

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

COBB COUNTY ORAL HISTORY SERIES

NO. 50

INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM G. GISEL

CONDUCTED BY THOMAS A. SCOTT AND HUGH M. NEESON

SUNDAY, 25 OCTOBER 1998

Cobb County Oral History Series, No. 50

Interview with William G. Gisel, former President, Bell Aircraft Corporation

Conducted by Thomas A. Scott, Kennesaw State University, and Hugh M. Neeson, Director,  
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Sunday, October 28, 1998

Location: Gisel home, Buffalo, New York

TS: Mr. Gisel, why don't we start by asking when you were born and where you were born and things like that. Then we'll talk about how you got into the aircraft industry.

WG: I was born March 9, 1916, which makes me 82 years old... going on 83. I was born in Jamestown, New York, and went to school in Jamestown and, later, to college at both Miami Universities.

TS: Oh, really?

WG: University of Miami in Florida and Miami University in Ohio, and I graduated from Miami University in Ohio with a Bachelor's in Science and Business Administration.

TS: How did you get down to Miami - the one in Florida?

WG: On a scholarship. During that era, money was rather important. So, I had a scholarship, went down, spent two years, and played golf most of the time. I didn't learn very much.

TS: What kind of a scholarship was it? An academic?

WG: No. Athletic.

TS: For football?

WG: No, for basketball. After a couple of years my mother and father felt I was not getting a proper education, so they said you can not go back to Florida. I began to look around rather late in the season to find out where to go. A friend of mind was going to Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and that's where I ended up.

TS: Did you still play basketball?

WG: No, I didn't do anything, except study. I had to make up four years in two years, which I did. After graduation I was employed by Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company as an auditor, which was not my cup of tea. I left that. I went back to

Jamestown. I went in the Bank of Jamestown pretty much a trainee. A friend of mine from Buffalo by the name of Dick McKee was one of the originals hired by Larry Bell back in 1935. He had a very heavy affection for a girl in Jamestown, so I saw quite a bit of him. He prevailed on me to come to work for Bell, and, after some deliberation, I did. I started and had a very nominal salary of 55 cents an hour.

TS: What was your job?

WG: Initially. I was a cashier. After a short period of time, I moved up in the accounting department, particularly in the payroll and ended up in charge of all the payroll activity for--at that time-- about 35,000 people, which was a major job.

TS: By this time, we are into World War II?

WG: Yes.

TS: What year did you go to work for Bell?

WG: 1940.

TS: So, you started there when there were still only about a thousand employees?

WG: Less than a thousand. As I recall, there were about four or five hundred. We had a rapid expansion after the 1940 period-- not only physical plants, but people. As the plant grew, I moved up in the accounting department. I became chief accountant, and I was controller. About that time in 1941 and '42, when the B-29 activity started in Georgia, I went down to Marietta. I spent about two or three months in Marietta setting up the payroll department. Then, I would go back quite frequently. Come back here and go back. I lost my apartment up here. I had an apartment on Alan Street. The landlady thought I was never coming back, so she just took all my stuff and threw it away. I came back, and I had nothing. Anyway, it was an interesting experience coming back to Georgia. That's where I met my wife. She was secretary to Captain [Harry E.] Collins [the general manager of the Georgia plant]. She was the Number 1 employee. I'll have her come down and testify.

TS: All right.

WG: Then Captain Collins was moved from Georgia to Washington.

TS: So, Kay stays and Collins goes, is that right?

WG: No, he prevailed on her to go to Washington with him, provided that, if she wanted to go home, [she could]. So, she went to Washington. I would see her in Washington. I said, "Finally, I have you on the other side of the Mason Dixon. Now, we can talk serious." Anyway, we were married on November 25, 1944. I spent most of my time up here [in Buffalo] from that point. I spent most of my time in the financial area. Then, I became Secretary and Treasurer of the company and gradually moved up.

TS: Was it about 1960 that you became president?

WG: I could give you my resume. It would be easier.

TS: So, you went to Georgia about what--

WG: In 1942, I believe.

TS: So, you were there during construction and about a year after.

WG: I was there in 1942 and '43, and some in '44, but after that, I was pretty much up here.

TS: I guess since you'd been to Miami, it wasn't a total culture shock.

WG: No. No. No. It wasn't, except that I found that there were a lot of traditions during that period. Captain Collins, who was running the plant, found that out too. He was formerly under Roosevelt. He knows how to fix things.

TS: We were beginning to talk about traditions.

WG: Yes. [It was difficult to build] a plant that size with a number of people involved--they were farmers--cotton farmers and things like that. They were not used to regimentation, as far as punching your time card. Then there was this serious question about the blacks being uneducated and not eating in the same place with the whites. It was quite a problem at that time to educate the people to get involved in a big industrial effort. It took a lot of time and effort in that era, and we did spend a lot of time and effort. I think we did a good job in training people.

TS: Did you have a lot of tardiness -- people showing up late for work?

WG: They just weren't use to it, although it improved as we went along. But, it was a very interesting assignment.

- TS: What did you do if somebody was late for work—did you dock their pay?
- WG: They had a time card, and it was recorded on that time card. If there were four hours, they got paid four hours. If there were ten minutes, they got paid ten minutes. It was purely by recording.
- TS: So, they would punch in and punch out. That had to be a shock to people who had come off of a farm.
- WG: That's right. As I said, it was a very new process of training people to the industrial way of life, and a lot of them didn't understand.
- TS: Did you have to dismiss any significant number of workers, because they couldn't get into an industrial schedule?
- WG: As I recall, it wasn't that big of a problem. One interesting thing, we hired all these midgets, because the final area in the final assembly had to have midgets do the work, which was interesting. But, I think the personnel was the biggest problem in getting started. We had a great training program, and everybody was so enthusiastic about the effort.
- TS: Patriotic duty?
- WG: Yes. Really, no problem.
- TS: Say a little about the training program.
- WG: As I recall, we hired some professional educators or trainers, and we would have classes. They would divide the classes into various skills and elements of the whole program. Some were in final assembly. Some in flight test. It was broken down by their assignments. I think one person—I can't remember his name right now--headed up the whole program. He did a marvelous job.
- TS: So, this was training in the plant?
- WG: Right, after they were hired, we trained them.
- TS: There were a number of training schools held in the community to prepare people to go to work in the plant, too.
- WG: That's right. As a matter of fact, you were talking [before the interview] about

Vickie Chastain. Her father was in purchasing at Bell. We brought him up here in Buffalo to train him on how we handle our purchasing. His name was John Franklin.

TS: Vickie Chastain was Mayor of Marietta in the 1980s. She served on the City Council, and then she was Mayor and still is very active in the community. She's been on the Board of the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation. You were talking about problems with race relations. Could you say a little more about that?

WG: Actually, it was for the people who came from the North to get used to a situation. There was a very decided effort on the part of Captain Collins and the executive staff to work out these relations. We worked with the NAACP. It worked out well. We really didn't ever have any serious problems, but it was something you had to do. It was faced properly, and it was well done.

TS: The number of blacks that were employed at Bell probably wouldn't be the percentage of blacks that you had in Marietta at that time, but there still were a significant number. I think there were 1700 or 1800 blacks working--

WG: Mostly in unskilled jobs.

TS: There were a number of complaints. The Fair Employment Practices Committee didn't really have any power. There were just trying to negotiate. But, we've got one interview with a black lady that worked at Bell Aircraft in a fairly minor job, but it paid so much more than she had ever made before that she had a very positive memory.

WG: I don't think you'd find anybody who had any negative [memory]. Once in a while there would be a problem, but it was all resolved. Never had any problems. We had more problems up here with our labor unions.

TS: There was a union that was voted in during the war--

WG: As I recall.

TS: Was that while you were still there?

WG: No, that was after I was there. It may have started while I was there.

TS: Labor unions are not as strong in the south as in the north. Did you have any labor troubles at all that you can recall.

WG: No.

TS: Apparently, there were some minor ones towards the end.

WG: Well, that is when they were talking about closing the plant.

TS: What about Captain Collins? Did you work closely with him?

WG: I thought he was a tremendous man. He was very political oriented, and he was very fair and very outgoing. He was an aristocratic-type person and very knowledgeable. I would say Larry Bell put him in there to get things started -- get him on the right foot. Then he put a professional general manager in, Woodson, who took over and ran the plant. Collins was not a manufacturing man. He was more a person to get it started properly.

TS: Because of his political connection?

WG: Yes, political, and also his personality-- conducive to that type.

TS: I got the impression from secondary sources that Larry Bell may have lost confidence in Collins at a certain point for this particular job and decided he wanted somebody else to actually run the plant.

WG: I think that's probably true, but I don't think he lost confidence in him. I think he was aware of the fact that his capabilities and his function had been performed properly at the beginning, and now that they were in the manufacturing stage, that somebody else could do a better job. Plus the fact, he needed somebody in Washington, and that's where he moved.

TS: For the politics?

WG: Well, for the contacts.

TS: Was he the head of Washington operations for Bell?

WG: Oh, yes. That's where Kay was. She was the secretary for him in Washington.

HN: You call him Captain?

WG: Yes, he was a Captain in the Navy.

HN: Was he retired at that time?

WG: Yes.

TS: What about Woodson - Omer Woodson?

WG: He was a good guy.

TS: Was he?

WG: Very capable. He understood the manufacturing process. He was well disciplined in his thoughts. He recognized the necessity for good organization and people. As a matter of fact, he hired [Carl] Cover, and that's an interesting story. The day of our wedding--we were married in Marietta [on 25 November 1944] and went to New York City; when we went to New York City, we found that Cover and Max Stupar were on this airplane going into Dayton that crashed. Both of them were killed. As a matter of fact, we bumped into somebody in New York who told us about it. John Berry, who was the vice president of finance, was supposed to have been on that plane. For some reason he didn't go and he was saved. But, Cover was a former Air Force type. It was a great loss actually, when they lost Stupar. Stupar was a planner. He was in the planning department.

TS: We have a photo of a Bob Hope show at the Georgia plant. Do you remember that?

WG: I remember up here. Not down there.

TS: Oh, okay. I see that the photo is dated 28 November 1944. So that would be just about the time of Cover's crash and while you were on your honeymoon.

KG: We went up on the 25th.

WG: No. The night of the 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>.

KG: So, we got there the 26<sup>th</sup>.

TS: Did you fly to New York?

WG: No.

TS: I think Jimmie Carmichael was supposed to have been on the plane with Cover, too.



WG: Yes. That's right.

TS: – and Larry Bell asked him to ride the train.

WG: You're right. Jimmie Carmichael and Kay were good friends.

TS: Is that right? I guess so. Jimmy Carmichael was born in 1910.

WG: Well, she's a little younger–1915–[so there was] five years' difference.

TS: Carmichael was a year behind in school after his accident.

WG: As a matter of fact, we had dinner with Jimmie Carmichael the night that Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. We were at the driving club.

TS: Piedmont Driving Club?

WG: Yes, Piedmont Driving Club. Carmichael was with us. We had some military [officers] with us, because the Air Force had an association meeting there. I always remember that, because that was the last time I saw Jimmie Carmichael.

TS: What was the reaction to the King-- ?

WG: Nobody even raised an eyebrow. All the black waiters – no reaction at all. It was very passive.

TS: From the waiters?

WG: Yes.

TS: What about Carmichael?

WG: Well, I think they were sort of upset that could take place. But, it didn't interrupt the evening too much.

TS: Martin Luther King wasn't one of their favorites?

WG: No.

TS: Do you know the story about Woodson leaving Bell Aircraft?

WG: No, I don't recall. I don't know.

TS: There's a story that he announced that he had a job with Howard Hughes.

WG: I don't remember that.

TS: But, apparently, he didn't have a job. He just wanted out.

WG: Doesn't register.

TS: From everything I can gather though, he did a good job of running the plant.

WG: Very good. His son-in-law was Ted Nolan.

TS: Who's Ted Nolan?

WG: Well, he was up here at Bell in the manufacturing department, and he married Woodson's daughter.

TS: What about Carl Cover? He was new to the company when he came in '44?

WG: He was a Colonel in the Air Force and retired. I don't know who recommended Cover to Larry Bell, but he was supposed to be a very important person in the whole organization. Then he was killed. I can't tell you who recommended him or anything else.

TS: Did you work at all closely with him?

WG: No. No. That was later.

TS: By that point, you were still Marietta at the time?

WG: Part of the time.

TS: Was Bell getting so compartmentalized as it got so big that there was less contact with other people?

WG: I worked closely with Al Leo-Wolf. He was the Chief Financial Officer at Marietta at the time, and I would work closely with him. He stayed until the plant was closed.

TS: Where did Leo-Wolf come from?

WG: He was from Niagara Falls. When I was in Buffalo, he was over me in Buffalo. Then, when he moved, he brought me down occasionally--back and forth. But, he was in charge of all financial activities at Georgia:

TS: Tell me a little bit about him.

WG: I think [he was] very capable. He had a wonderful personality. He could work well with people and could organize properly. He had a very tragic life, because his wife was ill and he later committed suicide. Not while he was working, but this is after he was out of Bell.

TS: Did he stay down in Marietta?

WG: Yes, he was permanently moved.

TS: What kind of a budget did you have? How much money were you handling for the company?

WG: Well, we had over 65,000 employees, including Buffalo, Georgia, and Burlington, Vermont.

TS: A huge payroll.

WG: It was my job particularly, to obtain V loans, so I worked a lot with the banks in New York. We had substantial budgets. I can't recall exact figures right now.

TS: I know that the local banks in Marietta had never seen anything like what they experienced in World War II. They suddenly have to keep longer hours and all the workers coming in on payday. Could you say anything about your relationship with the local banks.

WG: Oh, it was very good. As I recall, [Jim] Robinson-- maybe my wife can help. I think he was the head of one of the banks. We had an advisory board.

TS: Ed Massey was the President of the First National Bank of Cobb County.

WG: We worked with mostly the Atlanta banks at the beginning. We had Louis Sperry, who was here, and he was brought to oversee all of our V loans. We had substantial V loans.

TS: So, it's really the downtown Atlanta banks that had the expertise to handle the

business of a large corporation?

WG: Right. We need some expert advice [referring to Mrs. Gisell].

TS: Mrs. Gisell, I understand you were born in Marietta?

KG: I was born in Cartersville. My mother was from Cartersville. But, I lived a lot of my life [in Marietta], until we were married. I lived on Atlanta Street [at] Waterman Street.

TS: Is that right? Which house was it?

KG: It isn't even there anymore.

TS: If you were going toward town on Atlanta Street, would it be on the left?

KG: Just across the street on the left.

TS: Well, we brought you in to ask about banks.

WG: Was it Robinson?

KG: Mr. Jim Robinson.

WG: Jim Robinson.

KG: First National Bank.

WG: Isn't he the one whose son is at American Express?

KG: I think.

WG: Anyway, we worked at Atlanta banks.

KG: He was a great man though.

TS: Great in what sense.

KG: He was just great all around--an honest man you knew you could trust. He was good looking. He was pleasant. His son, I think, followed pretty well in his footsteps. He was with the bank until he went with American Express.

WG: Dr. Scott's wife is from Buffalo.

TS: She was born here and they moved in 1955 to Marietta: So, she grew up in Marietta and was from Buffalo.

KG: I didn't even think I had an accent anymore. We came in the airport last week, and Bill was getting the car. It was raining and this porter was standing there. He went to get some bags for me; and he said, "What part of Georgia are you from?" He had been born in Marietta.

TS: I understand your father was on the City Council in Marietta.

KG: Right.

WG: I told them about the story about Rip Blair arresting me.

TS: Yes, but we didn't get that on the tape so maybe we ought to do that again. That was before we got started on the tape. That would be a good idea to get that on the tape. You got married in November of '44. Was this at a reception?

WG: It was a reception for our impending wedding, and they had gifts and cocktails and things. While we were participating in the discussion, in walked a couple of policeman from the Marietta Police Department. They wanted to know if there was a William Gisel from Buffalo, New York present. I said, "Yes, sir." They said, "You're wanted for kidnaping, and you better come with us." Kay said, "Rip Blair, you can't do this to him." I said "Well, I'll go." So, I went out with them. We rode around the block a couple of times, and they said "All right, we'll let you escape now." I walked back to the house, and that was it. But, I think you were concerned, weren't you that I might be in jail?

KG: I was mad that he got up and left without a fight.

TS: Fight the police?

WG: Rip Blair was mayor at the time.

TS: What did they say they arrested you for?

WG: Kidnaping. I kidnaped a Southern Belle. They didn't like that.

TS: That's what happens when the northerners start coming .

WG: That's right.

TS: Obviously, you all hit it off, but was there any kind of culture shock when you started dating?

WG: Well, we actually started in Washington, so we met about half way.

TS: I see.

WG: I already told them it was north of the Mason Dixon line.

TS: So, you were a secretary for Captain Collins?

KG: Yes.

TS: How long were you a secretary for him?

KG: Three years.

TS: There were quite a few women who were working at the Bell Aircraft plant. We've done some interviews with some of them that were there.

KG: Oh, have you? Mary Acuff. Is she still living? She was Al Leo-Wolf's secretary.

TS: She would be a good one to talk to. What was it like working for Bell?

KG: It was wonderful. That was a new world for anybody that lived in that part of the country. It was amazing how they [the Bell Aircraft executives from the north] really sort of melded into that atmosphere without making so many people mad. A lot of people were against bringing the plant there.

TS: Really.

KG: There were like ten thousand people [in Marietta], and three years [later] it was thirty thousand. Everybody didn't want it. But, people came from all over the United States right there. Very interesting.

[Mr. Gisel brought out a copy of The Bellringer, February 1944, which contains a photo and article on p. 10 about Katherine Lee (Mrs. Gisel) and other secretaries at the Georgia plant].

TS: This is from The Bellringer.

WG: Yes.

TS: I see Katherine Lee and then some others.

KG: You've probably interviewed some of them.

TS: Well, no. I haven't interviewed any of these. It would be nice to track them all down.

WG: If they are living.

TS: Do you know who some of those people were who were against the plant coming into Marietta?

KG: I couldn't remember. One old Marietta family really raised up in arms. But nobody could do anything about it, once they decided to build the plant there. I think the big thing was the blacks were completely separated from the whites, even their own restaurants and everything.

WG: That probably was the biggest thing.

TS: You think so?

WG: Well, they were working side by side by side—assembly lines and everything else.

TS: Okay.

WG: Read what this says. [Referring to a photo of Rip Blair in The Bellringer, September 1944, p. 16].

TS: "Marietta's 'go-getter' Mayor L. M. 'Rip' Blair. His clear foresight and administrative ability was largely responsible for the lack of confusion in the process of Marietta's 'skyrocket development.'" But, Jimmie Carmichael was a large part of that, too.

KG: You want to interview somebody from Carmichael's family.

TS: Well, we've talked to his sister. Actually, both of his sisters.

KG: Willa Mae and Peggy.

TS: Yes. Mrs. [Willa Mae Carmichael] Williams died about a year ago.

KG: You know, I was thinking about her and wondering. Peggy was one of my best friends--her younger sister. Willa Mae always lived her life for everyone else.

TS: She was a very nice lady. I talked to her years and years ago, I guess. The old Carmichael house in the Log Cabin community has just been torn down in the last two or three months. All that property was sold. And the store, too, was torn down.

WG: How about Aunt Fannie's Restaurant [in Smyrna]?

TS: It closed recently. Another restaurant is in the house right at the end of what is Dobbins now where Jimmie Carmichael lived until some time during the war he moved right across from Rip Blair.

KG: Yes, on Cherokee Street.

TS: Both of those houses are still there. There's a lawyer from Atlanta named Tom Watson Brown who lives in the Carmichael house on Cherokee. He's a character. Rip Blair's house is still being used as the headquarters for a development of fine homes in all of the back property.

KG: Tell me is Dan Blair, the son, still living?

TS: I don't know. I know Barbara [Blair Renshaw, the daughter], and she's doing fine. She married Jack Renshaw, who was from Buffalo and moved down to Marietta--another one of those Northerners who came south. They're living out at the new Marietta Country Club now.

KG: I hear the old Marietta Country Club really is something now.

TS: It's now the site of the Marietta Conference Center & Resort. You were mentioning earlier controversy over the plant coming in the first place. That had to be a shock to people in Marietta when people from other parts of the country were coming in.

KG: It changed the town. There's no doubt about that.

TS: But, your memories are of harmonious relationships when people came in?



KG: Yes.

TS: People made a lot of money in Marietta:

KG: They sure did. It costs a lot to stay in Atlanta. But they came from towns all around. They had to get the people. A lot of them stayed.

TS: Did you know Jimmie Carmichael before all of this?

KG: He was the brother of one of my mother's friends. In fact, he was the cause of my going to work for Captain Collins.

TS: Is that right?

KG: I could see things happening, and I said to Daddy I wanted to work for Bell, and he said no. Daddy was very conservative. He said you have a good job where you are. So, I said, "Do you care if I talk to Jimmie Carmichael."

TS: Jimmie Carmichael must have helped a lot of people get a job.

KG: He was wonderful. You know, he had broken his back.

TS: Right.

KG: He was crippled after that. He became a very fine lawyer and then got into all kinds of things.

TS: In all the photos taken at the Bell Aircraft plant he seems to be using a cane. I know he had his back broken and I know he sometimes used a wheelchair. How mobile was he?

KG: Well, it got worse. He was all right when he came out, but he did get a lot worse.

TS: I think by the time I came to Georgia in 1968, he must have had arthritis setting in or something, because he seemed to be in tremendous pain.

KG: Yes, he was in a lot of pain.

TS: He told our president once that it took him three hours to get dressed in the morning.

KG: But, he was much better than that in [the World War II era].

TS: His papers are down at Emory. I've gone through the correspondence. He had an operation while he was assistant general manger, and it seemed to make him better.

KG: I think they did everything they could.

TS: Did you go to Marietta High School?

KG: Yes.

TS: So, you must have been three or four years behind Jimmie Carmichael in school, I guess?

KG: I graduated in '33.

TS: So, he would have been just about through Emory by the time you graduated?

KG: Right.

TS: And, so, you were good friends with his sister?

KG: Peggy. She was my age.

TS: She is the youngest of the three?

KG: Right.

TS: I have an interview with Jake Ward. I don't know if you remember him.

KG: Yes.

WG: Boyfriend.

TS: Oh, really?

KG: For a short time.

TS: Well, I did an interview with him. He was telling me about Jimmie Carmichael. They were really close friends.

KG: Real close friends.

- TS: He was really telling me how brilliant Carmichael was.
- KG: He was. And so was Jake Ward. I understand he is having a building named for him at Emory.
- TS: Oh, really? Well, he deserves it. I interviewed him about five or six years ago. He told me about how he use to travel around with Jimmie Carmichael when Carmichael was in the legislature. Carmichael was still in his twenties at this time, yet everybody seemed to defer to him. The older legislators would ask what do you think about so and so.
- KG: He did establish confidence, you know, and he was a wonderful speaker.
- TS: I've read a few of his speeches. We haven't asked Mr. Gisel about your relationship with Larry Bell-- what you knew about him.
- WG: It was very close. Over a period of years during the war, my mother worked with his wife on the Russian Relief. She was in Jamestown, and Mrs. Bell was here in Buffalo. Larry never had any children, and he always was very, very interested in our children. We had a daughter who was burned very badly, and he was very upset and concerned about her. In his will when he died, he left [funds] for this plastic surgeon in New York City to make sure that everything was done that could have been done. [He used] this surgeon himself when he was in an automobile accident. I worked with a lot of people, and I would say he had great capability at leadership. He was a good salesman. He was completely taken back by the fact that he never got [the Georgia] plant back. When [it went to] Lockheed, I think that was the end of Larry Bell.
- TS: Really.
- WG: Because he had a great devotion for that plant, and when the government awarded it to Lockheed, after we closed, he was very despondent. When the plant was still just the plant in Buffalo, he would walk through the plant every single day. They all loved him. And he loved his workers.
- TS: How much time did he spend in Marietta?
- WG: I can't tell you. I would say it was quite frequent during the height of all the activity. But, he became very obsessed with flying, so he always took a train.
- TS: That's unusual for somebody building an aircraft company.

WG: He knew too much about them.

TS: Didn't his brother get killed in a plane crash?

KG: His first brother.

WG: I traveled quite a bit with them. We were having a helicopter demonstration in Atlantic City, and after that we went to Washington. He was taken very ill in Washington, and I got to know him quite well during that trip. But, I would say one of the most wonderful men I could ever think of.

TS: You know, I never heard that story that Bell might have been interested in getting his plant back with the Korean War.

WG: Yes. He was really devastated.

TS: I never heard that story. Why didn't they get it back?

WG: I never could find out. Politics. As a matter of fact, maybe you don't know it. Well, you probably know it. We came that far of owning Lockheed.

TS: Is that right? When was that?

WG: Bill Miller and Harvey Gaylord had offices in the plant in Burbank and everything was all set. Then Miller, at the last minute, canceled it because of that litigation they had in the shipyard in Seattle.

HN: Bill, could I just ask, when was this initially--in the 50's?

TS: Well, this was during the Korean War. It was '51 that Lockheed came in.

WG: Well, it had to be earlier [that Bell almost purchased Lockheed].

KG: Early 40's.

HN: Would it have been an alternative that they would have put helicopters in?

WG: No. It had to be in the early 50's. When did Lockheed take over?

TS: I believe it was January of '51.

WG: Before that.

TS: Of course, the Korean War broke out in 1950. The Air Force wanted the plant to take those B-29s out of moth balls to begin with. It would have been logical for Bell to come back in and do it. But, of course, Jimmie Carmichael was brought from Scripto to reopen the plant. You know, he was the general manager for Lockheed.

WG: I didn't realize that.

TS: Well, Dan Haughton was his assistant.

WG: I knew Dan very well.

TS: Jimmie Carmichael was running the plant a year. He just took a leave of absence from Scripto, but he was on the Board of Directors of Lockheed for the rest of his life after that.

WG: Dan Haughton was a great person. He was going out with Carmichael's wife.

TS: Was what?

KG: His widow.

WG: His widow.

TS: Really? I didn't know that.

KG: For a short time, I think. I think they were just good friends, because they had been before Jimmie died.

TS: I think part of Lockheed coming in there was because Carmichael was willing to come back and open the plant.

WG: Well, I think Larry would have taken Carmichael. I think [the Air Force's choice of Lockheed] was political. It had to be.

TS: Well, everything was political, for sure. Truman was President at the time.

WG: I know we had Truman up here.

TS: Truman came to visit the plant here?

WG: Yes.

TS: I'm wondering if it had anything to do with the labor troubles they had up here after the war.

WG: Could have been. I don't know the reason.

TS: I think Bell was very proud of the fact that he had something to do with the economic recovery in the South.

WG: Right. Right.

TS: It would have been logical to have come back in.

WG: He thought so. Apparently, it was the decision by the Defense Department to award the facility that was owned by the government. Whether Boeing or Bell or Lockheed were the participants, I don't know. All I know is Lockheed got it and Bell was unhappy.

TS: Bell was apparently very unhappy that the plant didn't get any awards for its production during World War II.

WG: We built more than Boeing. We didn't get any [awards].

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