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NO. 63

INTERVIEW WITH JOE B. GABRIEL

CONDUCTED BY THOMAS A. SCOTT

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Cobb County Oral History Series, No. 63  
Interview with Joe B. Gabriel  
Conducted by Thomas A. Scott  
Monday, 23 October 2000  
Location: Mr. Gabriel's home

THOMAS SCOTT: We're going to be talking today about Mr. Gabriel's experiences with Bell Aircraft and with Lockheed. Let me begin, Mr. Gabriel, by asking you where you were born and when you were born?

JOE GABRIEL: I was born in 1914 in Brentwood, Tennessee; November 21, to be exact.

TS: What part of Tennessee is that?

JG: Just outside of Nashville about ten or twelve miles. They had what they called an interurban train that ran from Nashville to Franklin, Tennessee and back to Nashville. My daddy was the motorman on that interurban.

TS: I didn't know Nashville ever had an interurban line. What was the name of the community you were born in?

JG: Brentwood.

TS: That's all suburban now, isn't it?

JG: Yes, yes. It's the richest suburban. Back then it was rather countrified.

TS: You must have gained some technical knowledge then from your father when you were growing up.

JG: Well, quite a bit. He was real strict with us, and he insisted that we get an education. He left there and went over to Alcoa. From Alcoa he went to Badin, North Carolina, which was just opening up. They built a big aluminum reduction plant there. That is they would take the raw ore and process it and make it into aluminum ingots--fifty pounds. It was quite a huge undertaking. They used carbon in their pots to cook the ore. Carbon was about eighteen inches long and about five inches in diameter. They would arc the current between the two carbon electrodes and that would generate the heat to cook the ore.

They used alumina and red dirt--well, it looked like dirt--and they would cook it and make the aluminum. It was quite an undertaking. At that time it was the

biggest aluminum plant in the United States. Then in order to produce the power to run the cookers or pots as they were called, they built two big dams on the Yadkin River: the Falls and the Narrows. They were about six miles apart. The Falls was the larger of the two. They ran twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

TS: What was your father's name?

JG: Leo W. Gabriel.

TS: These were Alcoa-owned dams?

JG: No, it was Tallahassee Power Company at that point in time. Alcoa bought into it and finished the project when they had financial difficulties.

TS: I see. Where was the Badin community?

JG: Forty-eight miles east of Charlotte, and it was a very nice community. The authorities in Badin insisted on real good education. So they canvassed the entire South for the best teachers they could find with the highest grades and aptitudes. So actually although I graduated from high school, I feel like at this point in time that I actually had a junior college degree, because they were so thorough and basic in their teaching. They were real good, and to that we are indebted to Alcoa. And it had also financed my father's musicals.

TS: Yes, you were telling me about that earlier before we started the tape. Could you say a word or two about that?

JG: Well, yes, I'll have to go back to the Bible and the story of the talents, which I'm sure you're familiar with. In addition to my father's other business, he loved music. He taught every child in that community that wanted to, how to play a horn. He organized a little band, and he directed it. He also wrote a little music. He was just very prolific with his musical ambition. He played the trombone. My fondest memories of my childhood are after supper, as we called it, at night, we would get in the music room. We had a special room where our instruments were kept. Mother would play the piano, father would play the trombone, my older brother would play the bass horn, and my younger brother would play the trombone. We had a Cokesbury Hymnal. My father would transpose the music out of the Cokesbury Hymnal into the different keys that each one was adapted to. We would play hymns for maybe an hour or an hour and a half at night. We were so close, and it was just

wonderful, just wonderful.

TS: Did you all ever play professional?

JG: I did and my younger brother did. But my father had his hands full teaching that band. He started them at ten or twelve years old, and they grew up to be quite a few good musicians. For instance, one gentleman, Starborough, is now director of the Charlotte Symphony Band. He taught the colored children too, and he had a colored band. We had several of those to go on into big name bands playing. So he took one talent of music, and he spread it throughout the community. I'm talking from three hundred to five hundred children over a period of time. He taught them how to play. So he used his talent.

TS: Well, Cokesbury Hymnal, you must be Methodist.

JG: We are Methodist. My daddy would transpose that music into B flat for my clarinet or E flat for my saxophone. My brother would play the big bass horn. Pete would play the trombone. Daddy would play the trombone, and Mother played the piano. If she would sing, she had a beautiful voice.

TS: What was your mother's name?

JG: Irma Blanton Gabriel.

TS: Did you all ever play in the churches?

JG: Oh, yes. We played in the church every Sunday night. We played the Sunday nights.

TS: Did you? I didn't know whether a trombone was too radical for a church back then.

JG: No. What they did was Sunday nights we had--nowadays you'd call it a sing-a-long. We'd go through that pulpit, and everybody in the church would sing. It got to the point where the church was practically overflowing every Sunday night, because the other denominations in town, the Baptists and the Presbyterians, would come and sing with us. So it was quite an undertaking.

TS: Wow.

JG: Real enjoyable and fondest memories.

TS: Do you still play anything?

JG: I play the organ a little bit. Due to my health

condition I cannot play the clarinet and the saxophone, although I still have them.

TS: You've got to blow too hard?

JG: Yes. It's put too big a strain on my heart. But there again, I attribute my longevity to playing the horn when I was young and breathing deep.

TS: Right.

JG: It worked real good.

TS: Well, you said you were born in 1914?

JG: That is correct.

TS: So by the time you were getting through high school I guess we're in the . . .

JG: Thirties; '31 I reckon.

TS: The depths of the Great Depression.

JG: A little humorous, I didn't have to crack a book in high school. At that time we had what we called chapel every Friday. They alternated between the teachers in the school as to who would be in charge. They would all come by and say, "Joe would you play?" I played the piano. They'd say, "Joe would you play for me on Friday? Here's what I want you to. . . ." "Be glad to, tickled to death." So old Joe comes through high school with a B+ average and never cracked a book. It was fantastic.

TS: What did you do out of high school?

JG: Out of high school I played in a couple of bands locally, I mean Charlotte, Raleigh. I went to Kannapolis, North Carolina. I was putting out advertisements for a dance. I heard this band playing. So I went over there, and they were playing music that I knew, and I loved it. I had my clarinet with me in the car, so I told the conductor could I sit in with you. He said yes. So I got my clarinet and went in there and said, "Where do you want me to sit?" He says, "Where do you normally sit?" I said, "Normally I'm number one." So they put me in the end chair, which is the high honor. I had my clarinet, and we played a couple of tunes. Then he, we took a short break, and he brought out the Poet and Peasant Overture. That was a hard piece, but I had been raised on it, and I knew it practically from memory. So I ate it up, just knew it raw. I mean, I could play it. Anyway, at the end

he said, "Where do you work?" I said, "I don't, I'm looking for a job." So I went to work for Cannon Mills Company.

TS: Cannon Mills?

JG: Yes, in Kannapolis there. I went to work there with them, and they didn't show me too much favoritism, some but not too much. But they gave me a fairly good job, and I stayed there till '40 or '41.

TS: Now, did Cannon Mills have its own band?

JG: Oh, yes. They had what they called a mill band. It was about forty pieces. They used it for the entertainment of the town. We played in parades in the surrounding areas. We had uniforms and everything. Cannon Mills supported it completely. It was a real, real good deal.

TS: Great.

JG: I left there in '40 and went over to Nashville; I went to work for Vultee Aircraft. Now that was an old company, but it was taken over by North American when Jerry Vultee got ill. We went from there to Consolidated. I learned aircraft there, and I loved it.

TS: I did an interview with Harold Mintz who worked there.

JG: Oh, yes, I know him. Yes, he was in Nashville too.

TS: So good training programs with Vultee.

JG: Oh, yes.

TS: What were you being trained to do there? Every aspect at that point?

JG: Every aspect of it. I started at the bottom, and I got up to be a supervisor. I was supervisor of the shortage ramp.

TS: The shortage ramp?

JG: Yes. All aircraft companies have a terrific part shortage problem. But you would carry the airplanes as far as you could go and put it on the shortage list and set it outside until you got the parts to put them in the airplane. It normally would be fifteen to twenty aircraft setting out on the ramp. I had charge of seeing that the people who came out to put their parts in did the work they were assigned to do in a workman-like

manner and to clean up after themselves, so that we had a clean aircraft at all times.

TS: So you had to be familiar with everything on the airplane?

JG: Every aspect of it, yes. I was real familiar with it. We were building, at that time, an A-30 fighter which was a dive bomber, single engine. We built them mostly for England. Of course, the United States bought some too. It was a rugged airplane, real rugged. I gradually worked from the shortage ramp to the flight line. From there I got my engine run card and flew occasionally with the pilots.

TS: I see.

JG: It was a two-seater airplane.

TS: You called it an engine run card?

JG: Yes, engine run card.

TS: What does that mean exactly?

JG: It's a license to run the engine on that particular aircraft. You see, those . . .

TS: Oh, when the test pilots take them up.

JG: Before we gave them to the test pilots we had to clear them completely and make sure your oil pressure was up and everything was right on them before we could release them. From there we were just getting P-38's in; Lockheed built the P-38. It was a good airplane; it had the Allison Inline engines. They would ship the parts into Consolidated there. We would put them together. Then we would test fly them, and then we would deliver them. Well, I left there about the time the tenth P-38 was built and came down to Bell Aircraft here. Now we're talking, I don't know, '43 I suppose.

TS: Right. That's when the assembly line opened here.

JG: So I had about three years of flight line, so to speak, in flight. I did fly with Consolidated there in the dive bomber in the A-35, but I flew the back seat which was nothing but a reserver, because you didn't have instruments or anything else. You had a control stick, a rudder, but that was it.

TS: Were you married by this time?

JG: Oh, yes, I got married in '36.

TS: What's your wife's name?

JG: Sadie. That's the same girl I got in the house now. And she's been wonderful.

TS: Did you have any children by that time?

JG: No, we didn't have any children. We've got our daughter. This is her portrait here. We adopted her in 1956.

TS: I see.

JG: She was eleven months old when we got her, and she's been a joy.

TS: What's her name?

JG: Jeannie. She's a blonde, and she was built real good. She's been such a joy to us. She went through school here in Smyrna, and in her senior year I told her, "Now, Jeannie, I've been putting some money aside for your education. I want you to pick out the college you want to go to, and we'll see what we can do." So she came back about two weeks later and said, "Daddy, I appreciate you saving the money, but I am not college material." She showed real mature judgement there. She said, "Just don't spend the money." I said, "Okay, I'll save it for you." So she married. I think she was twenty when she got married. She married a boy, Johnny Eberhart, and he had his own plumbing business here in Marietta. He is just a prince of a young man. He loves us with a purple passion. They have been a joy to us. They live here in Marietta.

As an aside here, I'll tell you. He was raised over in Ft. Payne, Alabama. They went up on the mountain there about six miles this side of Ft. Payne on Little River Canyon. They bought seventy acres of land up on top of a mountain, and they have built a log cabin. On Friday, when their son gets out of school, they go up to Ft. Payne to their cabin every weekend. They've got it cleared, and they've got a beautiful cabin up there. [It has] three rooms, and a loft. They sleep up in the loft. But they thoroughly enjoy it. He gets away from the phone; he gets away from all his worries. She enjoys it too. So it's just fantastic. They have a little pond with fish in it, and he built it. They've just done a wonderful job.

TS: Well, let's get back to 1943, you leave Vultee . . .

JG: Yes, and I came to Bell.

TS: I know when I was talking to Mr. Mintz that he had to have all kinds of letters of recommendation because of the draft board.

JG: Oh, yes, we had all that to go through with.

TS: He said it wasn't easy to change from one company to another.

JG: No, it wasn't. As a matter of fact, my foreman over in Nashville told me when I quit, "Well, you'll be hearing from your draft board." I said, "I have no fear of a draft board." I did hear from them, but I was already at work here at Bell when I heard from them. I came to work here for Mr. Mark Haney who was the chief pilot. He came from Buffalo, and he hired me. We didn't have any airplanes to work on or to fly or anything else.

TS: You were at the ground floor then.

JG: The mud floor. We had had Spring rains that year, and that red mud was a foot deep, I'm telling you.

TS: Which building were you in?

JG: I started in B-4 building.

TS: And it had a mud floor when you started?

JG: No, B-1 building still had the mud floor. They hadn't gotten around to pouring the concrete yet. But that is a fantastic building. It's seventy-six acres under one roof. It has avenues and streets in the basement where traffic can go: trucks, cars, scooters and foot traffic. It's completely air conditioned throughout and heated and well lit.

TS: Do you know how that air conditioning system worked in the early days? It's not exactly like an air conditioning system now is it?

JG: No, I don't; but I think it was very similar. It used units up on the roof, but I was not real privy to that type of information.

TS: Right. But you were out in the B-4, and that's a pretty big building too.

JG: Oh, yes. It's four bays, and each bay would hold two B-29's. Later on they turned one of the bays into a machine shop. You won't believe, we got pushed for space; so they made a machine shop in one of the bays.

TS: Now, what were you doing for Mr. Haney?

JG: Well, we didn't have anything to do. I was hired as a flight-line mechanic. So immediately we had to be at work, had to come in until we got airplanes. Anyway, I researched. I got blue prints, technical manuals, and read about the B-29, which was engineered at Boeing. They had other plants at Wichita too. But I availed myself of the opportunity to read the blue prints and to learn all about the B-29 that I possibly could. It was a grand old bird. It was just wonderful. I loved every inch of it. Even today I drive by one over here on Dobbins and look at it and remember certain things you had to do there. It was just real good.

TS: It's a remarkable plane.

JG: We got the line started, and then we started getting airplanes on the flight line. By this point in time I was what they called a sub-foreman with Bell. I had a crew of about fifteen people underneath me, and they held me up.

TS: They held you up? [laughter]

JG: They had to hold me up. I was a little bit green. But you gradually learn. At that time sub-foremen on the flight line would fly with the flight crew on the B-29's. We would fly in the back end of the airplane where the bubbles are. We would report on take offs, landings, any oddities that might occur such as smoke coming from an engine, the gear going up and the flaps going up. It was a learning experience, but it was grand and enjoyable, because I was flying. I enjoyed it just so much.

TS: Now, are you back where the gunners would be?

JG: Yes.

TS: So you're in the pressurized part.

JG: Yes, the pressurized part. Now, they had a tunnel that ran across the bomb bays up from the back of the airplane to the front, and it too was pressurized. But the bomb bays were not pressurized. Neither was the distance between the back bulkhead and the tail of the airplane

where the tail gunner sat. Now, this tail gunner was a very small place. It took a wiry guy to get in and out of it. I had kept on Mark Haney that I wanted to shoot the cannon. They had an eight-millimeter cannon back in the back of it. Every twenty-five airplanes we would go over the Gulf to the shooting range, and we'd fire all the guns. Well, I wanted to shoot that eight-millimeter cannon. So Mark finally gave in to me and put me back there and let me go back there one flight. He beat my butt to death. He'd raise the tail or lower the tail and switch it from right to left. I was in such a confined area that it really got to be quite an ordeal, but I got to shoot that eight-millimeter cannon.

TS: Better not have claustrophobia back there.

JG: Yes.

TS: Where did you actually shoot it?

JG: Over a range off of the Gulf.

TS: Off the Gulf?

JG: Yes, down over Mobile.

TS: Okay, you went on a long flight then.

JG: Yes, well, relatively speaking.

TS: I know the B-29 is a long range bomber, but still, that's a long way from home. Well, now, I believe Stinson Adams worked in the B-4 building.

JG: Yes, Stinson Adams was a flight line superintendent.

TS: And what was your title?

JG: I was sub-foreman.

TS: So what was the hierarchy? From sub-foreman to foreman to superintendent?

JG: Sub-foreman to foreman to superintendent.

TS: So you actually worked for him?

JG: That is correct.

TS: I did an interview with him a couple of years ago.

JG: Yes, he's a good man.

TS: Did you work on the flight line the whole time that you were at Bell?

JG: No, no, I went into modifications. You see, we had a contractor build airplanes to certain specifications. During the process from the start to finish of an airplane, engineering would make certain changes as requested by the customer, which was the Air Force. At this point in time they set up a department to accomplish these modifications. Some of them were minor; some of them were major. For instance, one of the major ones was on the bomb bay doors. The airplane originally came out with screw type openers, electrically operated. They were so slow that the Air Force wanted a faster way of doing it. So they put in a compressed air deal. We had to change those screws in the air cylinders, and they put a compressor in there to open them and close them. They would open and close under 2,500 pounds of air pressure, and they were fast. It was just as fast as they could be. And that was one of the changes that we made. We had numerous wiring changes, but we'd had a major operation to pull those screws out and put in the air cylinders and then put the valves in that controlled it and put the air compressor in and then pipe it or tube it all the way around. It was quite a deal.

TS: How long did you do that?

JG: I did that until Bell Aircraft closed. I got to be a foreman at night there. During the interim before I went into the Mod, I was on the flight line. It was there that I met Jim Watson who was the company's chief pilot with Lockheed. But at that time he was an army officer, a lieutenant. I met him.

TS: So he was stationed at the air base?

JG: He was stationed at the air base. The company would fly the airplanes for a couple of hours and turn them over to the Air Force. Then the airport would have to fly them before we could deliver them. Jim was a lieutenant, and he was a hell of a flyer, man. He could fly that airplane. He and I developed a bond. He insisted that whenever he flew one of the airplanes that I be aboard in the back end or either on the engineer panel. We were that strong. So when he went to work for Lockheed he immediately got in touch with me.

TS: Oh, so that's how you ended up at Lockheed.

JG: That's how I ended with Lockheed. Jim Watson.

TS: What did you do between the time that Bell closed and the time that Lockheed came in?

JG: I was selling safety equipment, fire extinguishers, ladders, hoses, anything I could.

TS: Was it tough getting a job after that?

JG: No, I had my own business.

TS: It seems like a lot of people started their own company after Bell.

JG: I didn't burn my bridges anywhere. I just wanted something higher. The idea of going back to work in the mills didn't appeal to me at all, because, one, the pay scale was lower, and I just didn't like the environment of the Standard Mills Company.

TS: Wasn't a pleasant place to work?

JG: No, no. There again, it's hard growing up. You have to learn these things.

TS: Right. I think the aircraft industry provided a major alternative.

JG: Oh, yes. And I dearly loved it.

TS: Well, Mr. Watson calls you up and says, "Come work for Lockheed." And you jumped at it.

JG: Yes, he said, "What are you doing?" I told him, and he said, "Well, meet me at the airport in Atlanta in the morning at nine o'clock." There was three other people there I didn't know. I met them all and asked where we were going. He said, "You're going to Pyote, Texas."

TS: Okay. That's when you go out there.

JG: That's right. I never had heard of Pyote, Texas. But I said, "Jim, I haven't got the money to make this trip." He said, "Don't worry." He reached in his pocket, and he pulled out five hundred dollars. He gave it to me, and he said, "Sign this." So I signed it and got the five hundred. Out of that I had to buy my airplane ticket.

TS: So when he said meet at the airport he's talking about Hartsfield. I guess it was Candler Field then.

JG: Yes. So I found myself on an airplane going to Pyote,

Texas. We flew into Midland, Texas, which was about sixty-five, seventy miles from Monahans.

TS: Why didn't you fly right straight into the air base there?

JG: There was no commercial airplane that went.

TS: Oh, you're going on a commercial.

JG: Oh, yes, we were commercial. There were no through planes, so we flew into Midland. Watson had a station wagon there. They kept a representative, and we'd get aboard that station wagon and go on out to Rattlesnake Bomber Base at Pyote. Now, west Texas is hot and dry. When they built that place they ended up with a big hole in the ground back over there, and there were a lot of rocks and boulders.

TS: Boulders?

JG: Yes. When we were stuck there over the weekend, actually when we didn't get a plane to fly in, we would go out there and sit on the edge of that canyon, so to speak. When the sun came up and the rocks got warm, the rattlesnakes, some of them as big as your arm, would come crawling out from in those rocks. We'd shoot them with a .22 rifle. And that was our [recreation]. I mean, there was nothing else to do.

TS: Right, this is in the end of the earth, almost.

JG: Right, the end of nowhere. And man, Pyote was an experience in itself. We were housed in the airport barracks. They were air-conditioned, and there was ample hot water and cold water. Of course, they had a theater there and a bar, an officer's club, and a cafeteria. There were a few civilian employees, but mostly the civilians there worked for Lockheed pulling those B-29's out of storage. Now, they'd been in storage for some five, six, seven years. They'd been in what they called cocoons.

TS: What does that mean exactly?

JG: That means all the openings were closed up, and the engines were what we called pickled. Pickled, that is, the oil was put in to keep it from rusting. When they pulled them out, and I'm talking about two hundred airplanes sitting out in the desert, they would pull them up there and wash them and de-cocoon them and get them ready to fly in here to Marietta.

TS: Are these Lockheed employees who are doing this?

JG: Yes, they were Lockheed air service; it's a different branch but it's still Lockheed. They would get them ready for service. You can imagine how they were after sitting out in the desert for five, six years.

TS: At least it was dry there though, I guess.

JG: Yes, they were dry, it was dry. [chuckle] But they would get them ready. Then we would fly them in here. Originally, we would have a lot of trouble with the engines on those things. So we eventually got to the point that we had a couple of sets of slave engines. We would put those slave engines on, take the engines that were on the aircraft, and send them to the factory for refurbishment. Then we would take the slave engines on the B-29's and fly it into here. Well, when we got here the first thing they would do would be to take the engines off, put them on a tractor-trailer, and truck them back to Pyote.

TS: I see, your slave engines.

JG: Yes, that way we had good engines, or relatively good engines.

TS: Are these Wright Engines?

JG: Yeah, Wright, 2,300. They were huge, and they'd gulp fuel like it was going out of style. For instance, if we were coming in here, one time, I don't remember what shift it was but we got [bad] weather. We didn't have any instruments to fly on that were reliable. We could only fly those B-29's under 10,000 feet and on no instruments. I mean, we had a compass, we had a radio .

. .

TS: What was wrong with the instruments on the planes?

JG: They hadn't been checked. They were just too much trouble to go through a period of checking all the instruments. We couldn't go under pressure anyway, so we could only fly VSR. That's Visual Flight Rules.

TS: So no night flights.

JG: No. We would leave Pyote, and we'd tune in the AM radio into Dallas, Ft. Worth. As the radio got louder we were getting closer, so we'd turn it down. When we got to Dallas we'd tune into Shreveport. We would follow that music or radio into Shreveport. From there we were going

to Birmingham. We'd get on Birmingham, and from Birmingham we'd come into here and get them out. That was the way we navigated, and it was real good.

TS: Well, I guess there wasn't as much air traffic to contend with there.

JG: No.

TS: So at Dallas, let's see, what's the air base there in Dallas? Is that where you were going?

JG: No. We were listening to a commercial station. We weren't listening to the Carswell Air Force base in Ft. Worth.

TS: So do you actually stop at Carswell?

JG: No, no, no.

TS: You just go over it.

JG: You just go over it.

TS: You don't have to stop in a B-29.

JG: We were using that as a navigation point. We corrected our bearings in Shreveport and then to Birmingham and then into here.

TS: How many months did it take to fly all those planes to Marietta? I think you had 130 of them, didn't you?

JG: A little over a year.

TS: And you started maybe around April of '51?

JG: Yes, I think I came to work for them in the last of March or the first of April.

TS: So for the next year you're flying planes.

JG: Well, now wait, I just flew them up until about November, because after we blew that airplane up in Ft. Worth, I wasn't exactly scared, but I wasn't real comfortable.

TS: We need to talk about that. Now you said you blew a plane up?

JG: It was the sixty-fifth airplane. We were inbound. We were east of Dallas about twenty minutes, and fuel started hitting the back bulkhead where the gunners would

sit.

TS: Because there's a leak?

JG: Yes, because there's a fuel leak. So old smart ass Joe, I said, "I'll go back and fix it and see what I can do." So I went back, and it was back of the center wing. Underneath the center wing they had the fuel transfer system. This fuel transfer system enables you to load the fuel from the outer wing to the inner wing, from the right wing to the left wing and more or less keep the airplane in a level trim due to the weight, because some engines would burn more fuel than others. You transferred the fuel around to keep the airplane at a level condition. Anyway, the leak was coming from in there. Now, in the process of getting into the bomb bay I had left the engineer panel. I got soaked with one hundred octane gasoline. My flight suit, parachute, everything was soaked. So when I got to the back of the airplane, I took my flight suit off and my underwear. I didn't have a damn thing but a parachute when we went in. That's all I had on was a parachute.

TS: Now, you landed at Carswell?

JG: Yes, we didn't land, we crashed.

TS: You crashed.

JG: I was, I wouldn't say scared, but I was apprehensive.

TS: I bet you were.

JG: My main purpose, and I think the reason Watson hired me, was to keep the crew loose, because you don't want to be on a crew that's scared. I mean, you got to keep loose, that is, in a humorous situation. I'll give you an instance. We had one engineer with us, Wilbanks, and he was afraid of flying. He would go through the papers every day and see who all cracked up. If he'd come he'd tell us all about them. Then when he would go out he would find some reason not to fly. For instance, on several occasions his parachute had come unpacked.

TS: Just an excuse.

JG: Just an excuse. Other times he was nauseated. One time he was out there, and he wanted to come back in. We were coming in, and I said, "Willie, I tell you what, you can fly the engineer's panel, and I'll lay in the back." They had some bunks back there. He said, "I appreciate that." I said, "That's all right." So that afternoon I borrowed

the station wagon. I had my own key to it. I had borrowed it before and gone into the hardware store and had me a key made.

TS: Okay, you go into Monahans, and you buy a water pistol.

JG: Yes. I got a Pepsi-cola bottle full of hundred-octane gas. We got on board and start flying back. Well, I'd talk to the pilots, Gibson and Lloyd Harris, and told them what I was going to do. So old Wilbanks is sitting up on the engineer's panel. I filled up that water pistol with hundred-octane gas. I crawled up through the tunnel from the back section through the rear. It's about forty feet I reckon. Anyway, I'd stick my head out with the water pistol and squirt the water pistol around in the radio compartment, which was in the front of the airplane. The odor would go all over. Everybody knew it but Wilbanks. I'd get back there to the back, and then I'd scoot back to the back. They'd say, "Gabe, you smell anything back there?" I'd say, "No, I don't smell anything." He says, "Well, it smells strong up here." And I said, "Well, get up on it. Hell, we might be in deep trouble." So I kept him hunting the gas leak all the way back, and I'm talking about four hours.

TS: That was mean. [laughter]

JG: Well, it was humorous too. Anyway, when he landed, he said, "I'll never fly with you bunch again. You're a bunch of kooks." And as a matter of fact, he quit that weekend. We cured him. I told him, I said, "Wilbanks, let me show you where that gas leak was." I reached and got that water pistol and squirted it, and the light came on and he knew. Oh, he was mad! [laughter] But there again, that was a point of keeping loose.

TS: Right. How many were on your crews?

JG: Five. Lloyd Harris, Gibson . . .

TS: These were pilot and co-pilot?

JG: Yes, pilot and co-pilot; myself, Joe Sedita and John Volin.

TS: Joe Sedita?

JG: Yes. He's in Minneapolis in a nursing home. He and I were real close. We worked together in Nashville and with Bill too. But he's in a nursing home in Minneapolis.

TS: Tell me about the crash a little bit more.

JG: Okay. We were twenty minutes east of Dallas, heading in, and we called Shreveport and told them we wanted to come in there. They said, "We don't have the equipment to take care of you." So we turned around and flew back to Dallas/Ft Worth. Well, Meachem Airport was in between Dallas and Ft. Worth. We called them, and they said, "We can't take care of you here. You'll have to go on to Ft. Worth." So we headed for Ft. Worth. Of course, I was in the back end at this point in time, because I had done gotten soaked with gas. We had planned to go in with the wheels up. The commander of the base there at Carswell ordered us to lower the gear to make a normal approach. Well, now, to do that you had to put power on the aircraft to lower the gear and the flaps, et cetera. Well, we didn't want to put power on, but he insisted. So we put power on the airplane. That was a mistake, because when we lowered the gear the airplane caught on fire.

Now normally you lower the gear some five, six minutes before you land. We came in across Lake Worth there and everything was normal. We were burning and we knew it, because I had reported it to the front end. As we came in over Lake Worth the pilot, Gibson, was going to make a flare landing. That is, you go down below a level and then pick the nose up and let it settle in. Well, when he went to pull back on the yoke to bring the nose up, the tail came around to the side of the airplane. It literally cooked off. When it did that, we hit fourteen feet up a bank from Lake Worth up to the end of the runway, fourteen feet dead center of the air strip, the concrete, and our first bounce carried us up to the landing area. We went skidding down that thing, and there was sweat and there was smoke.

TS: Are you still in the back of the plane?

JG: I'm in the back of the airplane.

TS: And the tail has come off?

JG: The tail had swung around. When he pulled back on the yoke the pressure went to the back of the airplane to the elevators.

TS: So you're flying around with the tail then.

JG: Well, just a little ways. Not far now. It wasn't far, but we were over Lake Worth. I can remember that. We had fourteen feet from the top of the runway. We went

skidding down the runway on fire and smoking, dust, dirt. When we finally stopped, the tail of the B-29 is normally about seven feet off the ground. I wasn't thinking right, and I'm sure you wouldn't either under the circumstances. Anyway, we hit short, bounced up, hit the runway dead on, and we went skidding down it. Of course, we've got the meat wagon there and the fire trucks. They immediately came to our aid and started putting out the fire. I go out the back of the airplane, and I think I'm seven feet in the air. So I jump. Actually, I'm six inches off the ground. Scared me to death. Anyway, there I am, naked except for a parachute.

TS: I bet you were glad you got that flight suit off.

JG: I was glad I was there. I didn't bother to get up and run. I crawled around the airplane to the front to see if I could help up there. Gibson, the pilot, had had a rawhide throng around his neck with his microphone on it to pick it up and talk. It was real handy, and it was a good deal, except that the chord running to the microphone had to go through the throttle into the plug in there on the side of the airplane. When he bailed out the window, the chord hung. As a result, he hung. He was about five feet from the ground, and he was hanging by his neck. Then all of a sudden it let go. He landed on his back and broke his back, three or four vertebrae.

TS: I guess that's the end of his flying career.

JG: Yes. That finished him. He might have flown a little light plane some, but he was in a cast for about six months.

TS: Could he walk after that?

JG: Yes, yes, he got to where he could walk, and he was doing all right.

TS: What was Gibson's first name, do you remember?

JG: Victor. V. D. Gibson. He's buried in the cemetery over here in Marietta. As matter of fact, he was married right here in front of that desk.

TS: Is that right? Well, was that the worst injury?

JG: That was the worst injury by far.

TS: So ya'll were lucky.

JG: Well, yes. Sedita was burned a little bit, and the co-

pilot on that particular flight was a little guy, Dilenbeck. He was a Navy pilot. He was flying co-pilot, and when they were going down the runway, his window was right there at him. So he raises the window on the co-pilot's side. When it stopped, he tried to get out it. Well, he was a little bit chunky, I mean, pretty damn chunky. So he hung in the window. So Sedita put his foot on his butt and pushed him through the window. Well when he did, it just peeled both sides of his rib cage, just peeled the meat right off. We were laying there, and Dilenbeck went over where Sedita was and said, "Joe, I want to thank you for saving my life." Joe said, "Save your life, hell, you had my whole stopped up." [laughter] He wasn't worried about Dilenbeck's life. He was worried about getting out of that plane.

TS: Getting out himself.

JG: Anyway, they carried us into the Air Force base hospital there. Now the first thing they did after we got all in a big room, they brought in some guy--I don't know who he was--and put him in a bed over there. Well, right off the bat we knew he was a plant.

TS: A plant?

JG: A plant for the Air Force to find out what we were talking about. So we started attributing the crack up, because the flutenary valve didn't reclean. Now, there's no such thing as a flutenary valve, and reclean was just good English. So we kept talking about the flutenary valve didn't reclean. Anyway, about a week later when they had the hearing before the Air Force board, they asked us about the flutenary valve. [laughter] But we didn't want that guy to lay there and not have anything to report. So we had a flutenary valve.

TS: Was the plane totally destroyed?

JG: Yes, I think I have a picture of it here, I'll show you in a little bit. I'm not sure.

TS: How long did you stay in the hospital?

JG: About three days. All of our clothes got burned up, everything.

TS: I guess so with all that gasoline.

JG: I called in the plant here. I was the only one mobile; so I called. I knew I had to let Lockheed know. So it was on Saturday. I called the plant here and told the

operator the story. I said, "Now, I've got to get in touch with Dan Haughton." He was the big chief. So this guy in purchasing happened to be working. He was the only one that was authorized to take a collect call. Well, I was collect because, hell, I was broke!

TS: I guess so. You left your clothes behind.

JG: I finally got in touch with him--Stan Austin--

TS: Stan Austin.

JG: Yes. He got in touch with Haughton, and Haughton called and asked to speak to me. I talked to him, and I said, "Uncle Dan, we tore your damn airplane up."

TS: Uncle Dan, is that what you called him?

JG: Uncle Dan, yes. Everybody called him Uncle Dan. He was a father type figure. He said, "I don't worry about that. Tell me about the crew." So I told him as best I could. He said, "What do you need?" I said, "Anything; we ain't got a damn thing." So that night he sent a representative out there with a sack full of money and let us have the money. We signed for it, of course. We had to pay it back. So we could get clothes, so we could get out of there and get toiletries and this type thing. And Charlie Black was emissary. He's the guy that brought us the money, and he was real nice. Of course, Lockheed has always been nice. They were just wonderful to me throughout my entire working experience with them. And it was out there that I met Sherman Martin. Sherman was in the crew that was selecting the airplanes to be brought back in here. They would go over the records and, I don't know, check for every little thing--and big--and make sure the records were all right before they could okay them to be cleaned up and brought in. He had quite a responsible job, and he was real good at it. Of course, I tell you, he was scared to fly too.

TS: Was he?

JG: Yeah, one time we were out there--we were coming home on Friday--and he wanted to come the worst way in the world. But he couldn't get reservations on the commercial airplanes. So we told him to just fly in with us. Well, he had about three hours to think about it, and he thought about a lot of things. Anyway, when we got ready to leave, he said, "I don't believe I'll go. I'll just stay here and catch a commercial tomorrow."

TS: That doesn't give you much confidence that they checked

out those flights.

JG: There again, the airplanes, they were flyable, but they weren't too exactly what you might say trustworthy.

TS: Well, it'd been awhile, I guess.

JG: Oh, yes, just sitting there. They weren't too trustworthy.

TS: What exactly did you do on the flights?

JG: Well, the engineer sits in behind the co-pilot. He faces aft, and he's got his instruments there, all kind of instruments that gauge the engines and everything else. We had to okay the engines before we could turn them over to the pilot to say, okay, we're ready for take-off. We had to make sure all the instruments were reading decently and that the engines were performing as they should be. Then we would take off. Now, part of the time I was there. Part of the time I flew in the back end to report the general condition of the back end of the airplane to the pilot, because when the pilot was sitting up there he couldn't see a damn thing but four propellers. Other than that he could see nothing coming out the back or nothing else. We'd have occasionally smoke come out of the engines. We'd have to pedal the prop to come in. Now, on the first ones it was real bad, because we hadn't yet reached the point where we used slave engines.

TS: Yes, you had to go with the old ones.

JG: Well, most of the gaskets were real paper-thin between the main surfaces on the engines. All the oil has evaporated or gone somewhere, and it left just a dry piece of paper, so to speak, in between the main surfaces. They very often leaked not only fuel, but oil.

TS: And you needed new gaskets and everything.

JG: That was one of the reasons we had to go to the slave engines, because of the drying out of the gaskets and the engine and the fuel system. It was a real tricky situation there at first until we got to the slave engines. We did a lot better. I know when we had the original engines, once in a while we'd had to go down and fix them.

TS: On the way? You'd have to stop?

JG: Yes, on the way in. A lot of the times the weather would

get us too. You just had so much against you that it didn't pay to take a chance at all. For instance, one time we were coming in from Pyote to Marietta. I was on the engineer's panel, and Jim Watson was flying. We go in at Birmingham because of the weather. It had beat us right in. We were down to 500 feet coming over Birmingham. Of course, Birmingham sits down in a saucer. It's surrounded by mountains, and the top of the mountains you couldn't see. So we went into Birmingham. We stayed overnight and got up the next morning. I put one hundred gallons of fuel in each of the four tanks. We got out to the end of the runway. We went to close the bomb bay doors prior to take off, and the doors wouldn't close.

Jim says, "Stand by to take off. I got a meeting to attend." Well, Birmingham sits down in the saucer. The aircraft wasn't underpowered, but it wasn't a damn bit overpowered. So I reached up and cut the master switch. I'm on the engineer's panel, and I cut the master switch and stopped all four engines. Watson says, "Gabe, what in the hell are you doing?" I said, "Jim, let me tell you. We'll get out, and we'll close those doors by hand. [They were over center locks]. When we get them locked in, then I'll fire up, and we'll go. But I am not flying out of here with those doors hanging loose." Now, if they were all the way open, that would be different. But I said, "If they're blowing in the wind and we lose a hinge on one of the front of those doors, it'll go into the props. Then it's good-night nurse."

Oh, he was mad, but he said, "Well, get out and fix the damn doors." So I got the boys in the back, and we went out. We closed the doors, pushed them up manually over center, and they locked. You could hear them lock. When we got that done, we got back aboard. Jim was real sarcastic. He said, "Well, Mr. Gabriel, are you ready to go?" I said, "Yes sir, as soon as I start the engines." So I started the engines and cleared them. Then I said, "Okay, Mr. Watson, take over." So we took off. He had to come to a meeting here; so he come on back. But when we landed I said, "Well, Gabe, you're through here." So I cleaned out my locker and got in my little car and I went back to North Carolina.

TS: Oh, my goodness.

JG: Because I figured I was going to get fired anyway, because you just don't cut the master switch on an airplane with the chief pilot flying, you know. But I did. I got back to North Carolina, and that night about 10:30 I got a phone call. "Gabe?" I said, "Yes, sir."

He said, "This is Jim." I said, "Yeah, how are you Mr. Watson?" He said, "What in the hell are you doing back in North Carolina?" I said, "Well, Jim, I figured I was going to get fired for what I did this morning. I didn't want to give you the pleasure to fire me. So I quit, and I come home. You can mail my check to [such and such]."  
He said, "Get your ass back down here. We got to go to Pyote in the morning." I said, "Is everything all right?" He said, "Gabe, you did the smart thing. There ain't many people got enough guts to do what you did. But I admire you for it, and your job is waiting on you. As a matter of fact, I'm going to give you a raise."

So I came on back, and he gave me a raise. We flew just like normal. But he told me on the flight back to Pyote, "Gabe, now let me tell you. One of the reasons I've got you on a flight crew was because you will not fly anything that is unsafe. We need a person like you on the airplane at all times that knows something about it, so that they won't let us go overboard." He said, "I want you to know that I admire you for doing what you did."

TS: Well, great.

JG: That made me feel a lot better. So we got back.

TS: When you flew the planes into Marietta, then you got on a commercial flight to go back?

JG: Yes. A lot of times we'd fly into Dallas/Ft. Worth and take the train, the Texas and Pacific. It would go right into Monahans, and Lockheed's station wagon would meet us there at Monahans.

TS: Where is Monahans?

JG: Beyond Midland. Monahans is about ten miles from Pyote.

TS: I see. Well, now, after you got all the planes back, all the B-29's, what did you do after that? Go back to the flight line?

JG: I went back to the flight line for a short period of time. Then you've got cold and nasty and wet and rainy and everything you can think of. So I started shopping around for another job. I ran into Sherman who was a department manager. I asked him for a job, and he said, "Yeah, come on in." So I went into the planning organization as a manufacturing engineer general. I got to be a manufacturing engineer senior after awhile. When the C-5 came along, they were having big troubles with

it, and they started putting hot shots, that's what we were called . . .

TS: You were a hot shot?

JG: On each airplane. I worked at that time for production control, which is over the hot shots, because that's where the heat comes from was the sparks. Production control was in charge of getting the parts to give to production to put on the airplane. So they put one hot shot for each airplane. I had Ship 6.

TS: You had what?

JG: Ship 6. That's when we formulated that plan and went to work. We kept lists of each and every part that we were short. We would file it in the manufacturing process. The minute it was able or in shape to pull, if they were making ten of them, we would get one and get it on the airplane, the hot shots would. It was quite a deal but it worked.

TS: Well, the C-5's got to be about the biggest plane ever made.

JG: Oh, yes, it was a huge thing. You know, the wing span on that C-5 was longer than the Wright Brothers' first flight.

TS: Is that right? [chuckle]

JG: It's about ninety-nine feet, and the Wright Brothers' first flight was about eighty feet.

TS: Could you even get a C-5 into the B-4 building?

JG: No, the tail was too high. That's why they built that building out there to put the tail on the airplane. Actually, there again, the humor comes into it. They called it the cat house, because that's where the C-5 got its tail. That's aircraft lingo, but that's the way it works.

TS: What year did you retire from Lockheed?

JG: 1977.

TS: So you went through the good times and . . .

JG: And the bad.

TS: And the bad, I guess.

JG: Let me tell you; when we first had the flight line down there it was in what you call hut city. There was a whole bunch of army tents with wood up about four feet. Then it was canvas, and that was hut city. That was the offices and production control. Miscellaneous small parts, that is, screws, nuts, and bolts that they kept in different tents down there. Production had a tent there that was an office for Mr. Frank West who was the head flight line honcho. I worked for him at night.

Now, you get the airplanes ready to fly at night mostly, because the day hours were shorter. Actually, to be perfectly frank, you could get more done at night, because there were no wheels walking around sticking their nose in your business and you having to stop and explain everything to them. So you would get the actual work done at night. Well, I had a crew of about twelve people. I was supervisor. When we would get our airplane ready to fly, it was generally accepted by me, being in charge, that the crew could go aboard and sleep. We'd put a wolfcat with a lookout up over the entrance which was up through the nose wheel up a ladder into the cockpit. He would watch and see if any wheels were coming. If he did, he woke everybody up, but if he didn't we snoozed. That was allowable, I mean, if you get your airplane pre-flighted and it's ready to go, we didn't want anybody aboard it but the flight crew, because we didn't want anything messed up. So when I would get them ready to fly they would be ready. The crew would go upstairs and go to sleep.

They all knew that. Management didn't know it, but I was management. So that was one of our [rewards] for getting our job done. Three or four o'clock in the morning, they, we're all through. Well, you don't send them home at that time. You put them up there and let them sleep. That way, at six o'clock you get up and get them ready to pre-flight the airplane and get it ready to go. So when the flight crew comes in at seven you can get right on off the ground. And that worked.

Anyway, we had this hut city. It was one cold November night, cold, snowy, wet, stinking. I had a prop governor to change, and I had a green crew. That is they weren't too knowledgeable, and we had a prop governor to change. Now a prop governor set out on front of the engine, and it was kind of a tedious task to change one. So I wanted the crew to see how it was going. So we got crew chiefs standing all around there. I was up on one of the crew chief stands with some wrenches, and I took the prop governor off. I looked around and there wasn't anybody

there but me and one guy holding the light. So I got down and I said, "I got to hunt my crew." I went over to the hut, and the head honcho's in the foreman's office. He had a stove in there, and that stove was cherry red.

TS: That's where they were.

JG: Everybody was sitting hunkered down on the floor, sound asleep. So old Joe, he went over there to the cat door. We had a pet cat down there. We fed it, and we had a cat door on the back of the hut. I got a hundred-pound seal tube fire extinguisher, and I carried it around to the cat door. I stuck it in the cat door. I reached up and opened the valve. Well, it makes a terrific noise in addition to the fact that it throws out a bunch of CO<sub>2</sub> which is much like smoking it. Just filled the entire hut. Well, that crew took off running. When they took off running, they weren't too careful. They tore the fence down that separates Mr. West's office from the rest of the building. They knocked the door off the hinges. A couple of windows got broken out. That whole fourteen-man crew got out of that building. West came in the next morning, and he said, "Gabriel?" I said, "Yes, sir?" He looked at it, and he said, "What in the hell happened?" I said, "Mr. West, let's say I motivated my crew last night." [laughter] And I reckon that's what you would call it, a motivation. But it was something else.

TS: Well, I've heard stories about Dan Haughton constantly walking through the plant.

JG: He was a wonderful man.

TS: Did you have many conversations?

JG: Oh yes. I was coming up to the flight line. I had been assigned down there to manufacturing engineering. We used to go out there to the gatehouse and stand and then catch a ride up to B-1 building. Well, I was sitting out there one day, and Haughton comes by. I asked him for a ride, and he said, "Yeah, get in." He called me Gabe, and we went up there right by the engine run position. As it happened they were bringing a B-47 engine, all six of them at that point in time. There was no blast fence. There was a big dirt bank there. Those six engines were creating a pile of dust that you wouldn't believe up in the air about forty feet and just dirty and dusty. He said, "Gabe, can't you get us a blast fence here?" I said, "Mr. Haughton, let me tell you; I've written ten or twelve pieces of paper, 3166 to get a blast fence. Somewhere along the way it gets bopped down. Maybe it's not in the budget. Maybe it's that. Anyway, I can't buy

one." He said, "Do you have a vendor?" I said, "Oh yes. I've already been in touch with Armco up in Illinois, and they've agreed to come in and put up a blast fence."

TS: What's the term?

JG: Blast fence. What it did is it took the air currents coming out from the engine and directed them upwards right in the aft of the wing. So he said, "Gabe, get me a piece of paper. Bring it to my desk, and let me sign it." I said, "You mean I'm to bypass everybody in the command?" He said, "That is right." I said, "Well, I'll do it. I don't think it's right. I've never been taught to bypass people." He said, "I'm telling you; I'm giving you an order." I said, "I'm taking it." So I went back to the office and I wrote 3166 to buy the blast fence. I signed it, and I carried it up to his office and told the girl that I wanted to see Mr. Haughton. I went in, and I said, "Uncle Dan, here's your paper." I pulled it out, and he looked at it. He says, "Yeah." And he signed it. He said, "Now, you take this down to plant engineering." That was the normal routing. He said he would call E. J. Docekal.

TS: E. J. Docekal?

JG: E. J. Docekal. And he said, "You take it down, and I'll call E. J. Docekal. You don't need to get anybody else's signature." I said, "I wouldn't think so." He said, "I'll take care of it. You get it down there." And he said, "Also, call Armco and tell them to start getting their stuff together down here and put the blast fence up." I said, "Without a PO [purchase order]?" He said, "Handle it." I said, "Yes sir." So I carried the paper over to E. J. Docekal with nobody's signature on it but Dan Haughton's and mine, and I put it on his desk. He said, "Yeah, I been waiting on that." I had called Armco, and the next day here comes this big old truck with all this seal on it and everything. They put up that blast fence. It took them a couple of days, but we got us a blast fence. We stopped that air from blowing up that dust all over the place. But that was one of my occasions to work with [Haughton].

TS: Did you work on the C-130?

JG: Yes. I worked on the C-130 in final assembly as a manufacturing engineer. We bar-chartered it. Manufacturing engineers are responsible for getting the equipment necessary for the workers to put the airplane together. That is, the stands, the lights, and everything else. That was their responsibility. Everybody

had a certain [task]. I had body mate. That is where the fuselage was mated with the tail and the engines put on and all of that, the body mate position. Real good job.

TS: Which was your favorite airplane?

JG: B-29.

TS: Was it?

JG: Yes. I loved that airplane, because I was so familiar with it. I knew every nut, bolt, fitting, and everything on it, and I dearly loved it. I dearly loved it.

TS: I just have a few more questions I wanted to ask. I've heard different stories about how Lockheed integrated the plant and got black and white workers working together. Do you remember anything about that particular event?

JG: Well, I know here at Bell we had separate water fountains, we had separate restrooms, we had separate cafeterias. And Lockheed, one of the first things they did was take out the colored water fountains. Now, that doesn't sound like much, but let me tell you. When I came here, the people didn't exactly welcome us with open arms.

TS: The locals.

JG: Yes. I'll give you a good example. My first week here, on Saturday I went down to get a haircut. I went just off the Square of Marietta on Roswell Road to a little barbershop. I went in there, and I waited my turn. Of course, it was full. The guy says, "Next." Well, it was my time. So I got up and walked over there. He said, "Don't you bother to sit down." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "You're a foreigner, and we're taking care of the local people. We ain't cutting your hair." And he didn't cut my hair. But that's the way the local people at that point in time felt about Bell Aircraft coming in here. They had a deep resentment.

TS: They just didn't want a change?

JG: They didn't want a change. They didn't want their city messed up. They used to have the trolley track running around the Square and going back to Atlanta. Well, we had it branched off to come up by the plant and let the employees off. That was the mode of transportation at that point in time. There weren't too many cars in the parking lot.

TS: Where did you live when you were working at Bell?

JG: We had a trailer over here on old 41. It wasn't anybody but my wife and I. Aircraft work was funny at that point in time. It was either feast or famine, and you never knew where you were going to be next, because you were always looking for opportunities to advance. So we had a trailer we lived in.

TS: You didn't think you were going to be staying here that long?

JG: No. We bought this place here in '56 when we adopted our little girl. We lived out in the country, well in the country at that time, on Spring Road in a big, old farm house. It wasn't sub-floored. In the wintertime when the wind was blowing you could see the carpet jiggling all over the floor. [laughter] You could say we had cross ventilation.

TS: Were you renting the whole house?

JG: Yes, we rented the whole house and lived in it. It was what, four bedrooms, a big house.

TS: So this is the first one that you owned then.

JG: Well, first one I owned in Georgia now. I owned the one in North Carolina.

TS: So by '56 you think things are pretty permanent?

JG: Yes. Well, from '51 to '56 I went through a learning period. I learned the mechanisms of Lockheed and knew how everything worked. I liked it, and that's why I stayed.

TS: How long did it take before that resentment against Bell and Lockheed workers went away? Was it still there when Lockheed came in?

JG: No, I'm talking about Bell. Now, Lockheed wasn't even in the picture at this point. We're talking about '44.

TS: Did people stay resentful throughout the War do you think?

JG: Yes, more or less.

TS: What about with Lockheed? Did they resent Lockheed?

JG: Oh, no. We were welcomed with open arms.

TS: Really?

JG: Yes, because they had seen what prosperity would do for you if you had the aircraft plant open. And we had the prosperity.

TS: What I understand though is that people kept expecting Lockheed to leave just like Bell did.

JG: Yes. They expected that for, I don't know, a number of years. Well, I think the C-130 was a solidifying aspect and the 141. Now, there was a good airplane, the 141.

TS: Did you work on that?

JG: Yes. It came down the line with the fewest number of squawks, that is discrepancies, of anything we ever built. It was just a slick airplane all the way through. They didn't build enough of them.

TS: What happened? Was it too expensive to keep building them or why did they . . . ?

JG: Air Force, I don't know. They figured they had enough. I think we built a couple hundred of them. We got up to nine a month on that. I think that was the figure.

TS: Well, I think I'm just about out of questions. Is there anything that we should have talked about that we didn't?

JG: No, I don't think there's a thing we haven't covered. We've covered it pretty good. Except that it's been a distinct pleasure. I've never gone through an experience like this, but what the hell, I'm not too old to learn, you know. And I've enjoyed it.

TS: I really want to thank you for the interview.

JG: Well, I want to thank you for asking me.

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