

**Dorian Shager:** The following is an interview with Bob Anderson. It is being conducted on Saturday, May 1, 1993 as part of the Grinnell community history project. We're at Booklada book store and I'm Dorian Shager. O.K., lets begin by having you tell me about your early life. Where were you born and when?

**Bob Anderson:** okay, I was born in Albion, Nebraska, which is about fifty miles northwest of Columbus. Uhm, my folks were at that time farmers and I grew up on a farm. At the age of eleven we moved off of the farm and into town because that was in the middle thirties and dust storms and ten cent corn and droughts and all that good stuff, my folks went broke on the farm. So we moved to the town of Wayn, Nebraska then. For high school my dad bought a dairy in the little town of Hardington, Nebraska south of Yankton, South Dakota. So that is where I went to high school and graduated from there in 1941. In high school I used to get up at 4:15 in the morning to deliver milk. And then I washed the milk bottles after I got off the route and went home, had my second breakfast and then went to school (laughter).

**DS:** Were you basically dairy farmers?

**BA:** No, we bought the milk. The farmers brought us the milk to us, we processed it, pasteurized it there. Pasteurized it only back then. We bough chickens and eggs and that good stuff too at that time.

**DS:** What year did you graduate?

**BA:** 1941

**DS:** What did you do then?

**BA:** Well then I went to Wayn State at Wayn, Nebraska to a small teachers college. I was the youngest kid in my class, I was only 16 when I graduated from high school. I went to two years to Wayn State. I peddled milk while I was at college too, as a mater of fact I peddled with a horse. It was 41' to 43', but I got drafted in May of 43'. I didn't have to take my exams they gave me full credit anyhow (laughter). I was in the service for almost three years, I ended up being in Honolulu for two years of that time. It was really great duty. I was working with civilians while they were actually purchasing in the courter master buying supplies. I had my own car over there and I had a good time. I almost stayed there (laughter). Okay, discharged from there in February of 46', and meanwhile my folks had moved to Sioux City, Iowa so it was just easier then to enter the University of Iowa. I ended up getting a bachelors of science and commerce at the University of Iowa in August of 47'. I then went to work for a company know as Retail Credit Company, an insurance investigating company actually. worked in ceder rapids for them. October 1950, Korean War had broken out, and I was in the inactive reserves. They didn't even

have my current address, in fact, I heard it on a car radio that I had been recalled. Kind of like desert storm.

DS: What was that like...

BA: Yeah, instead of calling as groups they called it as individuals, so I was called in. I had to go through refresher training, all that good stuff down at a fort in Texas. I found myself in Yokohama, Japan, unassigned. Quick little story here, I hope you don't mind. There were three ship loads of us landed in Yokohama that particular day, 7,000 troops. We had suntans, neckties, they took those all way from us. They issued us ski socks and all that good stuff, for going into Korea. And we went through the business of watching the movie of what to do with frozen toes and all that kind of stuff. Next morning at 7:00 fell out for orders and I remember all 7,000 of us standing out there. The following named men will be rifle men in the seventh infantry. I couldn't even take a M-1 rifle apart hardly, geez. Anyhow, we stood there for hours. Finally it was down to twenty of us left, still hadn't called our names.

"What goes with you?", we say to each other.

"well I'm a lousy typist they got me, I don't know why, that is not my specialist".

"yeah same here".

So anyhow, there was a big (indistinguishable) who said you are the lucky ones. Yeah, we're figuring they would fly us right into the front lines in Korea. Anyhow, they said, no, you are APO-500, MacCarther's headquarters downtown Tokyo. Took back our ski socks, got back our sun tans and ties (laughter). Went back and got assigned to MacCarther, we were in the Diechi building downtown Tokyo, which was the only six story building in town at that time. Because you know the earthquakes they didn't know how to build high buildings at that time. MacCarther was on third floor and we were on sixth floor, we would always maintained we were above MacCarther (laughter). Anyhow, we were there when Truman fired, and saw the Japanese people literally cry when MacCarther left. They lined the streets all the way at the airport, threw flowers and this kind of stuff. They really admired MacCarther. Of course MacCarther was confrontational with Truman and that didn't work. So that is what happened there.

Well as things wound down, I got out in August. I had a lot of points, so to speak, and so when they came to let someone out, well, I was one of the first ones home. So I ended up in Des Moines then with the Retail Credit Company. Stayed there until 1953. A credit bureau was for sale here in Grinnell, and so I knew the fellow, so I ended up buying it from him but I got a office supply business along with it that was just starting. So that is when we came to Grinnell, was 40 years ago. The credit bureau didn't do to much, but the office supply did pretty well. As a matter of fact, in 1974 I was selling computers, Olivetties of all things, imports from Italy. Then we sold for 23,000 dollars apiece, maintenance agreement for 1400 dollars. Compared to

today's computers, not too much comparison really, anyhow, that's what we sold. And we had troubles keeping the things working. The printers were like the old IBM ball machines. Here we had micro computers doing the computing which was so much faster than that ball could type it out. So we had constant printer problems. And as a matter of fact in 1976 I think we never sold a one, we could barely just keep the others working. So anyhow, I stayed with Olavetti and got into all there calculators and all this kind of good stuff and I ended up winning a lot of sales trips with them abroad. In fact I won seven trips going abroad. We would go to Italy a lot (chuckle), branch out from there to Spain, Portugal, whatever. And 1970's did real well. 1979 was probably the best year we ever had, it was case of prices were going up, some customer didn't buy something today, they didn't wouldn't have to pay for it until next week. I mean that was the way it was, we couldn't keep enough merchandise in stock. Anyhow, a salesman for me inherited some money and wanted to buy me out. So I sold out to him in 1980, I was fifty five years old then. And so I didn't want to quit then, so that is when I started this book store. It is sort of a semi-retirement, that is why it is kind of small peanuts business compared to what we used to do in the office supply business. But, it keeps me out of mischief (laughter). And, also I have done some more traveling. I went to Israel for three weeks with a group out of DuBuque, seminary. In 83' I went with a church group to Mexico, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. Been with the poor down there for a while, and the cockroaches, ate fried bananas. 85' a group locally wanted me to run for mayor. I hadn't even thought about it. Anyhow, put on quite a campaign, I had two attorneys heading my campaign, the other guy was from the city council and thought sure he could beat me. Anyhow I beat him two-to-one as it turned out (laughter). So, our mayor terms are only two years and I am now in the second half of my fourth term, or eighth year of being mayor here. Of course the pay isn't very much, and it is more of a part time job. But I enjoy doing it and I feel like we have made some pretty good strides here in Grinnell. Since I've been in, we have put in a new airport, new swimming pool. And there are other things I could talk about, streets, now we are putting in a five million dollar sewer system in the city. so I feel like we are kind of forward looking. We are a little bit hand strung by money at the moment. The state legislature kind of mandates us to do things without giving us the money to do it. So we are a little bit hand strung for money right at the moment, so we are kind of on a plateau. We are not buying any capital equipment, but we are not laying any people off either. So we can still give the services.

So in 87' went again with the Lutheran church to Russia. And Helsinki and so forth, and really enjoyed that trip. That is the last trip of any consequence that I have taken. I have figured that I have been out of the country fourteen different times, so traveling is kind of my thing.

DS: yeah...

**BA:** So along with that I guess came the interest of a sister city. So I have started a sister city here in Grinnell with a another city in the Stavorfold region in Southern Russia. And as a matter of fact I am wearing a wrist watch that was given to me by the mayor of our sister city that says Peristroika on that, of course this was given three years ago so that Peristroika is a little of past history. But I am sort of, you know it is a meaningful thing that watch is to me. And this spring we had a doctor from our sister city, the mayor was supposed to come but at the last moment he couldn't come. After I had made arrangements for him to be introduced on the house senate up at the state house here in Grinnell uh, in Des Moines. But we had a good time with the doctor. Anyhow we have a good sister city club arrangement going right now. We have had students go back and forth. We had a doctor here, we had a doctor go over there. And we really expect more good things to come out of that. And hopefully I'll get back to Russia again. As a matter of fact I was going to go in July, and things didn't work out. So that is where I am now.

**DS:** That is great, that is a lot. (laughter)

**BA:** Yeah.. (laughter)

**DS:** Okay, how about we go back to the beginning and...

**BA:** Okay.

**DS:** Can you tell me some more specific things about your involvement in the second World War?

**BA:** Yeah, I guess I am a peace loving guy, I think the army knew what to do not to put me in with fighting. I don't think I would be a very good fighter (laughter). I mean that is an unusual thing to say, but I ended up in the quarter master in Honolulu which was we were getting supplies for forwarding groups. They would come over from the states, states side, of course Hawaii wasn't a state yet, then, and we were out buying supplies. I really had a good time over there, it was, my wife and I have been back. We went back to Japan in 77' with the luthern church group again and we stopped in Hawaii so I got to show my wife around where I had been and where I worked there. So it is a good relationship, and I hope we go back to Hawaii next January, will have to make plans.

**DS:** Did it seem like, where you were, that there wasn't much in the sense that you were not around the war?

**BA:** Well, yeah, I mean of course I could look out my barracks window and see Pearl Harbor from where we were located. Of course this was sometime later. So we certainly knew what was involved. I mean it was black out time then, lights at night, and so we knew were in a war of course. The european war was winding down, or if that is the proper term. And then the tension in Japan, of course



a couple of bombs put a end to that. So it was back home and get back to school and do that.

DS: Speaking of home, what...were you...uhm, did you see much difference when your family lived on the farm and when you then moved to town?

BA: Yeah my dad was agricultural by nature, I mean he grew up on a farm himself. That is what he wanted to do, wanted to be. To go broke on the farm in the middle thirties was a real downer for him, it really truly was. And he ended up working for this creamy, and being in the milk business, which is agricultural related, so that's what he liked and that's what he did. So, oh on the farm in the thirties, of course back in those times you produced all of your own food, so we weren't hungry, I mean it wasn't bad. Gosh we had orchards, fruit trees, chicken, eggs, of course our own milk, we butchered, did all that good stuff. Mom made homemade bread, we ate pretty good, I mean my dad was going broke, but we ate good (laughter). Didn't have any money but that was the way it was. Then city life was of course was different and I was, maybe a little formality here, there were, well I went to country school until seventh grade when I moved to town. And my friends, "ah, your going into the city", you know, "the big city hicks are going to clean up on you, they are going to wipe the streets with you", and all this good stuff (laughter). I really wasn't too sure but maybe they might, you know (laughter).

Any how we moved into Wayn, Nebraska, about eighty miles from where we were on the farm. And the strange thing was that in a country school you are of course you are listening to all the other classes, just a one big one room school actually. So you are listening to the grades higher than you and I found myself scholastically in courses way ahead of the kids in the town school. I really was, I was way ahead of them. So as it turned out, town school was a breeze. Not that I was so smart, but just the atmosphere, and different surroundings. So the city school turned out fine. Of course I didn't weigh much, I went out for football and I weighed all of 115 pounds (laughter).

DS: Oh (laughter).

BA: So I didn't do to, and I was flat footed, I think I could do the 100 yard dash in fourteen seconds if I really tried. So I wasn't to much in the athletic thing. But you had to get in everything at a small school. And school wasn't hard, I graduated with ease. And then went to state teachers college, and there I found out I had to learn how to study (laughter).

DS: Was sports not quite as the big thing as now? Or...

BA: Oh, yeah, it was a big thing then. I know you said something about coming from Minnesota, and things struck my mind. I remember my dad was, my folks both had gone to Nebraska Wesleyan, which was

a separate school in Lincoln, Nebraska where the University of Nebraska is located. So my dad was a great follower of the University of Nebraska, the big red. And Minnesota was the team to beat (laughter).

DS: (laughter)

BA: And I remember even back in 1941 my dad went with other friends, and they went to Minnesota and saw Nebraska play Minnesota up there. They would go out of state to watch Nebraska play. Of course the football team in Nebraska is the only thing going out there really. I mean one big school and that is it. So it was a good diversion, and when I got out to University of Iowa, and of course athletics was, no way was I going to compete in anything down there in athletics. So I just wanted to get my degree, get out of there and start making some money (laughter).

DS: (laughter) How did you end up not going into teaching?

BA: Oh, yeah, as I had mentioned to you before there, I came from a teachers family actually. My mother was, taught Latin in high school. My dad taught country school for one year. I guess they couldn't find a teacher so he ended up teaching that. Then I had other relatives, an aunt who was an old maid school teacher in Sioux City. So I was around the influence of teachers all of my life. And it was just when I grew up, that I would be a teacher. I mean that was just kind of the way I assumed it would be. And I didn't think any differently. So I went to this teachers college in Nebraska, which was a really inexpensive school to go to. And when I came out of the army in 46' they gave me a test to see what I was supposed to be best suited for, and sure enough, I was best suited to be a teacher. But I didn't think there was enough money in the teaching field. I got to get in business, that's where you got to make it. So I went to University of Iowa and majored in Commerce, Marketing and so forth. That's what I ended up in, retailing basically.

DS: What differences do you, did you feel much difference between the atmosphere in the Korean War and World War Two?

BA: Well to me it was entirely different because, well we were all draftees practically, and I was with, I am going to give a wrong influence maybe here, but I ended up with other kids who had two years of college too, and they were just a good class of kids that I was in the army with. I mean they had high morals and they had desires to be successful, and they wanted to do a good job. And I mean we ended up in the army, we would end up going to the library to read and study. I mean you know, you know, it was the way it was, it was just, and, so was a good atmosphere.

When I got recalled for Korea we ended up there of course in downtown Tokyo. And the people that worked with me there and in the, we lived in the place called Rapongie. And it was mostly long

time regular army guys, and most of them had been injured somewhere in fighting somewhere along the line, but they were not bad enough to be discharged. And they were a crummy bunch of guys, they, you know, they wanted that once a month beer party and get drunk and fight. They were just, as far as I was concerned a degenerate kind of guys(laughter). I of course was married the second time when I was in, I wasn't married the first time. And being married I couldn't get out soon enough(laughter). It was just a bad deal as far as I was concerned.

DS: Did your wife stay here?

BA: Yeah, she was in Ceder Rapids at that point, and then she moved to Des Moines while I was, she had been in Des Moines before. And that is why we ended up in Des Moines when I came back, she was living, working in Des Moines. She went back to a company where she used to work there, before we got married. I met here in University of Iowa too. Her name was Anderson before me. They seated it alphabetically back then, so she and I ended up sitting next to each other in class, that is how we got acquainted (laughter).

DS: That's cool(laughter). How did you happen to make it to Grinnell, you just...

BA: Well, I had been with this Retail Credit Company in Des Moines from 1951 to 53'. And they were wanting to transfer me into claims and this sort of thing. And I really, wasn't what I wanted to do, go out and settle claims with people. I did some of it and I didn't particularly like it, had to go out there and negotiate with these people. So I had a friend who had a credit bureau, and, so I called him up one day and wanted to know if he knew of any credit bureaus for sale, and he said yeah mine is. Thirty days later we were here(laughter).

DS: Oh(laughter).

BA: I bought his business which also included and office supply business. So that's where those two things grew up from.

DS: You like grinnell? I mean...

BA: Yeah, yeah, I really, I really truly do like it here. Of course we are less than 9,000 people here. It seems like you know everyone, or they know you. Of course, my life is kind of an open book. I mean whatever I do everybody else seems to know about it before I even do almost(laughter), you know. You take that for what it is worth and go with that. I've lived in big cities, like in Honolulu for example. I have been in big cities really around the world on my travels. I just don't care for that, I really don't. You know as far as culture is concerned, we got cultural surroundings up here at Grinnell College. I mean they bring in

cultural events, big time speakers, or you can go to the civic auditorium in Des Moines, which is only fifty miles from here.

(background noise)

DS: Okay, we had a little pause because we had a customer come into the store. Do you remember exactly where we were?

BA: Hmm, we were talking about teachers and being in the army.

DS: I have one more question...

BA: Okay

DS: What exactly did you do now in Korea?

BA: Well I ended up in MacCarther's headquarters, I actually ended up as a tela-type operator of all things. I was sending telegrams, in fact I was up there typing, that is what I was doing. I will tell you a little ironic thing that happened. Of course we were thirteen days aboard ship going over there and you get to know these guys pretty well. And so we end up with 7,000 of us there, and some of those guys end up being riflemen in the seventh infantry. Well when they got to Korea they had their rifles issued to them but they didn't have any ammunition. So they were on a train on the way up to an ammunition dump to get ammunition and were ambushed on the way up. Four hundred of them were killed. And I am typing this stuff to the Red Cross back home. Typing these names of guys I knew. And, well you know, it could have been me just as well. So that always had kind of a profound effect on me really. How come me, how come I got singled out 20 out of 7,000 people? And so I thought, I don't know, unusual. But I thought, well I must have been left here for a purpose, I better make use of it. So I have always been sort of dedicated kind of person and go out and do everything I could. I do a little bit to much sometimes. so I have been involved in a lot of civic activities kind of stuff. In the church, lutheran church, for example, I ended up being on the seven person executive committee of the Iowa district which had over 400 churches on it. I was president of the Chamber of Commerce here in Grinnell back in 1963 to 64'. Back in the JC, that's Junior Chamber of Commerce, I won and outstanding state chairman award, Stat of Iowa. Went to four JC national conventions. 1976 they wanted to bring Junior Achievement to Grinnell, and I ended up being the first president of that got it going. It is still going today. And oh other things in the church, I ended up teaching the bethel, I ended up teaching(laughter). The Bethel course is a bible course is actually what it is, detailed biblical course. Took it on the teacher trainee level for two years, and then taught it on the lay level for three times. So became quite a student of the Bible, and I ended up teaching an adult class and doing all this kind of stuff in our church. But I have backed off now and let the younger guys



do it, figured I have done my share. So I've been active socially in a lot of ways and enjoy it.

DS: Speaking of the church, does Grinnell seem to be a very religious community?

BA: Oh, I guess we are not any more so than any others. I think about 40% of the population goes to church or claims membership. I belong at the St. Johns Lutheran there right across, you now on eight and east right across from the college. I've been a member of there ever since we came to town. I don't know, I think we got something like 23 churches in this town of 9,000 people. Of course some of them are pretty small. And, so yeah, I wouldn't call us the bible belt by any means, but I would say we're basically church going kind of community as much as anybody is across the country.

DS: Many different denominations?

BA: Oh yeah, you got the whole, Assembly of God, Presbyterian, Congregationalists, Christian Church, to Lutherans, to Catholic. And the Catholic church here has the largest membership. Go over here to the little town of Brooklyn east of here and it is almost all catholic. So there is a lot of, I suppose you call it Catholic dominance here, but they don't, we pretty ecumenical really. I mean we get along I think pretty good with each other.

DS: You mentioned before that this building is over a hundred years old.

BA: Yeah

DS: Is a lot of Grinnell...

BA: I don't know how much you know about the history of Grinnell. I am not quite sure of the year that this building was built, I (unidentifiable) be able to find it out. But it had to be somewhere in the late 1880's. Now there were two things that happened about that time, and I may be a little bit off on my dates, but I want to say 89'. There was a tornado that hit the campus of Grinnell College and practically destroyed the campus up there. And then like a year or so later, we had a disastrous fire downtown. And it practically destroyed the square block just south of us here. But it didn't hit this side of the street, because of the winds or something. Anyhow, the town rebuilt at that time. Up from the ashes was what they talked about. So this building is, survived those two events, and it was primarily a mens clothing store here all the years. When I bought it in 1980 it had been vacant for two years. I remodeled it to accommodate it to be a book store. I need to do some more work, but I kind of just keep doing a little bit work each year with it. I would like to restore it so it could become a historical society, become a part of that.

But I got a ways to go so I don't know if I am going to make it or not.

DS: What can you tell me about the history of Grinnell?

BA: Of course J.B. Grinnell, that's who it was named after, and you may have heard the phrase, "Go West Young Man, Go West". Well I don't know if that is fiction or not, in fact I am not quite sure, I think if you really wanted to check it out it may not be true. but anyhow it makes a good story (laughter).

DS: (laughter) Yeah.

BA: And J.B. Grinnell was a minister. Came here from the east coast. We celebrated the hundredth anniversary in 1954, so it was 1854 when Grinnell was established as a community. Grinnell college came a little bit later, actually it was known as Iowa College at one time, and I think it had been located in, I am not sure, I think started with Iowa City. I am not quite sure about that where the college started. Anyhow it came to Grinnell and then became Grinnell College. The central parkway of down here, this is what I am told now, that one of J.B. Grinnell's statements for what he wanted was that there would be no intoxicating liquor sold in the property adjoining the park. So in other words you couldn't have a tavern across the street from central park. Well I think that has been stretched a little bit. I mean I have been to social functions in the Memorial Building that is in central park, and as I recall, there have been some social drinks served there. So I think the law has been circumvented (laughter). So Grinnell has basically going from there. And its during the 80's when Iowa was suffering farm setbacks, and all this sort of thing, and our downtown was effected likewise. We had a lot of open store fronts for rent. But, we seemed to survive, and in 1990 I think we had a capital gain of 12 people in the community for ten years. But in comparison to other communities across the state, they were loosing, except maybe a metropolitan area like Des Moines. But most small communities, particularly in rural areas, really lost population.

DS: Why do you think Grinnell was able to maintain population?

BA: Well I don't know, we seem to be a real diverse group. There is no ethnic popularity here. Well you take the make up of, well Grinnell College has a vital part in our community. They provide the cultural, the educational part of it. Certainly contribute to the pay roll of our community. Then we have the industrial complex out south of town between here and I-80, that we started back in the 1960's. I've been a part of that ever since it started, and we have some really pretty substantial industries out there. So we got the blue-collar there. Okay, we are in the rural area, so we got the agricultural element there. Then we have other industries like General Telephone here, GTE, which unfortunately has

diminished in size here considerably in the last four or five years. But at one time they had over six hundred people here working. Okay, they kind of provide the white-collar portion of the community. So we really have a mix here of people. And I think everyone saw that hey, you know if we're going to make it, we've got to work together. And this is what's taken place, that's the way I see it. We have a large, gro...that's not the right word, a volunteerism. Let me give you just one example of what I am talking about here. Of course being mayor I get involved with this kind of stuff. But recycling, we saw back four or five years ago that recycling was something that we were going to have to do. there's no question about it. And so we started in a small way, collecting, and people bring it to us. sperate out your cardboard and your plastic and your glass. And we had that first year 220 different volunteers help us with recycling. I mean we didn't have to pay them, I mean they, we go down there, take your stuff down there to the shack, I called it a shack at that time, and on a saturday morning, and here would come two kids out, maybe ten or twelve years old. Well they were out, down there with mom and dad helping out. And the community understood what recycling was about, why we have to do it. Environmental concerns, you name it. So we really took right off with recycling and composting and all that goes with it. Unfortunately right now we have hit a plateau. In the past year we haven't really dropped very much. In other words the people who believe in recycling are really doing it, but you still got those people, "ah gosh, what do I have to do this for". And they don't want to do it. And so, in fact, we are going to have a meeting monday, which is a continuation of some previous meetings, on how are we going to get the people to, or not engage in recycling, how are we going to do it. And you got to do it through their pocketbook, I'm convinced. In other words, if you got a little old lady who lives by herself here and she puts out maybe a half a bag once a week of garbage, and the couple across the street with two kids, the four of them maybe have six bags. And they pay the same for pick up as the little old lady does. Well, that's not hardly fair. They got to get it down, that four member family, ought to get it down to 30 pounds a week of garbage. I mean they out to get it down to that, I mean honestly they are putting cardboard, you name it, cans, milk jugs in that garbage. So how are you going to get to them? What we are proposing, I think is what's going to happen. We are going to say "people, you put out more than one bag a week, we are going to charge you a dollar a bag". And if they got to pay three, four more dollars a week, I think they are going to take a second, "hey maybe we ought to do this"(laughter).

So I don't know, that's what we are talking.

DS: Is there anything about recycling(indistinguishable).....Do you feel like maybe now, there is, i don't know how to say it, a lot more I mean...(indistinguishable).

BA: Yeah, back then, who ever thought of saving cans, I mean you

threw them out on the road side when I grew up. I mean think about it, here in Iowa the state of Iowa does a tremendous job, I don't know about Minnesota, but we get a nickel a can to return it to the grocery stores here in Iowa. And when you travel the roads in Iowa, and you don't see refuse and cans and junk along the roads, you really don't. And I know when I grew up it was common to see junk in ditches, you didn't think anything about it. You just accepted it, you didn't know any different, that's the way it was. But, well we just cant continue too, you know, the number of cancer cases and how that has grown in the world. You know, shape up people, eat right, sleep right, live right (laughter), I mean that's what its got to be. And so I am a solid believer on this environmental concern stuff, recycling. And of course recycling, I think another thing we have to do, and we talked about this the other night, we have to get back to the source, and kill the source. We have over three hundred tons of Des Moines Registers that come into this community a year. Over three hundred tons. Hi there.

DS: Well we had another little break for a customer, you were talking about 300 tons of Des Moines Registers.

BA: Have you ever seen the Des Moines Register on a sunday?

DS: Yeah, yeah.

BA: Its filled with all those advertisements.

DS: Yeah

BA: Coupon books, this kind of stuff. Which I just stand by the waste basket and dump it. You know I just pull out the good parts of the paper. And we're 50 miles out, I mean why?

DS: (laughter)

BA: You know I think there are electronic means for transmitting information, grocery stores could electronically special this week or something, and you get so much off. Get away with all this news paper print, gezz, and its slick surface stuff. I just got a thing about that (laughter).

DS: lets go back to the very beginning of the interview, do you know what your relatives, how far back they go before coming...

BA: Yeah, on my dads side my grandparents came from Sweden. And in fact my grandmother did not want to learn English and she wouldn't. Probably picked up a few words maybe. But, in fact my dad, with them speaking Swedish all the time in the home, he had to learn English in order to start country school. Because they talked Swedish all the time. And the church in the community had Swedish services until 1935. And it was all Swedes, I mean it was



Petersons, Johnsons, and Nelsons, and that's what it was. So that's the neighbor hood and community in which I grew up. Now I never did learn Swedish myself except for a few words. A spenska pouka, yaah(laughter). So I have a little fun with it. As a matter of fact the book store here, the name Booklada is a Swedish term, it means book barn in swedish.

DS: Oh.

BA: Goes back to sixteenth century. And if you notice the color scheme in here it is the swedish colors, that's what it is, including the carpet. My wife had a lot to do with that. And then my wife, who was an Anderson, she came from a totally Swedish background. And her grandparents from both sides came from Sweden. So we go to her family background in Boon County, Iowa, its all Swedes. Now my mother was not, she was Irish. And so I grew up actually half Swede, but I grew up in Swedish environment all the time.

DS: Was the town Swedish?

BA: In the community where I grew up it was, I mean on the farm it was. When we went to Wayn, Nebraska, then that was a different ball game.

DS: (indistinguishable)

BA: No, that was, no, her parents, no her mother was born in a sod house in Nebraska. And then her father came from Ireland. But I don't know what to say about it, just weird in the Swedish atmosphere and that was the way it was.

DS: What do you see as the future of Grinnell?

BA: Well I think we're going to continue to work on the quality of life in the community, in other words make it a good place to live. No I don't see us growing by leaps and bounds at all, is like Grinnell College, they really don't want to increase that student body. And I really don't want to see them do that, I mean it becomes a selective student body, but if you start increasing enrolment up there then its increased teachers, its increased buildings, and it just seems to me I'm glad to see them sort of hold where they are. And I see the community being that way too, in other words, being the best that you can with what you have, and go from there.

DS: Okay we had one more break, and we came back here and you had something that you wanted to talk about.

BA: Well I am a little personally upset that the drug activity in our community. We like to think that we are a better community than anyplace else, but believe me we have drugs here just like

anyplace else has. I guess I am really upset with drug activity and beings that go on, in areas adjacent to our local schools. I'm talking about you know the grade school, middle school, high school. And so I've been a member of what is known as SAFE, that's an acronym for substance abuse free environment. We have a variety of comities working on that, to represent all areas of the community, and representing government. And then at our city council meeting on monday night it is on the agenda at my request, that we establish an ordernance that will settle drug free areas around the schools. I would say a circumference, or radius of 200 feet out from the school, each building. Now its mostly a psychological kind of thing. In other words we are going to put up, if we do what I want to do we will put up conspicuous signs within the circumference of the schools, and it will say that this is a drug free area. In other words tell them, sending out a message to the dealers that we are watching you, and if you want to do your business go elsewhere, not here. So that's basically, and I think I am going to get it passed without a problem.

About a month ago we had a local policeman who's with the Jasper County/Poweshiek County drug enforcement agency. And he wants us to adopt an ordernance that has to do with parafanellia of drugs, equipment. This is pipes, all that kind of stuff. And he brought over a big box full of it and laid it out on the table in front of us, and it was absolutely amazing what equipment he had. That he himself had picked up from drug raids. And he said this is nothing, I could show you other police lockers down at the police station right here, and show you a lot more than this, I'm just showing you what I have. Well I think this is kind of an eye opener to what is going on here. And we just want the drug dealers to know that they are not welcome here, by golly go elsewhere.

DS: How do you think that they came to Grinnell?

BA: Its hard to tell, I know that one case, a house that was two doors from where grade school, and dealing was going on at that house. And this bi-county enforcement unit knew about it, they had evidence to make a raid. But the night they made the raid, somehow the word got out, and they got to that house it was clean. Now these were people that had moved in from I guess Cedar Rapids, who were renters. Now after they made that raid, which was clean as far as they were concerned, they soon left, because they knew that they were being watched. So they were bringing it in I guess from Cedar Rapids, but I don't know. So we've got it, and I'm tired, I'm just death against it. I just want to see it go away.

DS: Does it seem like it has increased since the time when you grew up?

BA: Oh yeah, no question about it. Now I still think alcohol probably is the biggest abuse against marijuana or cocaine. The public seems to accept alcohol, and I drink a beer myself, so I guess I cant be a total snob here. I think anything used to

extreme and out of hand needs to be curbed. Oh yeah when I grew up I had never heard of such things as cocaine, I didn't even know what the hell it was. It just seems to me that kind of material is so prevalent and so available in small quantities so young people can buy it without spending a lot of money. And I just think it is detrimental to start on the stuff. And I know smoking was the big thing when I grew up, you know if you didn't smoke you weren't a man, or something to that effect. Well and I was once of them, sure. You grow up and you. (end of tape)

DS: Continue our interview here, and we were just talking about drugs and we got onto smoking. I was going to ask, how long did you smoke?

BA: Well I quit in 1969, so that's what, twenty three years ago (laughter).

DS: Okay.

BA: But I started smoking I think when I was 14. Well I was sneaking cigarettes I think is what I was doing, because my dad smoked so I did.

DS: I was going to ask if you saw a correlation in why you smoked and then maybe why kids now....

BA: The only two things I see different, I see this kind of macho kind of stuff I suppose related to it, I'm not sure. But in drugs, that's a way of making big money. And cigarettes back then, there was no way that had anything to do with money. I mean we were buying packages available on cigarettes as I remember for like ten cents a package back in the thirties. So there's that difference. But I don't know, its a habit and I broke it, and I'll never do it again (laughter).

DS: What, thinking back to when you were a kid then, or teenage years, what would you do if you went out on a friday night?

BA: Oh, well one thing, I was pretty busy, I really was. I told you remember my dad bought this dairy when I was in high school and we got up at 4:15 in the morning to peddle milk. I went out for athletics after school and then I was in high school plays or debate or choir practice or something. Man I was busy, I never had enough time to sleep when I was in high school, man I was busy. So it was that kind of activity when I was in high school. Dancing, I never became a good dancer, didn't do enough of it. Just wasn't that much in the way to do things. I was just busy with school kind of activities, its the way it was.

DS: Did you go to movies?

BA: Well yeah, they were pretty cheep back then. What I did, when

I was like, I haven't even mentioned this, my dad made a popcorn stand for me. So I sold popcorn, and I would go downtown, of course back then saturday night was the big night in town, the farmers came to town. So I would wheel that popcorn stand down on the main square on saturday night and sell popcorn. I would make the band concerts on wednesday night, and then we would even make county fairs. So with popcorn, I've purchased my own clothes since I was fourteen years old. As a matter of fact I paid my first two years of college with that popcorn, I made pretty good money.

DS: Wow.

BA: I sold it at five cents a bag back then. Well what the deal was, real quickly, I bought it from Jolly Time Popcorn in Sioux City, and popcorn cost me eight cents a pound. Well I could get eight bags of popcorn out of a pound. So I got forty cents out of every eight cent investment. Then of course the account of my time, a little Mazzoula oil and some salt. But, no I used to make good money. In fact, back then I was kind of the big spender(laughter).

DS: (laughter)

BA: I had more money than most kids did. Well my dad gave me a little bit for working in the dairy. Peddling milk and selling popcorn, yeah I did pretty good. Hi There.

DS: We took a little break there, and during the break you were talking about how much college...(indistinguishable)...if you could say those again.

BA: Right, well I graduated from high school when I was sixteen and I had saved some money from buying popcorn and I had purchased my own clothes so I was okay in that respect. But I went to Wayn State Teachers College in Wayn, Nebraska. The books first of all were rented out of the library, well not rented out, you just checked them out like a public library. So the books didn't cost us anything. And then the semester tuition was fifty cents a semester-hour. Lived in a fairly new dorm, shared it with another guy, and the room fee was a dollar fifty a week. I remember going over to eat breakfast, it cost me twelve cents, get a glass of milk and a roll. And then in the evening meal I ate out at a family home. She charged us fifty cents for a family style. I filled up on food for the day there. And then of course I also peddled milk while I was in college, worked at this creamery. So I got my milk down there(laughter). So I really got through college making fifteen dollars a week peddling milk with a horse. And so I was living pretty good in college.

DS: You talked about the G.I. Bill...

BA: Yeah, then when I came back after World War two and went to the



University of Iowa I had the G.I. Bill, which really was a great thing as far as I was concerned. First of all, they paid for all of our books. We were paid so much a month, I think it was only like sixty dollars a month at first. But in it they provided you with spending money is what it did. And of course a year at the University of Iowa wasn't too expensive back then either. So when I graduated from the University, because I also held a part time job, I ended up owing no money. I had no debts when I graduated from the University of Iowa.

DS: Yeah that is a very nice thing to have. What did you do right after you graduated?

BA: Well that is when I went to work full time with Retail Credit Company, insurance investigators. I went to Ceder Rapids to work for them.

(customer leaving the book store)

Okay, thank you, she'll here from us and hopefully that will help.

DS: Did you have trouble finding a job or was it...

BA: Well I was with them part time when I was in school in Iowa City, so the branch manager in Davenport said to me, are you interested in going full time with us, we have a place for you. So no, I didn't even interview for another job. I just went to work with them, which made it easy.

DS: Yeah that was real nice. When you had play time as a kid, did you have any hobbies or did you have any specific games that you played?

BA: Well on the farm, of course I wasn't but eleven years old when we moved off, we used to do such things as drown gophers at recess time(laughter). Get some buckets of water, go out find a gopher hole and pour water down the gopher hole, you know. And when that gopher stuck its head up you clubbed him(laughter).

DS: Oh God(laughter).

BA: Yeah we did that during breaks when nice weather. Of course in the middle of Nebraska it was, the weather was extreme. Like in the winter times, gosh we would have thirty below weather. And real blizzards. So sleigh riding was a big thing. We had big hills where we lived, and we had fun doing that and throwing snowballs. So then in to town, then I got into swimming. This teachers college in that town had that indoor pool. And I joined the boy scoots and so I learned to swim in this indoor pool. And I've always enjoyed swimming all of my life, I don't do much of it now, but I used to do a lot of it, I liked it.

DS: Did the cold winters make it, I mean was the house very cold?

BA: Oh yeah, I mean of course, this is really ancient, on that farm we did not have electricity, did not have running water. I mean we had coal burning stoves, you know were you burn the one side and froze on the other. And you took hot irons to bed with you up in the upstairs bedroom, because you know, there wasn't any heat up there(laughter).

DS: What was it like then when you moved into town?

BA: Well of course that was my first time to live with electricity and running water, and all this luxury stuff. The bathroom was in the house, it wasn't outside(laughter).

DS: Did there seem to be a really big difference?

BA: Oh yeah, it was a pretty soft living, living in town. Yeah, my dad still farmed with horses back then. It seemed like a different world. I don't want to tell my grand kids about it, they cant believe I am that old.

DS: Did your father ever get machinery?

BA: Well yeah, of course he was going broke there in the middle thirties. So he didn't have but a tractor but steel wheels, I mean no rubber tires, and then of course sold them when we had the farm sale. Yeah he was getting a little bit mechanized, but we were still farming with horses basically.

DS: And did you like the farm? Did you ever really...

BA: Oh, of course eleven years and younger and that's what you grow up with, that's all there is. This is all you know. You got your little world and it probably didn't go more than forty miles in any one way. So you just grew up in that kind of an atmosphere. You know no T.V. back then.

DS: You mentioned being to like forty miles, and I just thought that was interesting how you mentioned being to seven different countries...

BA: Oh more than that, yeah.

DS: ...did you just sprouted out?

BA: Oh yeah, I just love traveling, I really do. Yeah well after I moved to town, and then got to find out hey there is a bigger world then I thought. And of course being in Hawaii in World War Two, mixed races there. I mean there was Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, whatever, and thought nothing about it. So, from that point, I was only nineteen or twenty years old at that point. Just grew to accept, hey we have all these different races in the world we can live together and all this sort of thing. Then we end up in

Japan and the Korean War and then traveling after that. I just wish I could travel most of the time, I just love it.

DS: Do you think your relatively early exposure to many different cultures and ....(indistinguishable)

BA: Yeah I think so, I mean I got a real interest in Japan, particularly later, of course I ended up getting sent there, but I have friends in Japan today that I write to and so forth.

DS: What was it like having, you were american ... (indistinguishable).

BA: First of all in MacCarther's headquarters I worked in the downtown hub of Tokyo, Tokyo is a big city. Of course back in 1950 it was certainly a different city from what it is today. I mean you had tents set up on the sidewalks people hocking stuff. Of course you wouldn't see that today over there, you got thirty story buildings just like any other big cities in the world. But I hobnobbed with the japanese people and didn't have to much problem with it. I didn't learn the language or learn to write it at all, it was to difficult, goodness. Well I didn't intend to be there very long, so didn't have much incentive to learn it. I don't know, I just learned to accept other cultures.

DS: Was it hard to get around not knowing the language.

BA: No, no, I got around. They had taxi cabs. I didn't have much money, I was an enlisted man. I remember getting a taxi cab ride and paying with cigarettes(laughter).

DS: What more can you say about the town of Grinnell?

BA: About Grinnell, well, I just think we are going to continue to improve. We have had a couple of things shake us up in downtown. We had the Sears store going to close now. Sears Roebuck, and we got Sperguns over here, a long time store closing. These are national chains closing up on us here. And we have had some other changes in our downtown retail section, so I am concerned about the retail section, and weather its going to be able to maintain its vitality. In fact we have a committee now, its call a revitality committee trying to see what we can do to bring more business to the downtown area. Strange as it may seem, there are a couple of things on the other side of the coin. Our industrial area out here, Wolverine is just expanding, just built another one hundred thousand square foot storage building, and got more people working. And we have other industries doing somewhat the same thing. Our housing in town, we have very limited housing, in fact it is really a sellers market at this point. You got a nice house in the eighty to one hundred and twenty thousand dollar bracket, you list it today and you might sell it tomorrow for the price you ask for, that's the way they are selling here in town. And we've run out of

lot, so to speak on which to build. So we are in a housing shortage here in town. So here we got industry expanding, housing is short, you get your price, the seller can. And yet we got a retail section downtown that is hurting right at the moment. And I really don't know how to explain that. Of course it is convenient to go shopping in Des Moines and what have you.

DS: Yeah, ... (unidentifiable).

BA: Well it does, you got your malls, and people are attracted to those. Its just a hop skip and a jump and your there practically. So it is easy to go in there and find bigger stores with more variety, so it tends to draw people. I think we are at what I call leakage, in other words, people earn the money here but they spend it or a good share of it in Des Moines. So we got a little bit of a problem here in the retail section, not quite sure what to do about it but we are working on it.

DS: Is there anything else in particular that you...

BA: No, I think you probably covered my life history and my philosophy on things, how I think, and feel, and believe about things. And I find you incidently a very pleasant person to have interview me. I appreciate your cooperativeness here, and working with me on doing this. And I hope it helps you in getting a good grade and all that other stuff (laughter).

DS: (Laughter).

BA: That's for the teacher there.

DS: Thank you very much.

BA: Yeah

DS: have a good day.