know whether you paid any attention or not. You might have seen right below that police headquarters, where they're building that (indiscernible) thing, where (indiscernible) working there. Well that's going to be -- that thing is going to be named after him. And they're putting the history up, old people who have been here a long time. Their name is going to go in there. My name is down there in there.
- Thonhoff, J.:** That makes you feel proud, huh?
- Williams, H.:** [laughs] Yeah. My name gonna be going on that -- in that market down there, where you walk through a drive-through and see the old peoples who have been here. They haven't put it, but they ain't got it all done with yet. (indiscernible) That's Oak Ridge high school there.
- Thonhoff, J.:** About what year is that?
- Williams, H.:** That high school started in 1940 -- about 1940 -- it was the in 40s, late 40s, back in the 40s. I worked on it when it was being built, high school.

William, Hal

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[4:3:35]

Thonhoff, J.: (indiscernible)

Williams, H.: That's old there -- (indiscernible) over here on the hill, according -- from the museum. You ever been to the museum?

Thonhoff, J.: Uh-uhn (negative).

Williams, H.: Well the museum is over there. And that's (indiscernible) building next to the museum where they used to have a -- where they (indiscernible) with rex and thing all like that, cows and things. That's what that page is. Only did I make it bigger.

And right here, which I know you ain't seen yet. But you heard Scarborough School. Well that's a -- belongs to UT. You see that sign that says UT. That's where they got all kinds of rex and animals. That's where they tested them. The first cows right there were brought from -- there was 13 of them. They brought them from Los (indiscernible). When they tested that bomb, they had them cows out there to see how that bomb did the thing. Most of them, it took hair off of them. And they brought them here. And the oldest cow, she had -- I don't whether that's her or not. But the oldest one now, after they brought them from out there, she had 17 calves.

Thonhoff, J.: Oh my God!

[4:5:09]

Williams, H.: Yeah. [laughs]

Thonhoff, J.: Were you like --

Williams, H.: Before she died, she had 17 calves, and they kept out there. She was brought from out there where they tested as Los Alamos. And they had her a number 17 that was on them. You could see her walking in the pasture. Right there, there's the number on her.

Thonhoff, J.: Did they do field trips out to here so you could kind of see what was going on?

Williams, H.: Yeah, you could go out there. (indiscernible) road things. They had an old building right there. You see the bridge of that building?

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Thonhoff, J.:

Uh-huh (affirmative)

Williams, H.:

In 1946, I went to a meeting in that basement, the (indiscernible), in 1946. The governor did -- they wouldn't even use -- it was old Scarborough school, where the right went when they were living here, children and things. But that's the school they had. That was the name of the place.

Thonhoff, J.:

What were some of the other things that happened to the cows besides --

Williams, H.:

Well, they kept them -- see, they had them right there when they dropped that bomb to test it. And they had it right there to see what it would do to the animals. And it was there, she lived 17 years before she died and had 17 calves, and that's her right there.

[4:05:39]

Thonhoff, J.:

Wow!

Williams, H.:

That's one of the churches right up on the hill there.

Thonhoff, J.:

Is that still there?

Williams, H.:

Yeah, it's still there. It's a big church. They have service in it every Sunday. It's a big church. There's two of them up there. Yeah, that's down there. That's a big church. That's St. Mary, a catholic church. That's (indiscernible) right now. (indiscernible).

Thonhoff, J.:

Wow.

Williams, H.:

Yeah, all that there.

Thonhoff, J.:

Look, they have a pool.

Williams, H.:

Yeah.

Thonhoff, J.:

They had a pool?

Williams, H.:

Yeah. You can still go there. They probably over there now swimming in it. They got a great big pool. That's over from the high school. (indiscernible). Yeah.

Thonhoff, J.:

And then this is Oak Ridge, an aerial view?

William, Hal

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Williams, H.:

Yeah.

[4:07:52]

And that place there, we wondered if Governor (indiscernible) had one of them research spots in now. (indiscernible). All them (indiscernible) big guys that -- governor in there. (indiscernible) DOE.

Thonhoff, J.:

There are a lot of executives in here.

Williams, H.:

Yeah. [laughs] That was the first 25 years of this city, and I am the only one that had that book.

Thonhoff, J.:

Another -- any memories, anything you want to talk about when you were in Oak Ridge at the time?

Williams, H.:

Well, actually, I went over everything because half of I probably done forgot, hold on it. You know, I seen in the 50s, (indiscernible) 60-some years I've been here. Some (indiscernible), I reckon. And I'm the only one living. It was nine that's come here together. And before it would have been ten. One died before he got here and made us two or three days late because we stayed and waited on his funeral.

Thonhoff, J.:

What happened to him?

Williams, H.:

Well he went up there -- he used to work that mess, (indiscernible) meals thing. And his brother (indiscernible) there. And so he wanted to grow up there and see could he still do the thing (indiscernible). Pull that thing to you. And he pulled it too far and spit (indiscernible) right down (indiscernible). And that made us be three days later coming here because we stayed (indiscernible) funeral. There was ten of us who were signed up to come here, but then the nine of us make it.

Thonhoff, J.:

And what did he pull straight through his (indiscernible)?

Williams, H.:

A saw, where he used to work at. It was a saw. And his brother worked it. (indiscernible) some kind of media (indiscernible) thing cut some kind of -- they made valves or something with that. And that's what he -- so he used to work there. And so he went there and told his brother, "Let him try." He just pulled the thing too hard. Hit him right in the chest.

Thonhoff, J.:

Oh my gosh!

William, Hal

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Williams, H.: [laughs] So that's what happened. And made us -- we decided to wait to go to his funeral because he was supposed to have been here with us.

Thonhoff, J.: Was it an adventure getting here?

Williams, H.: Huh?

Thonhoff, J.: Was it an adventure getting here?

[4:11:14]

Williams, H.: No, it wasn't no -- the only thing it was -- when I rode all day and all night to get in. And I didn't have one thing in mind. (indiscernible) that's the only place I heard about. We left. We were going to Knoxville. But when I got over here and got in this place over here. I don't know whether you come through it. I saw the signs. Sign said Clinton. And that's where they said, "This is where you get off." I said, "This ain't Knoxville. We supposed to be going to -- " He said, "Nope. You don't go no further than here." The bus kept on to Knoxville, but we didn't. And we put it off in front of a little hold hotel. And that lady knows about folk. That was her job when they (indiscernible) brought us some (indiscernible) and be down the street. Then she called into this area and told them (indiscernible) and they sent -- come out there and got us.

And that was the 8th day of July 1943.

Thonhoff, J.: Wow! And then after that, do they -- what was the process of you getting to start working?

Williams, H.: Well, they had to go through -- I even had to go clear over to Honeyman and go through the Army board there, thing you had to go before you can come in here. I had -- they took us over to Honeyman and then come back and -- when I come on through the (indiscernible) and give you your old badge. I signed up. (indiscernible) then I had to all the way to (indiscernible). That's we had to stay because they didn't have no place for you to stay here. And then we had to start unloading them trucks, getting them -- same thing (indiscernible) to them huts. Put (indiscernible) and the first four huts we put up, they brought us back and I stayed in one of them. And I been here ever since.

[4:13:26]

William, Hal

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Thonhoff, J.:

How do you like here?

Williams, H.:

Well, I like here. Well, I done spent all my life here. I ain't got no business liking nowhere else. [laughs] I've been here since 1943. So I can't call nothing else here but home. (indiscernible) I got a home here.

Thonhoff, J.:

And you were working construction and that's why you came out to work here?

Williams, H.:

Yeah, I was working with the same company before I come --

[4:13:59]

Thonhoff, J.:

So you transferred?

Williams, H.:

Yeah, transferred me here. They told me they had a job and there were two places I could go. They say you go to Knoxville, Tennessee, or Los Alamos. And I said, "I'll go to Knoxville, Tennessee. I ain't going to Los Alamos because I ain't heard of nothing like that. That was too far from home. And that's how I end up here. Come in and started working and I've been here ever since.

I got two granddaughter and I got a wife. I got (indiscernible), and I got two granddaughters. They's up and grown and they got their own jobs. My daughter got her own -- works up there on the (indiscernible). I worked out here at Y-12 plant, what you're looking at now.

Thonhoff, J.:

That's wonderful.

Williams, H.:

Yeah. The Lord been good to me.

Thonhoff, J.:

What a good life.

Williams, H.:

Yeah. I says that's why it took the government a long time to find out who I was at DOE over there. They see that name and every now and then they would see it, but they didn't know who I was. So finally one day they seen a guy. And they asked him did he know this fella was. He said he is him. And we -- (indiscernible). Said we have his name but we don't know who he is. And the fella told me about it. Come over to my house. Said (indiscernible) see you at DOE, the government. And so I went over there one day, and I got the letter at the house written out what they wrote up and

William, Hal

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gave me (indiscernible). Because I'm the oldest person that ever been here, come out.

Thonhoff, J.: Wow!

Williams, H.: And that's paid off. My daughter worked that -- she worked out -- and I had a granddaughter graduated from UT but she won't take it. She got a big job at UT. She come out at college last Saturday. They give her a job out there Monday.

Thonhoff, J.: Wow. That was really fast.

Williams, H.: Yup. [laughs] she got a job, secretary out there.

Thonhoff, J.: So you kept in the family, huh?

Williams, H.: Yeah. (indiscernible)

Thonhoff, J.: Well you said you had some more pictures of some things in here?

[4:17:08]

Williams, H.: Yeah, I think I showed you all the --

Thonhoff, J.: Oh no, these are the pictures and then I have the other pictures.

Williams, H.: Yeah. Yeah. No, the (indiscernible).

Thonhoff, J.: That's the stuff that --

Williams, H.: That's (indiscernible). I know I brought them. And you looked at that there -- that picture when I started to work here.

Thonhoff, J.: Yeah, I'd like to get a still shot of that with the camera.

Williams, H.: What, this here picture here?

Thonhoff, J.: Uh-huh (affirmative). And is there -- are there any memories or anything -- any more stories you have about the time you spent that you'd like to share?

Williams, H.: Well, I guess I done told you the history. [laughs] So I don't guess I have nothing else.

Thonhoff, J.: You wrote it down for me so I understand.

William, Hal

Williams, H.: Yeah. [laughs] So you got the history of Oak Ridge.

Thonhoff, J.: That's wonderful.

[4:18:17]

Williams, H.: And so --

Thonhoff, J.: But are there any particular memories that you look back and smile about?

Williams, H.: Well, I have so many, I couldn't just set one aside and say this and that any more. Because I had so many enjoyments, some things that -- but after all it worked out. So I don't guess one is more important than -- the good part about it is I'm still around here.

Thonhoff, J.: Absolutely.

Williams, H.: [laughs]

Thonhoff, J.: Absolutely.

Williams, H.: Yeah, so that's the most thing I'm smiling about.

Thonhoff, J.: Absolutely.

Williams, H.: Because I'm the only one still living out of ten of us.

Thonhoff, J.: From the very beginning.

Williams, H.: Yeah, from the very beginning.

Thonhoff, J.: Could you give me a story for each years or so, one that sticks out in your head?

[4:19:06]

Williams, H.: Well, I mean -- I don't know things because I mean to say when I come and worked until I retired. So I mean to say that I don't have nothing I need to say -- outshine (indiscernible) outshine the other thing. I had a good life and been down here. So I don't have nothing.

Thonhoff, J.: How did you meet your wife? You said she worked at K-25?

Williams, H.: Yeah.

William, Hal

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Thonhoff, J.: How did you guys meet?

Williams, H.: Well I meet because she was working there and I seen her and we rode the bus back and forth on the bus going -- she lived in them (indiscernible) where you seen the hut, and men stayed in (indiscernible). And I rode back and forth with her going to work, that's how I met her.

Thonhoff, J.: And you guys started talking?

Williams, H.: Yeah. Started talking and -- but she was staying up there in the hut, and we started talking and then she got interested and I started talking. And then we got (indiscernible) she didn't want to stay in the huts, and I had got tired of staying in the hut. And so they had some family houses up there, and that's the only way you could get one of them. You had to be married. And so we got on the bus one Saturday and went to Chattanooga down in (indiscernible). That's where you had to go then, Chattanooga, and go right down there, walk in there, and get married. You didn't have to wait, down there in (indiscernible), Georgia, right out of Chattanooga. Just across the line.

Thonhoff, J.: Wow.

[4:20:46]

Williams, H.: And that was (indiscernible) people back yonder I know. Black people, that's where they went and got married. Down there. Most of them weren't married when they come here, but you couldn't -- if you had a wife, you couldn't stay with them because they didn't have no family (indiscernible).

Thonhoff, J.: So most of the people would meet here and then get married and then graduate to a bigger house?

Williams, H.: Yeah. And then you had a chance of getting a bigger place. But they were living -- the women that I showed you that pen over where the women stayed and the men stayed. (indiscernible) But if you married, they had them flat top things, you could go there and get one of them. They had family, wife. Some of them had kids and things they brought them here. It was back at whatever company -- Georgia, Alabama, different places.

[4:21:59]

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William, Hal

Thonhoff, J.: Well I think that's it. You covered so much and what a rich history you have.

Williams, H.: Yeah, gotta -- I've been around here. But yeah, another thing I have a birthday this coming Thursday. I'll be 85 years old.

Thonhoff, J.: Wow. How do you feel?

Williams, H.: I feel good.

Thonhoff, J.: Are you gonna have a party and go celebrate?

Williams, H.: Well, I got a whole lot of cards and things, but I don't fool to having that any more. I got a card yesterday or the day before from a lady (indiscernible) a funeral -- or not a funeral, owns this insurance, big insurance. But she know my birthday because I have insurance with her. And I wasn't thinking. The other day I got a card and it said happy birthday. And I looked (indiscernible), it's here, my birthday. (indiscernible) wouldn't have got it.
[laughter]

I have insurance, and ever since I've been in that insurance, I guess about 20 years, she knows when -- I get a birthday card from her.

[4:23:52]

Thonhoff, J.: What a close community.

Williams, H.: Yeah. Because I knowed her when she first come in and started to work out there at the plant. And she (indiscernible) and then she quit and went into business for herself, insurance. Now she got, I don't know, four or five people working in her office.

Thonhoff, J.: Good for her.

Williams, H.: Yeah.

Thonhoff, J.: And you guys met at K-25 or X-10?

Williams, H.: Huh?

Thonhoff, J.: You guys met at K-25 or at X-10?

Williams, H.: No, I had seen her. I knew her when she was going to school. She come out of there and spent one year, one summer, from (indiscernible) where her home is, she'd come up. And they would

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let the kids come out here and they'd work -- spend the summer out here from all different -- they're still doing it. And she come out and worked out there and so she went on back to school and finished that year. And she had a job. When she left here, she took it. And they told her they would hire her if she want it. So she come back about a month or so. And she been here ever since and worked out there at X-10. Worked her way up and got her own insurance. [laughs] And got three or four people working for her.

Thonhoff, J.: She made it.

Williams, H.: Yeah, she made it.

Thonhoff, J.: Good for her. Well I think that's it. You have given me so much as far as history and stories and all your knowledge.

Williams, H.: Yeah, I guess it's getting closer to the time to get home too and get ready to try to get me something to eat.

Thonhoff, J.: What I would like to do before --

[crew talk]

[End of Interview]