

Hotfoot/49 Side A  
Interview with Harry Simons  
November 19, 1981

HS Do we have to test it or anything?

KF Okay this is tape 49 interview with Harry Simons. Let's start by telling me where you were born?

HS I was born in Morris Plains, New Jersey.

KF And when?

HS In 1947.

KF Birthdate?

HS May 17th.

KF What's your earliest memory?

HS I guess Feedwell Avenue in Morris Plains. I can remember that.

KF Remember the house?

HS Yea, we had a house there. We later sold, I remember my uncle's house there too, a big gray house and the French plant, the little shop there and all.

KF What was your house like?

HS It was two stories, white and kind of divided in two. To where my Grandmother lived in one part of it and we kind of lived in another part of it.

KF How do you remember your Grandmother?

HS As being very old, but she was real nice too. When I was young she was really, I'm not sure even how old but she was pretty old.

KF What kind of a lady?

HS She was a real good cook, she wanted her money's worth from the butcher. That's what I remember, she was a real good cook. Other than that she had alot of health problems and with her sight and with her heart and alot of things. And like that's about all I really can remember of her. My Grandfathers I never knew, never met, never even saw as far as I know.

KF You were living in that house until about '53 so until you were about seven, six years old.

HS Right yea.

KF Any memories of the first six years of your life?

HS '53?

KF I think so.

HS Well we got back from Turkey in '57 we were there for three years, yea, that's about right. We lived at Eglund before that right down there in Florida. Do I remember much else? I remember the (Laers) down the street, and I remember the Chevez kids there was a whole bunch, about eight kids in the family. That's about all I remember.

KF But what kind of a home was it that you spent the first six years of your life, do you remember. Was it warm? Was it cold? Was there alot of laughter alot of music?

HS I'd say it was warm, but I wouldn't say alot of laughter and music. I'd say it was a warm, a loving atmosphere I would call it. Where everybody seemed concerned for everybody else.

KF Okay.

HS Let me open up some windows to let some air in this place. To tell you the truth those are the vaguest memories of my whole life, possibly.

KF Okay, what happened in '53?

[Eglin]

HS In '53 I guess that's when we moved from New Jersey to Eglund Air Force Base right here in Florida, and he was working at the Ranger Camp here and before that I think he was at Fort Benning, and was coming from Fort Benning down here trying to start this camp down here, which he did. And we lived on a lake over there at Eglund, like a little duplex house, and then there was a lot of dirt roads. It's changed, there's a whole lot of more people now than there were then.

KF '54 you went to Turkey.

HS Right, yea.

KF For three years, how do you remember that?

HS That's alot clearer I remember the ship ride there and going to different ports on the way in to the place where we were actually bound for. And I remember living in Ankara in the capital and kind of what it was like there, even though, not a whole, I can't remember everything about it. I remember the house we lived in there. It had a little cherry orchard in the backyard and a wall around it, because there were hostile feelings I think between, especially the Turkish kids and the American kids. You know that's the way it was. Then we moved to Izmir which is down on the coast of Turkey. Everybody liked that alot more, because the water was nearer. We lived right on the beach for awhile there, went skin diving, swimming and everything.

KF     Sounds like a happy time.

HS     Yea, it was. Yea it sure was, we enjoyed it. It seemed we used to move alot right when it was just, when things were just starting to get settled. And it took me awhile to understand that. Now I'm glad of everything that happened. You know as far as getting to one place and all of a sudden having to pick up and leave. It worked out real well. I gave me a more well rounded look at what people are really like, I think.

KF     By the time you were living in Izmir you were about nine or ten years old. So try and think back to that age and remember what your parents were like.

HS     My Mother was pretty much always the same, she was always very nice but firm, especially like dinner time and things like that.

KF     What did you mean, did you have to be at the table at 8:00 or whatever it was.

HS     Whenever dinner was on the table you were either there or you didn't eat. There was no keeping it warm or anything like that. Which I think that was good too for punctuality I think that would be good for that. My Dad then he wasn't always at home it was like we had this house but he worked up near the Russian border at this camp in Cankiri, Turkey well that wasn't in Izmir. When we were in Izmir I'm not even sure what he was doing, it was just some guys in a building that's about all I can remember. I used to go and see him, they used to go diving with us too, mess around with the boats and stuff.

KF     What were they like together your parents? Were they affectionate together.

HS     Very.

KF     How did they show that?

HS Just almost every word that they spoke to each other was, I very seldom. I think one time in my whole life my Father raised his voice to my Mother, that I heard anyhow. They were very close.

KF Tell me about that times.

HS Oh, we were moving as you can see it can turn into a real scene with all this stuff. It's always been, and we always took it everywhere with us except for I think. No, we took this to Turkey with us too. We took most of this stuff with us almost everywhere. With so much stuff it gets to be like I said when you're just getting settled it's time to pack it all up and watch the movers do it and tell them how. It's a strain regardless of whether you are used to it or not, unless you're a mover. You know as an occupation.

KF Yea.

HS That's what, something happened and something, it was upstairs I just heard a yell and that was all I heard. And that was the end of it, right there. There were about three words spoken and that was it. It didn't go on and on or anything like that.

KF Probably sticks in your memory because it was unusual.

HS Very, yea, right. That's the one time that I ever heard anything like that.

KF But did they touch each other alot, or was it just in their voices?

HS Yea. I would say both not so much touching, unless it was in private, they were real affectionate with one another. Perfectly honest I would say, there was no. My Father would come home and talk the day over and my Mother enjoyed it, hearing what happened that day I guess.

KF '57 you went where?

HS Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

KF For how long?

HS Until '62. Yea, that was about the longest place in the military that we ever lived was in Fort Bragg.

KF So for a good deal of your childhood your father was at home.

HS Yea, when I was younger I would say back in the days of like New Jersey and <sup>[Eglin]</sup> Egglund Air Force Base. I considered him to be home when we were in Turkey too, he just had to go off to work and I can't even remember the time spans that lapsed I'm not sure how long he was gone or anything like that. He had to go away from home to work it wasn't like just going downtown or something like that. It was off up and far away.

KF Bruce has, Bruce remembers his father being away most of the time and you evidently don't, so I guess it was just a slightly different periods in your life.

HS Well, yea, I think well he born a little bit earlier than I, that was before the war.

KF He was born during the war, right.

HS Yea, during the war right that's why there was a lot of pictures of him, there was hardly any pictures of me because he was there when I was born he could see me. Well he was gone alot.

KF But you don't seem to, for Bruce that seems to have been a big factor in his life from what you've told me so far, it doesn't seem to have been a big factor in yours.

HS I wouldn't think so. It always seemed to me if there was some kind of problem that I had he always seemed to be there to answer it. I don't even remember if he answered any in letters or not.

KF Do you remember any of those problems?

HS Oh, just growing pains I would suspect to call them. We always used to do things as a family. Go to alot of places and do alot of things like that. Basically my Brother went to college at an early age, he skipped some grades and went to college at an early age. And after he went, the three of us did alot of things together. I guess when a guy goes to college it's kind of like a breaking point of a type I would say. I guess before he went to college. I'm just trying to think of why my Brother would think that he was gone all the time. I remember we used when he came home we'd put up welcome home signs, because it was nice for all of us to be together.

KF What kind of things did the three of you do together?

HS We'd go to the beach or something like that, mostly activities that had to do with water I would say. Or we would go skeet shooting or something like that. Motorcycle riding or anything. We tried to have barbeques and stuff like that, but I had my own interest as far as even like, when I was home I would go and play football and stuff like that.

KF Would you say your Father was a strict parent, a disciplinary?

HS Yes.

KF Did you get spanked alot?

HS Not physically no. He didn't have to get physical. It was I don't know how to really explain that. He had a tremendous command I would say over the English language and most people's mentality. That's what I would say. He was strict but it wasn't, he never was malicious or

HS anything like that. It was always for like if I was disciplined it would be for my own good, not for any kind of odd reason. That's why I think he would discipline anyone.

KF So he wasn't working on his own hangups.

HS Right yes.

KF Okay. And how did you get on with Bruce when you were boys?

HS Well we got along pretty well until he started getting in I'd say his high school years, and then I was an elementary kid and he was in high school. And everything started to change and he started getting pretty rough and we got in alot of arguments and but nothing very violent happened or anything like that. We'd yell at each other and chase each other up and down the stairs and maybe even throw something at each other. Other than that, by the time I would say from when Bruce went from high school to college all that changed after that. After he went to college there were no arguments or anything like that.

KF Were you scrapers, did you fight with other boys in the neighborhood?

HS Yea, in Turkey it was, you almost had to fight your way up and down the street, you know when you walked a dog. I remember that about that. There was alot of times, you'd walk outside the wall, that was it. You know they're out there waiting almost. They'd throw rocks at us and everything and my Brother would do alot of damage to them, I wasn't big enough really to do much. We didn't fight all the time or anything.

KF It's interesting because Stanley and Art were scrapers as well as boys, they fought all the boys in the neighborhood.

HS Yea, I wouldn't be a bit surprised.



KF Because they were bigger than you two. You and your brother haven't got your father's size.

HS Yea, I know. Yea, that's right. Just the way we ended up.

KF Now when Bruce got into college we're talking about '63, '64 he started getting into things of which your father didn't approve of, do you remember that phase?

HS Yea, I sure do.

KF But he was working for Civil Rights basically.

HS Yea, right.

KF What do you remember about that and how your father felt about that?

HS Well at that time we were in Panama, we lived in Panama for three years.

KF This would be '62 to '64.

HS Right. I remember he seemed upset about it, but he figured that it was his choice to make and whatever decisions he made he would obviously have to live with. It was getting to the point where I'm not sure. My Father was in really no kind of descention himself. I think that he felt that my Brother more or less was at that time and didn't really approve of that all. But still figured well he's going to have to figure it out for himself, what the score really is. I don't remember any big arguments or anything about it, anything like that.

KF Well of course Bruce wasn't actually at home and you weren't even in the United States. It would have been hard to have a face to face after this.

HS Yea, well he came down there, once or twice. For a visit, Christmas, or some kind of vacation from school.

KF It seems to me that both the idealism which Bruce expressed in that Civil Rights thing and the I don't know what the word is, but the determination not to be just idealistic but to do something about it, was pretty direct inheritance from your father. Now do you think your father saw that?

HS I don't know. I would imagine so. But I don't think he would have made the same decisions.

KF Oh sure, I see that point, but it was his idealism, it was his, you know this is the right thing to do and we're going to do it.

HS That's the way we were brought up. If we thought something was right to take it right to the boards or whatever. To do it right.

KF Yea. What do you remember about life on the base in Panama. You were the son of the Commanding Officer.

HS Of the Special Forces thing, not of the whole fort. But, we had alot of fun down there, there were alot of things to do there. Like going camping there was a great gigantic lake there that connects the east and west side of the canal. And we used to go out there alot, it was real green down there, it was green as you could get. What else do I remember. I had alot of fun growing, in those years I really enjoyed them, those are probably three of the best years I ever had. I could do pretty much what I wanted to do, and go where I wanted. I don't think that other people gave me any slack because I was the somebody else's son on me. I went around with all kind of son's of all kind of people, it didn't seem to matter to me alot. You know Sargeant's son, or Major's son, you know, Sargeant Major's son. It didn't seem to matter, it didn't matter at all to me. I enjoyed it, I liked it.

KF How do you think your mother liked it?

HS I think she enjoyed it alot. They were together most of the time there. Every once in a while he'd go off to Central America to check on things that his outfit was doing. But basically, we were together. I'd say nine-tenths of the time there and it was an enjoyable time for everybody.

KF Do you think your mother had any other aims in life rather than to be with him?

HS I don't think so. If she did, she never pursued it. She took alot of courses. She took a stenographer's course and got very good at it, could sit right here and just, but never did anything with it. And she could teach, I guess she had a teacher's degree and she never taught. She just wanted to be a good wife I think, and a good mother. Whatever he wanted her to be I think she would have been.

KF That didn't apply to you and Bruce..

HS No. I did then and still believe that and was brought up to believe just like I said, that you've got to do whatever you have to do, whatever it is. After I got out of high school and went to a couple of years of college and a vocational school also for tool and dye. I just took off. I think that possibly one of the reasons for that was that my Father told me when he hitchhiked across the country and I did the very same thing. I wanted to see what was out there. And the service is like almost it's a different thing that the rest of the world is, it just is. Maybe not as much now as it used to be, but maybe it's all in my imagination but I don't think so. I felt like I was almost like in the Army. Although I was never treated like a Private or anything. But the atmosphere was a military atmosphere I would say. Like there was no questioning, if I was told to do something, there was no questioning it. It was do it, so I did it. That was while I was there living in the house with them with my folks, I would do whatever they told me to do.

KF Do you remember Bruce marrying Ruby, it's Ruby, yea.

HS Yea. That took place while we were in Panama, I think. The decision, he made the decision while we were there. Yea, I remember that, I remember what my Father said about it. He said, you know, well it's fine but I think that they might have a rougher go of it than they think, but who knows. It may last forever it may not, it's like any other marriage I suppose.

KF Bruce certainly feels he was more disapproving than that.

HS Possibly face to face with the two of them alone, he may have been.

KF But he didn't meet her at that stage, did he?

HS No, no.

KF In fact he never saw much of her.

HS I'm not sure if he ever met her to tell you the truth, I'm not sure about that.

KF Now that's pretty peculiar.

HS Yea.

KF And your mother didn't see much of her grandchildren.

HS Right yea.

KF Now why do you think that was?

HS Well, I think that Bruce knew that they disapproved you know, or they would have much rather had it another way, if they were given the choice to make the directive to have it different. But I think my

HS     Father felt that my Brother had married himself into a problem situation, you know that most people in this country were not in sympathy with at the time. And that he did not want to have any of the problems that went with that decision that my Brother made, brought to him. Except possibly for advice, you know, if my Brother wanted advice, I'm sure that he would give him his best. As far as problems he didn't want any of those problems. He didn't feel that they were his. I think, and that's probably the reason I would say that there wasn't much visiting done. I was kind of like a courier between that then. I went out and visit them, hell I went out and live with them for awhile. To see what all that communal type of living was all about.

KF     Don't you think your mother would have like to see more of her grandchildren?

HS     I would have thought so, but I think, she would write letters all the time, like Christmas time, Birthday time, she'd try and write them all down and remember them all. Like she would for anyone that was a grandchild or a relative or anything. Would she have liked to see them more, probably, probably. But I think she kind of felt the same way that my Father did. That alot of times that when my Father was gone alot that my Mother could not deal with problems as fluently as my Father could. And I think that while he was gone I think there were I would put it attempts to visit my Mother like get back with the family from my Brother you know. And I don't think, I'm not sure though, I don't think that they ever formulated into anything. They may have gone to visit though you know once or twice, I'm not sure.

KF     I don't think so. Although Ruby went to it must have to Virginia and she went originally just for a few days but then she had to stay because there was some probabation left over from the Civil Rights demonstrations that hadn't been resolved.

HS     In Virginia, this is something I don't even know about.

[Bragg's]

KF No, maybe Carolina, Fort Brack's in Carolina or Virginia?

HS Carolina.

KF I'm just getting the states mixed up, sorry. They had told us Carolina, okay. So anyway, she was there for three months but that if I remember might be with Bruce right, it was the only time that they visited. And to an outsider, to me it seems like rather hard. But you all talk about it as if it was tough. Seems rather hard to me that your mother had all these grandchildren and obviously her first grandchildren and yet they were separated because of a problem but obviously not an inseparable problem.

HS Right, yea, there's no such thing that I know of.

KF But do you see what I'm saying, to me it seems awful tough and you don't seem to feel it as being awful tough.

HS Well, because for me it wasn't. I accepted the decision he made, that's all there was to it. And we were brought up to believe that everybody was equal and that's it. So I felt that way, well you know, that's what he wants to do, he's going to do it. No matter what anybody says, probably. I found it interesting though, Well it really wasn't interesting but it seems that he moved further and further from civilization and all of a sudden now he's decided, or his life has changed to the point where he's back into a smaller, small civilization almost about the same size as the one in New England that he lived in from what I heard. I've never been there, you know, I've got to go there. I go hunting and fishing up that way.

KF Yea, well I think I understand what Bruce has been doing, because after all that so many people, I went to college in the '60's too so and all that's very familiar to me. But it's your father's reaction that I find so difficult to understand.

HS Well, I think he thinks that he could have made a better decision and he couldn't understand why he didn't.

KF But he knew that when you fall in love you don't make rational decisions.

HS Yes, I know.

KF Okay.

HS I just think that it's a decision my Brother made that my Father really didn't agree with.

KF Let's go back to you, when you went back to college what did you study?

HS I only went to one year of a regular college, and it was just basic first year courses. And I was playing alot of rock and roll music then so I didn't study much. The second half of the year I didn't buy any books.

KF What instrument?

HS Guitar.

KF Oh, so you and Bruce both play the guitar. Well?

HS Well I've been playing it a long time but I wouldn't say, some people say I play great but I don't really think so. Because I know that there are artists that can play much better than I that I who I think are great.

KF Have you ever been tempted to do it professionally?

HS Yea, sure I played for money lots of times.

KF Oh, I see.

HS I guess that's where the novice and the professional separate is when you start taking money for playing.

KF Okay, what sort of, oh you said rock and roll.

HS Yea, rock and roll. We play whatever the top hits were then, it was basically Beatle stuff and things in that era.

KF Oh, well you didn't have to be terrificly good to play those Beatle songs. I can play the Beatle songs and I'm terrible.

HS Yea, well that's how I feel too. Some of them are pretty hard though.

KF Well I can't, oh well they're hard to sing, if you're going to play and sing that yea. How did your father feel about that sort of music?

HS He thought that it wasn't going to last long and was amazed that it lasted as long as it did. I think that was about it. I think he thinks it was zany but then I think that maybe when he was young and had music that his folks thought. . . It is like I feel kinda about punk rock, it seems more noise than music to me. To some people, it is music.

KF Presumably he didn't like to spending time playing music rather than studying?

HS Yah. When I was going to school and he was paying for it I can understand that. He was mad. I didn't blame him a bit. I felt bad the next year that I went to the vocational school I did very very well. I figured I owed it to him. I made all "As" and "Bs". I figured well "shit" you know this guy put up a whole lot of money for me to go school, I didn't go to school, I had a good time. But that was right when I got out of high school, there was something I had to know about. I had to get loose. It seemed like for so long that I had definite controls over me. But every kid does growing up I would say.



KF What college was that where you spent that first year?

HS (Hiram Scott College) in Scottsbluff, Nebraska. I don't even think it is business anymore. I think they went a couple of years and folded up for lack of something.

KF Where was the vocational school?

HS Fayetteville, North Carolina.

KF In where?

HS North Carolina, Fayetteville. Right outside of Ft. Bragg.

KF Fayetteville.

HS Yes

KF What did you study in vocational school?

HS All kind of mathematics, all kind of machinist courses. Working with great big lays, big millers, turret lays, that kind of thing.

KF Sounds like what we would call metal working in England.

HS Right. I would say not sheet metal. Metal work, yah.

KF Did you finish that?

HS I finished one year of that. That was it. I never returned to an institute of higher learning again.

KF Why?

HS I didn't want to. I suppose I was almost astounded at what the outside world was like at that point. Those are the days of hate Ashbury. I moved to San Francisco.

KF What year are we talking about?

HS About '67 I would say.

KF Maybe it was '65, '66 that you went to college. '66, '67 you went to vocational school. In September or October '67 you started going back to San Francisco.

HS Actually, I started off for Alaska.

KF You only got as far as San Francisco.

HS That was it. That was far enough.

KF How did your parents feel about that?

HS They figured that if that was what I wanted to do, that was great. By that time, you know, I suppose their two sons had totally astounded them.

KF Did your father know at that point that Bruce was doing some dope?

HS Yah.

KF He did. I image horrified him.

HS He was very mad about it. He did not approve. Horrified? I don't he was every horrified at anything, except my mom's dying; that I ever heard of or saw or anything.

KF I guess he probably didn't know anything about dope.

HS I don't think so. At that point that he was a popular thing like it is now with kids.

KF Now when you went to San Francisco you must have done some dope.

HS Oh, yah. Lot's of, more than 50 people would do in a normal life time.

KF Oh really?

HS I was heavily into drugs.

KF What kind?

HS Psycodelics, I went from there right on down to the bottom.

KF Were you into shooting up?

HS Yah. I had some horrendous habits.

KF Would you say you were a junky?

HS Yah.

KF For how long?

HS May two or three years.

KF How did you support yourself?

HS Doing all kinds of things. I did a lot of leather work. We made a lot of money because leather was real popular at that time. We made a lot of money from that. I had a store in New Orleans, I was a half owner in a shop that did real well. It was like a hippy boutique kind of thing. I made a lot of money there.

KF And fed your habit?

HS Who else is going to hear these tapes, other than you and I?

KF A girl is going to transcribe them.

HS I told my father about the drug problem that I had. He helped me a great deal with it. Because by that time several of the guys who he had been in service with had had a lot of problems. Especially in Panama and the Central Americas. I wasn't into drugs then at all. He gave a lecture, he even smoked marijuana one time.

KF Your father did?

HS In a doctor's office. He said it gave him the feeling of over confidence in any situation, is how he summed it up. That maybe things seemed a little different. That he thought he was more in control of the situation than he was is now he described it. Then he talked to the guys that were in outfit about it, after he had tried it.

KF Oh, really. That is interesting.

HS Well, he wanted to be. .

KF He didn't want to give the lecture until he had tried it. He didn't say that it made him relax.

HS I am trying to think of the word that he used.

KF If he needed anything, it was the ability to relax. That he doesn't seem to have had throughout his life.

HS He was pretty high strung, hypertensive, very intense. So incredibly intense is the way that I would describe that aspect of him. My God he was very intense. Highly diversified in his intensities also. He went out and took a picture, he got a camera, all the stuff to develop the film with. That is the way he did everything. Thoroughly.

KF But that didn't relax him?

HS I don't think so.

KF Where are we up to? When you got the leather shop in New Orleans, what year is this?

HS That is in the '70s. I would say about '72.

KF Which is about when he retired. What year would that have been?

HS '71 I think.

KF '71. Did you visit him then?

HS Yes.

KF Did you find your father changed?

HS Not really. I didn't think.

KF Seems to have adjusted rather well after getting out of the military.

HS I guess he figured when his time was up, that his time was up. He didn't want to be hurraed or anything. I think he went out the back gate of Ft. Bragg. I figured he just left it behind. Although I don't know if he really left it behind, because from time to time different people would ask him to speak at different things. Things like that. He enjoyed it. Something he could get his teeth into although I don't think he had any particular need to be a speaker at all. I have heard

HS things, where he got up in front of audiences and said what do you  
Cont. want me to talk about? What do you want to hear? That's how he would  
do a lot of things, like that. Especially over <sup>[Eglin]</sup>Eglund. There is a school  
over there. Some kind of special operations school or something. He  
would go ever so many months to give this speech and show a slide  
show about the POW raid. It would be good for the students as well as  
himself I think. He always needed to have, to be doing something with  
his time. He didn't believe in wasting a second.

KF He seemed to have liked to teach people.

HS Yah. He was good at it. I think that is one of the reasons. He could  
teach anybody to do anything. In my opinion he could.

KF What kind of things did he teach you as a boy?

HS Oh, well. How to swim, how to play baseball. Hopefully to gain the  
mentality to get out of playing football. Because I broke I don't how  
many, about 13 bones playing football. He was discussed with that. He  
thought was . . . We were mostly (could not understand). Usually  
college guys there, they were a lot bigger than I was, and I would  
always end up getting hurt. I didn't care, I just liked to play. He  
couldn't understand that, he didn't know, like sticking your head into  
a windmill, how many times do you do it before you figure out it will  
cut your head off.

KF Did he ever talk to you about religion?

HS I would say no. Only that if I felt like going to church, go ahead. He  
would never discourage me from any kind of religious believes at all,  
of any kind.

KF But he didn't give you any particular guidance in that area?

HS I would say no.

KF Did he ever tell you what he believed?

HS He believed that everybody should believe whatever they want.

KF That is not a religious. . . .

HS I think he. I don't know, you know. As far as his religious believes. I think he believed more in himself, in his power to do things, than supernatural powers. He would not let a supernatural thing rule his life or anything like that. He would want to control his own destiny rather than anything or anyone else doing it. Although all those things together might have been doing it right along.

KF Do you think he believed in God.

HS Yeah. I sure do.

KF Did he ever talk to you about politics?

HS All the time.

KF What did he say?

HS Everything you could imagine. I remember he would get up and jump and scream at the television set. This is after he retired. He couldn't believe some of the things that were going on.

KF What kind of things?

HS Well, I think he saw the political scene from the Nixon administration right down to the Carter administration going absolutely straight down, xxxxx at a terrific rate, is how I would describe how he saw things in that time frame. Which is basically when we had most of our political discussions.

KF     What kind of things did you and he . . .

HS     Political, modern-day political things that are actually going on that I didn't really know anything about. I read the papers, but I . . . I don't pay as much attention now as I use to to it. He would go from more practical thing of what he knew, rather than what any paper said. I would go with what the paper said, and that is where we started butting heads.

KF     Do you remember an example?

HS     Well when Nixon got caught doing the Watergate thing. I couldn't seem to get it through my mind that possibly other presidents had done the same thing and just never been caught. I figured they should hang the son-of-a-bitch, you know. Now I don't feel that way at all. I feel that he probably didn't do anything wrong at all. Didn't do anything different than any of his predecessors did. We got in big arguments. I mean my mother could not believe it. Right in that other room, in that room right there. Screaming and yelling and finally it would subside. Then we would be up on our feet again you know. That is just the way it went.

KF     He thought something of Nixon, didn't he?

HS     Yah.

KF     But I would have thought your father . . .

HS     He didn't think any more of him than he did a whole lot of other people. I asked him about what it was like to go to the White House. He said, "I want to tell you something. That guy that is the President puts his pants on one leg at time just like you and I do. He is no different than we are." I think my mother was a little excited about the whole thing. My father may have been excited about it but I don't



HS think so. I wasn't at home when that transpired, but I remember the Cont. conversation because I asked him about it. What was happening. He told me.

KF I am surprised. I would have expected him to have been offended by the dishonesty involved in that scandal.

HS He thought that Nixon made some stupid mistakes. Is the way I would sum it up. I think he understood why he made them too. Because I think Nixon had a law background and the law. I think that to a guy who has a background in law that destroying evidence was out of the question to a guy like that. Who knows. I don't know what really happened. Only what I have heard. I am sure that probably other guys had done the same thing but it had never surfaced.

KF Yah. Now you father was interested in history and I gather in particular he was interested in revolutions. Did he ever talk to you about that?

HS Not very much. No. I know how he felt about assassinations, this kind of thing. That they are wrong, like to assassinate the president of this country is dead wrong. I know he felt like that.

KF He was involved in assassinations in Viet-Nam.

HS Right. But that wasn't in the democracy I don't think. At least that is what I drew out of it.

KF It doesn't seem rigorous enough for Colonel Simons. To say that he would be against assassinations in this country, but it is okay in somebody elses' country.

HS I think that he felt like in this country that if he didn't like a guy, that you could vote him out of office. There are "nuts" who . . . I know a few eyebrows have been raised by people who worked with him when I mentioned that in my mind a person who would assassinated a United States President, in my mind, would be mentally unbalanced. Maybe in the assassin's mind he would be, but in my mind. Like the guy who tried to shoot Regan, the guy must have been out of his mind. That is a terrible thing to me. The thing that happened with (Sidot?) I consider that to be not good at all. Especially that thing with (Sidot?). That whole side of the world. . . They are suppose to have a democratic society there from what I have heard, I don't really know because I have never lived there. I have never dug into it deep enough.

KF Did your father ever talk to you about sex?

HS No.

KF No sex education?

HS No. Never mentioned it.

KF I wonder why?

HS I don't know. Possibly because I never asked.

KF But it was never mentioned in the house?

HS I would say No.

KF Doesn't surprise me, because when they were in Iran he was living in a small apartment with two other men. I asked both the other men what they talked about and you would expect men to talk about sex, I mean they usually do when they are on their own. But they didn't.

HS That sounds about right to me.

KF Okay. When they were living here, how did they spent their time.

HS Trying to better the place; trying to raise some hogs. My mom had some chickens and she use to sell the eggs just for kind of something to do. Fishing down at the pond, that's about it. They kind of hovered right here on this property more or less. He had a few friends that use to go to government auctions and stuff like that with.

KF And buy machinery.

HS Yes. Anything, anything useful. I got the same disease whatever it is. If he could have gotten away with it here, if my mother would have gone along with it, he would have turned the place into a automobile bodies, the whole deal. He loved scape metal, he would buy anything. Anything metal. Anything to build something with, to make something with. That is why he got things like that. There is stuff over there. Operating room lights, you name it. He used them to see better with. I guess they are as good of a light as you can get. He liked to fiddle with gadgets, just anything to occupy his mind with really. Anything. It didn't matter. He would spend all day with an alarm clock.

KF So really in retirement, although there was a definite change in his way of life, and by all accounts they both seemed to have been much happier than they had been before. Not that they were unhappy before, but here they seemed to have found a kind of contentment.

HS Right.

KF But basically he wasn't any different. He was still rather driven.

HS Right. Absolutely. I think he was driven by his own genius myself. That is what I think.

KF That is interesting. Because I have asked a lot of people what drove him and you are the first person who has had anything approximating to an answer. Tell me a bit more about that. Why do you say that, "Driven by his own genius."

HS I don't there was anything that he ever tried to do that couldn't do when he applied himself. He would think of something and the ideal would get into his head and he would not let go until he did it.

KF But why? What makes a man like that?

HS Well, I think part of it is heredity. I think that his father was a genius from everything that I heard and read of his father's books. I think he was a genius too. I think that my father was fascinated by the things that his father could do. His father use to collect a lot books. He would bring them home in wheelbarrels. Use to drive his grandmother crazy. It is kind of similar with the things from the sale of the government that we would bring to the house. My mother would look and say, "My God, what is that. What are going to do with that." He would say, "Don't worry. I'll do something with it." I think he wanted to be self-sufficient to the point of accumulating so much stuff to where he wouldn't have to go and ask somebody else to do it. He would rather do it himself and gain the experience and knowledge rather than pay someone else to do it. That is the kind of guy he was. Unless, it was something that he had no idea how to do. He would never operate on somebody or anything like that. But if it was in his scope of his abilities he would go absolutely go right ahead with it.

KF One thing that he was not able to do was make General.

HS Right. I think he attributed that to being a reserve officer. Not a West Point Cadet or anything, or a graduate. I think he went to every other school, I think, that they had. Commanding General staff school, advanced school, all these schools to get ahead, to get learn more, to be better.

KF It also seems to have been something that he just wouldn't fight for in the way that he would fight for most things. If you want to make General there are probably things that you have to do. Like going to the right parties in Washington.

HS He wasn't that kind of person.

KF He wouldn't do that. Yet he did by all accounts really he would have liked to have been General. Why wouldn't he play that game.

HS I don't think he liked to play games much. He figured that if a guy was going to make General, it didn't have to be in a ballroom with a glass of liquor in his hand.

KF Kind of principal.

HS Don't get me wrong. There were cocktail parties like at Ft. Bragg after the Turkish expedition. They were almost obligated to go to them because there were high ranking Generals on the post and they said, "You are going to be at the party, right." They went to some parties, but he didn't like to go to them. He went because he was obligated to go. I guess that when a General invites you and says you will be there, then you will be there. He expected the same from his men. If he told them to do, by God they had better do it. I think everytime he had a chance to get out of going to one it was just a sigh of relieve. I'm not sure if the amount of people, or the people, or the atmosphere at a cocktail party is . . . He told me he had a share of rot gut bourbon like everybody else, I guess. It didn't lead anyplace.

HS     Doesn't go anywhere. I talked to him about it. I don't think he felt  
Cont. bad because he didn't become a General. I think he knew that the  
chances of a reserved officer of being a General were very slim. No  
matter what he did or anything else. I think he basically concentrated  
on his job and did it as well as he could. Like he did everything else.

KF     Perhaps he figured that if that wasn't good enough to make him  
General, he wasn't going to be a General.

HS     Right. Possibly.

KF     Sounds like the kind of thing he might say.

HS     Yah. Right.

KF     The conclusion of all of that is that ambition certainly was not the  
thing that drove him along. He would like to be a General, but it  
wasn't a (could not hear). People that are terribly meticulous like  
that, terribly perfectionist.

HS     He was a perfectionist.

KF     Your bound to suspect that at the root of that is some kind of  
insecurity.

HS     Possibly. He didn't like to settle for second best at anything. What  
insecurity would be behind that, I don't know. I am not a  
phycologist.

KF     You are his son, you might be able to guess.

HS Right. I never felt like. I always felt like he was in complete control of himself and his surroundings whenever I was near him. I felt that way all the time. Even when he was in the hospital bed, dying, it just seemed that he knew what was going on. Felt comfortable with it up to a point. How comfortable can you get in a situation that it ended up in.

KF Even then, he had to know what was happening.

HS I think he. Right. He didn't want me to worry, I know that.

KF I know most of us settle for a good deal less than that. Most of us are happy to go through life, sometimes we are in control, sometimes we are not. Sometimes we do a good job, sometimes we do a bad job. And most of us are able to sit and do nothing for awhile, and goof off and things like that. That was an ability that he didn't seem to have.

HS Right. To be able to sit? Your right. The only time I think he would sit would be between 7 and 10:30 at night.

KF What would he do then?

HS He would watch television, possibly read. Or do gun work.

KF You see that is not just sitting.

HS I know, but for him it was relaxation. He was interested, it seemed like to me, in everything. In everything he saw he was really interested in all aspects how it came to be, how it got to be like that. Which I guess it is kind of like an historian thing, too. He had tremendous curiosity I would say. He had to satisfy it, he had to find out why, if he could. Generally, he could. At least, I think so.

KF What kind of things did he read?

KF Are these his books?

HS Some were his, some were mine.

KF Selected works of Mike C. Turner. Yours or his?

HS His.

KF His? No kidding. Three volumes. Expensive.

HS He read all of them. I don't know.

KF (Looking at books).

HS Those books are from my grandfather. All of his massive book collecting. All of these older ones here, are from my grandfather. He just had wheelbarrels of books that he would bring home. He loved books. He wrote some.

KF I can't see Colonel reading the (could not hear, sounded like a book title, "Fairy Queen.") could you.

HS Maybe in his younger day. But around here he would read books like, there are some over there, like that.

KF Did he listen to music?

HS Yes, he liked what I called department store music. He liked orchestra music. Symphony and things like that.

KF Did he like any particular composer: Beethoven, Mozart?

HS I don't think that that made any difference to him. I think he enjoyed to perfection of all of it.



KF Do you think he would have known about composers?

HS No I don't think so.

KF He didn't play. . .

HS He played this organ here by picture music. He never learned to read notes. He kind of found his way through it. He could play some songs. The ones he liked. He wanted to play the guitar but said his fingers were too big. His fingers were gigantic. I think the entertainers never impressed him at all.

KF I can image that. (Still looking through the books.) The Advanced Concepts of Poker?

HS He was a very good poker player from what I have heard. I never played with him. That was pretty smart not to.

KF Teach yourself Russian.

HS When we lived in Turkey, he may have gotten that thing from Russia. Was near the Russian border.

KF (Could not hear, too low).

HS He liked to read Lewy Lamour books. He loved Westerns. I guess that may be from when he hitchhiked across the states and ended up in Idaho Falls for a while.

KF I image that the world of the wild west that appealed to him. Where a man is a man. You disputes, can't be settled, could be settled with a gun. A man on horseback.

HS I think that all appealed to him.

KF A lot of peoples taste in novels basically reflects their fantasies. A lot of people say he was a man who did not fantasize. But what they mean is that he was a man who told the truth. Evidentially the world of the wild west was probably his fantasy.

HS Could very well have been. He read them by the box full. They are probably the quickest reading you can get.

KF I am beginning to believe that he was a sophisticated man with a basically unsophisticated psychology.

HS That is a pretty good description. To him everything was if you could recognize a problem, you had 9/10ths of a solution right there. He did everything like that. He would reduce it where an idiot could understand it, and know what it was. I never took one problem to him that he didn't know at least four good solutions to. No kidding. I didn't bring any monumental problems to him. Maybe when I told him the drugs that I was into, that it didn't surprise him. He could just look at me and see that something had changed radically. He gave me a great deal of help with that.

KF What did he say?

HS As a matter of fact I stopped right in this house. I left here a million times, man, but I always came back. Finally I didn't leave.

KF How do you mean?

HS To get more drugs. There are no drugs here. I would go to get drugs and disappear for a week. Come back. Have to leave again. Finally I just stopped. I could see there is something better than that. It was easy for him to show me that there was. All I had to do was really remember and he made that possible.

KF But what did he say?

KF When you told him. First of all, what did you say? How did you put  
Cont it.

HS I can't remember how it lead to the conversation, but I just told him  
that I had a \$700 a day cocaine habit and a \$400 or \$500 heroin a day  
habit. I said I got a problem on my hands that I am trying to solve.  
He said okay I will help you solve it. And it worked.

KF What was his plan?

HS To keep me occupied. To let my mind be occupied, my hands  
occupied. The same kind of therapy he used for himself.

KF What kind of things did you do?

HS We built a lot of things here. Some structures, some sheds, some  
hogyards.

KF This would have been what year?

HS That was the closest, we became very close here. It seemed to me that  
we did anyhow. When I was very young we were very close too. There  
was that period between where we were not together. Off. Doing  
everything I could do. Spreading the good word. It was a tremendous  
help. Other than myself, the best help I had. In a situation like that  
something you have to be the kind of person to get over it. At least  
that is what I found to be true.

KF What year was that?

HS About '73, something like that. A couple of years after they moved  
here.

KF That's quite something. That is quite a tribute to him that he could  
handle that.

HS     Yah. He didn't even blink, didn't flinch. Expecting it was even worse. I was really surprised. I thought the top was going to blow off this whole place when I say this. But it has got to be said. We were always pretty honest with one another. We just were. Here we were sweating in the same hole out here. That is really when you get to know somebody. Everything, the closer you are, the longer you are, the better you get to know them.

KF     Do you remember when Bruce got saved?

HS     I remember him telling me about it. Let me put it like this: I remember him saying that God had spoken to him. If that is being saved, if that is the same thing. As you can probably tell I am not a religious fanatic and my brother has finally slacked off and stopped trying to jam it down my throat you know. I understand how that goes too. I am just glad that it has finally starting to level off to something acceptable to both of us. He is just not as persistent as he use to be.

KF     He was persistent at one time. He wanted you to get saved.

HS     Absolutely. There is no other way. That was it. I have gone through these things, (could not understand), books, with my brother for a long time now. So I don't necessarily put anymore stock into any one of them except it helped to broaden my mind in the differences, which really to me there aren't that many between all the different religions.

KF     When you say you went through it with him. Do you mean you just saw this happening. Or did you. . . .

HS     I was participating. Like the book of changes, the mysterious thing and all that. But it never seemed to mean. . . My brother would throw coins before he walked out the front door to find out what was going to happen when he walked out. I would have more of a tendency to walk out there to find out what was going to happen.

KF Okay. I guess he wanted your father to get saved as well.

HS Yah, right. My mom too.

KF How did that work out?

HS That didn't work out very well. My mother was sick and had cancer. I called up my brother, told him he had to come, the things are reaching the not good stage at all. It would be for everybody to be together. He came down and boy, rather than. . . He approached everything with my mother from a religious point. Not like a son, but more like a messenger of God, or somebody else would. I thought that was real strange. That was because it was basically that I had never been around anyone that intense on that subject before although a lot of my friends, people I knew, had gone that way. I thought it was great if that is what they wanted to do. But I couldn't understand. I know that my mother, she, I think, thought that everybody, that religion was a very private thing really. What you believe in is up to you. I think it kind of bothered her. Very persistent. It is understandable, when somebody gets enlightened they want to tell the world about. I understand that. I don't think my mother understood it so well.

KF And your father?

HS He thought it was just another phase he was going through. What is it going to be this time.

KF How did he react to the idea of getting saved?

HS I am not really sure. There were some discussions that went on when my brother was down here. From what my father said it was like he expected my brother to be smarter than he was and not to rely on so much of a written thing as a guide. I think I would be how to describe it.

KF Do you think that your father got mad?

HS I think he got irritated that my brother read the Bible as much as he did and like when we would go out to feed the hogs, we would all go, but my brother wouldn't. I think he became irritated with that. He would sit down and eat half a ham but he wouldn't go out and feed the hogs. One of those kind of deals.

KF So far, the way I see it, we talked about three phases. We haven't talked about three phases. but there are three phases to your father's life. There is up until World War II. In which by Stanley's account, he is very strong young man, very smart young man, somewhat independent but not what people later came to call the "Bull." After World War II gets this tough military man. After he retires, the military to large extent drops away and he deals with being retired from the military rather better than most people do in being retired. Then of course phase four is after your mother died. That seems to have, by all accounts, seems to have hit him very very hardly. Surprised him by how much it hit him. Were you here at all then.

HS I was here for the entire time. I was here for that, yah.

KF Would you agree that he was surprised at how hard he was hit by this?

HS He went into kind of a state of shock, which is understandable. I think his whole life he had a plan see. He had a plan where he figured he would die first, like I think most men do. When it didn't turn out the way he planned, the way he thought it would be, it just, that shocked him. The loss of my mom, just floored him.

KF This Iranian adventure just seemed to have almost rescued him from a complete (could not hear).

HS I thought so.

KF Stanley told me that he tried to get your father to go into the Israeli army. Dick Meadows tried to get him involved in things, either Ft. Bragg or Eglund<sup>[Eglin]</sup> bases. But the things that brought him back to live seems to be another of the kind of commando raid type things he had done all his life. Really the thing that he did best.

HS That is right. He was kind of tickled with that. They way that turned out.

KF The great thing about it was that it was a success.

HS Yes.

KF Son Tay which should have been the climax of his career, while it was successfully in a purely (could not hear) point of view the point was you could not celebrate it to the high heavens because they didn't bring any prisoners back. It was kind of good climax, this Iranian.

HS Yah. It kind of put him back on his feet. Let him regain his identity. Maybe possibly even with himself. Get his blood moving again, so to speak. I mean he sat here for a year and didn't move.

KF In a way you would have expected him to have dealt with that by saying this is the problem, now what are the solutions. He had dealt with everything throughout his life that way. But he didn't.

HS The problem is, my mother was gone and he knew there was no way to bring her. Which he hated. I tell you what. We were in the hospital sitting in the waiting room to go see my mother. Honest to God, he reached into his mouth and just pulled a tooth out of his head and said, "Goddamn, this is driving me crazy. I have never been in a position where I couldn't do anything, like this before." He handed me this tooth. I say, "Man, stop pulling out your teeth before you end up without any teeth."

KF That sounds like an uncharacteristic thing. That is completely pointless to pull out a tooth.

HS I had never seen my father, up to that point, that weak. In a position where he felt helpless. I don't think he was ever in one. Or one that I knew of anyhow. It really bothered him. It bother everybody that was involved. I think that you are right, that the Iranian thing really helped him. I thoroughly agree with that. He didn't expound on it at all.

KF What did you say about the Iranian adventure?

HS I think that the way it went, is I came back from the oil fields and told him that he really kicked them in the ass that time. I'm really glad somebody did. He said, "Man, it was just like walking out in the meadow. Nothing to it. Everything just feel right into the sink." He was just tickled with it. He didn't go on and on or anything.

KF Now then. Do you think he was a happy man?

HS Yah, I think he was satisfied. That he did what he could about everything I think that was presented to him.

KF He was pretty patriotic?

HS Oh, yes.

KF Would you say that you are patriotic?

HS Yah.

KF Satisfied, that is interesting. Would you say you are happy now?



HS Basically, yes. I am luckier than most people I think. I have been lucky my whole life. There are some things that other people would say, that is not lucky all. When I look at how it all turned out, it could have turned out terrible. It could have turned out a number of different way, but it didn't. It may be that determination and luck both had a lot to do with it. Happy? Yah, I'm happy. Basically pretty happy. Things could be better, but things could be worse too.

KF Would you say that Simons was a good father?

HS Oh, yah. I think so, absolutely, yah.

KF (Could not understand).

HS He may not. I think possibly because I didn't do what Bruce did, as far as his marriage and everything. I didn't do anything that radical that would be with me to the present day, more or less. I don't know. Bruce was different than I was I think. He didn't like, as he got older, to do things with the family as much. Then he had his own family, you know. I always enjoyed doing things with my mom and dad. I just did. Possibly I got more attention, I don't know.

KF Seems much like the difference between the eldest son, the youngest son. That seems to happen often.

HS I never realized that when I was young at all. My father use to raise hell with my brother for his grades. They did the same thing with me. That kind of thing. I would say that he was a very good father. That is my opinion. Exceptional I would say.

KF Okay. Have you got another child?

HS Yah.

KF What is the other child?

HS Jason, he is at school.

KF He is how old?

HS He is nine now, to be ten in December.

KF Tell me your wife's name.

HS Shawn.

KF How do you spell that?

HS S H A W N.

KF Okay. I think I have run out of questions.

HS Okay. Would you like to walk around and see things. It might give you a better idea.

End of tape.