

Oral History Interview with Jack Huffington  
October 23, 2000

Jack is a very interesting gentleman from Marshall and he has a very interesting past and I want you, who ever is listening to this tape in the future. I hope you gain by it and I want you to listen to Jack now as he tells us some of the things about his past.

**CG: Jack just tell me about when you grew up and about your ancestors?**

JH: I was born on August 28, 1920. My family first settled in this area before Illinois was a state. That was from mother's side of the family. (She) was a Drake. They settled on the Wabash River about two miles south of what is now Darwin. The Huffington Family came in about 1850 and settled at Allright.

My wife's people were Archers and Corks and they came in prior to 1818. And some of her ancestors were the founders of Marshall. They were the Archer family. So all of our history dates back to before there was anything here in Clark County. I went to a country school and moved around. Dad was a teacher, and I ended up going where he taught a lot of the time. The country schools I attended were Walnut Prairie, I attended Snyder, attended West Union for four years and back to Snyder again and down to Crow for three years. I graduated from Crow. My dad was one of those people that believed that everybody got out of grade school too early. A group of us eighth graders took the 8<sup>th</sup> grade a second time. He didn't think my grades were good enough the first year to go on to high school, because I only had a 93 average. The next year I had a 98 ½ and if I'd spelled 'chisel' right I'd (have) had the top score in the county. The top student at that time in the county that was # 1 was Evelyn Bohn from Snyder. We lived close together down there and were good friends there and on through high school. In high school, I worked summers, nights and Saturdays at Kroger here in town. Played football three years, played basketball four years. Made team all the years I played. Enjoyed it and my football was such like after high school I went on to Rose Hulman and played football over there. When I graduated from high school I needed a little more money than I was making at Kroger and they was starting to build the power plant at Hutsonville, Illinois. I had been known to be around Hutsonville a little bit, and I'd visited a girl down there whose dad was the coach at Hutsonville and also the editor of the

paper. He was Red Huffman. To anybody in the West Union or Hutsonville area, the Huffman family was well known. So I worked there that summer for Bates and Rogers Construction Company, and in the fall I left and started into (what was) then Rose Polytech and is now Rose Hulman. At the time I left Bates and Rogers they told me if you ever want a job, hunt us up. Well after three semesters at Rose money was getting short and there were good defense plant jobs, so I decided to hunt Bates and Rogers up, and found them, and work a while and get money together and to go back and finish. At that time Bates and Rogers was building a shell loading plant at Kingsbury, Indiana, which is just south of LaPorte. So I went up and got a hold of Bates and Rogers and I had a job to go right to work. And I did go to work for them there, I was a pusher on a concrete gang and building big blast walls and pouring concrete and of course, I had had concrete work at Hutsonville building the power plant. And was aware of the specifications and everything that was needed.

After about 6 months of that I got a chance to go to the engineering company Cole and Son at Kingsbury. And with my background in survey work that I'd had in school and my construction background, I was hired and made an instrument man to go out on survey. We finished that up and Cole and Sons then had a contract to go to Crab Orchard Lake down near Carbon-dale and Marion in southern Illinois and I went down there on the first survey crew to open that up for another defense plant. We went through that between August and April, had the work pretty well lain out. Now my involvement was to lay out a railroad: the mapping, topography that type of thing.

**CG: What years was that, Jack?**

JH: That was in the years of '41 and spring of '42. A lot of interesting things happened. One of the things I remember (is that on) one of the survey crews we had, the chief came out to Wisconsin. Well up in Wisconsin when the lake freezes over they want to cross to lake, they just drive across it. He came down and Crab Orchard was frozen over and he needed to get around to about two miles to the other side and he just took out across the lake and it wasn't to long until he was in water. The crew they went out on the ice and he had an International wood station at that time, it went through the ice and after the ice went out they went out in there in a boat and hooked a cable to it and pulled it out. When they got it to shore there was four wheels left and the running gears. When they had build Crab Orchard Lake they cut the stumps off to about knee high to waist high and they had drug that thing out

through those stumps and it tore every bit of the body of that station wagon. So, we had a lot of fun as we went along.

An interesting thing that I did have down there in that area at one time was to go through and locate every cemetery and every bridge that I could find in the Crab Orchard area. You found a lot of thing in the early settlements where they (were) buried in the Orchard. One particular thing I remember, and I never knew what it was about, must have been a massacre because there was about forty graves all of them with the same type and same age headstones.

But, as we were getting our layout work pretty well completed there, we had another job opening up in Illiopolis, Illinois so they moved me from Carbondale then that same company that had me at Kingsbury and moved me to Carbondale. And then from Carbondale I moved to Decatur to the Illiopolis plant. Now Illiopolis had two defense plants, one on the south side of Route 36 out of Illiopoiss and one on the northside. I went into the one on the north side there was doing work for railroads and doing highways, doing building layouts, water lines, steam lines, we had power plants there you pipe steam heat from one place to the other.

One of the funny things that happened there, you'd have a target where you'd have a mile of railroad down maybe straight across that or three quarters of a mile. You'd get kind of a target set up so that every time that you wanted to work on that you would just measure in the center line and sight on that target without going down. So I went down and painted a red target on a barn. They build a base for the railroad they came along putting ballast down and ties and they got about a third of the way down and they saw their track was running off the grade that had been build. So they were looking to see what had happened and they went down to this barn. That target that you were going to shoot at had been painted on a rolling door on the side of the barn. And somebody had opened that door and that moved that target about 8' and so as they went toward it they got off line. Another thing that happened there, they were using tapes that was 101' long. The experts from the office, that had all the answers, went out and did some measuring laying out base lines and got back in and tried to compute them and they wouldn't compute. They found out they hadn't read the tapes to well instead of a hundred feet they had measured them one hundred one. So all of these things in later life it cautions you and people get tired of me saying when they are on the end of the tape, now have you got zero what's the first thing this side of it, well that's one. But if they happened to be at the end of that tape, the first that (is) that side of it is zero and you get real cautious about that.

Now I was in Illiopolis and I had some tricks that I had learned from the old surveyors that had taught (me) short cuts. And one of the things there, the company had two surveyor crews out there trying to stake out steam lines and set grades on them for the contractor to cut off and they couldn't keep ahead of him. So they called me into the office and said, "We got a problem out here on our steam lines." So they showed it to me and (asked), "Can you do that?" They said, "What do you need?" And I said, "Three men." Well they said, "We got two crews out there now that can't do it." I said, "I just need three men." And I had tricks as to how to get that done easily. And it worked and that contractor said, "Jack I don't know what you are making here but, I got a contract on the AlCan Highway, you'll make more than three time as much as what you are making here if you'll go up on that highway with me." I told him no, that I was going to join the Seabee's and go to the South Pacific. Well he went to Alaska, I joined the Seabees, and they sent me to Alaska.

So, I was in Dutch Harbor just a few miles from where they were building the AlCan Highway. I was making \$66.00 a month instead of \$700.00, but the work in service was interesting too.

**CG: While you are on that subject, this is what is interesting about your life to me. (It) is because your past intertwines with mine. My father worked on the AlCan Highway. Later on as you hit these other projects that you had a part in, he worked on those too. You did some of the similar things.**

JH: And salvation.

**CG: Right**

JH: And now in the summer of '42, my wife and I had gone together, (had) dated some in high school and some after high school, and I knew I was going to be going (into service). And I just decided I wanted to get married before I went into service. Which is absolutely the wrong thing everybody said to do but we did it anyhow and Elsie had left and gone to Washington, DC and was working in the Pentagon and I was working at Illiopolis and so called her and said, "Come home. Lets get married." Well that was kind of a shock and after thinking about 15 minutes she decided she would come home, but she didn't tell her folks. Well we had the date set and I had time off, (you) didn't get much time off when you were working in defense

plants. I had to come to Marshall and take the examination for the army because my draft number was a high one. And so that day I arranged and Elsie came in and I picked her up at the railroad station at Terre Haute to bring her home. Well, she had gone to school in Rockford, Illinois and a friend of hers that she had been real close to lived in Decatur. So Shirley was going to stand up with Elsie and I to get married, and a guy I was working with was going to be best man. Shirley and I came to Marshall the night before and she was going to stay all night with Elsie's folks. (I) got to Marshall and there was nobody there. Got a hold of her dad and found out that her mother and sister had gone to see Washington the end of the last week. When they got in there I found out they were coming home on Monday. So, that's why I got by with spending the night before I got married with another woman in the Deming Hotel in Terre Haute. Picked Elsie up about six brought them to Marshall and went up for physical, had physical exam for the army and then picked Elsie up, went back to Terre Haute. I bought a suit, we bought a ring, we then drove to St. Louis and got married and drove back to Decatur all in the same day.

But after I bought supper I looked at how much money I had left and decided I better not try a hotel, we better go back to Decatur because I had a room there we could stay in. So our life has been like that now. We've been married fifty-eight years and it's been about that hectic for fifty-eight years. I did enlist in the Seabees; I stood in line all day to get in it, and three years to get out of it. But, I can't praise the work that I had enough. It afforded me a chance to do things that many (who) work in this field never get a chance to do. I went into the Navy, went active. They said, "Now there is two things that you can count on in the Navy. You'll get paid twice a month and you'll have a nine day leave when you get out of boot camp." When I was about half way through boot camp and they called me in and said, "Jack we need surveyors in Alaska. We are sending you to Alaska." So that was the end of boot camp. I got on a train and as near as I got to Marshall was going through Lawrenceville. I tell you it was sure hard on me when we crossed Route 1 to look up Route 1, 46 miles away, and know my wife and family was up there and I was on my way to Alaska. So, I took the train on to California. Then from Port Hueneme, California (I took) another train up to Seattle (and) shipped out of Seattle for Dutch Harbor. And Dutch Harbor was where the Japs had made an attack. And had they known they could have taken it, there wasn't enough fortification there to stop anything. But there had been a Navy base with a few planes stuck on an island west of there where they had laid iron mats down on the tundra and when these ships came into Dutch Harbor they were attached from the rear by those planes.

And they thought there was a fleet behind them, so they backed out of Dutch Harbor and that actually saved it.

Now I was in Dutch Harbor from April until late August and our first child was born in May. I got a letter from Elsie (that) said, "Water broke and I'm on the road to the hospital." That was at the time they attacked Attle. At the time they did that there was no phone calls, there was no telegrams, no mail in or out of Dutch Harbor for three weeks. And I was three weeks not knowing what had happened. Dad was head of the contact and Red Cross and he couldn't get anything through.

But on Dutch Harbor there was a lot of work on docks. It was a supply base there and you do soundings to determine where the dock lines had to be, so you had forty foot of clearance for water and you did that with two instruments and a boat. And the boat would drop the lead line and the two instruments were on a base line and at the time he dropped the lead line, he would record shot # 1, water fifteen feet deep or twenty-five feet deep, whatever it was, and we'd record the angle. And that could be taken into the office and plotted up and then you did a map of the bottom of the bay. One of the times a battle ship came in to Dutch Harbor and you had to set an anchor for that because it had to be in forty foot of water and an anchor in forty foot of water had a pretty good swing radius. And they told me what it had to be and I had to do the soundings for that to make sure the battle ship didn't get on the rock. The engineering officer said, now Jack whatever you do you make sure that buoy is in the right place for that, for if you get that battleship on the rocks they'll be after me and I'll be after you. We made it all right.

At that time, when that fleet came into Dutch Harbor at that time, I didn't know it at the time but we found out later that Don Ferris had been on that. We had runways there. One of the jobs I had there was to take a boat and a crew and go out and map the area for gun placements. Go out and do the contours and bring it in to be drawn up where gun implacements were going to be placed around Dutch Harbor to guard things. Now it doesn't sound like you were there long when you were there from April to August, but it is a lifetime.

Now I did mention, they say you get a nine days leave and get paid twice a month. I got no leave and went to Dutch Harbor where you got paid once in a while. No place to spend it anyhow. But, I came out of there and back to the states in August. I had been gone from December until August, which is a lifetime, but when I got home I had a three-month-old daughter. That's the one that people know as Jinny. And Elsie had met me in St. Louis and in coming by train from Seattle, I came down and dropped our stuff at north of

Oakland, out at Camp Parks, a Navy camp. Then we got our 30-day leave and came home. And coming through Oklahoma that train had loaded up mineral water some place and they served a fricassee chicken that was about half salt. By the time I had a fill of the chicken and the mineral water (and) by the time I got to St. Louis, I was in bad shape. (I) made it home, and after the 30 days in going back to California I ran into Frank Bubeck at a railroad station in Terre Haute and Frank was on his way back to California. Frank and I had been the best of friends through high school and we lived close together down in the country. So we went back to California together. Then we figured we'd ship out pretty quick but they weren't ready for us yet and so we were in California from September until May. They ran out of something for us to do at Camp Parks, they decided that maybe some of us hadn't had boot camp they ought to put us through all that again. So we had close order drill then and all that crap that after you'd been overseas once, you're not much really interested in. And I walked by one day and they had a Seabee Band in our battalion. I'd had some teeth out and couldn't play a trumpet anymore. But, they had two baritones lying there, and I picked up a baritone and I was doing pretty good at that baritone. I had a job playing baritone in the band. Now, I didn't drink at all so they had a dance band that went around to the officer's clubs and played. Since I didn't drink I held things together and run the PA system, played the bass fiddle a little, and I would be involved with the band. (Our officers) came along and decided our battalion should march up Mt. Diablo in California. One of the things that I remember about that, we had a young kid that had lied about his age and got into the navy at fifteen years old. He hadn't been there too long when he saw the terrible mistake and he was trying to get out. We were in the process of changing complement of officers and Junior was straggling along about a thousand feet behind everybody. An officer walked up to him, he been pointed out, said, "Hi Junior, how are you?" "Not worth a damn." He said, "What's the matter?" "I'm just waiting 'til that SOB of a new chaplain gets here so I can get out of this outfit." The guy said, "I am the new Chaplain." So he got Junior out. He sent him to Honolulu. We saw him when we went through there the next time on the way out. But, I always remember the pup tents. We slept in pup tents up there. There's bobcats up there. Them bobcats would come into camp scrounging around for food and stuff after everything got quiet. I always wondered what would happen if a bobcat ran into a pup tent with you and your partner. (It) didn't happen to me or to anyone there.

My wife then knew I was going to be there a while and she came to California and brought Jinny with her. Now Jinny at that time lacked about four months of being a year old. I couldn't find anything to live in. I did find a room in a cheap hotel and I could get liberty at night to go in. And we'd go out and look around and hadn't found anything. So to save a little money we bought a can of salmon and some crackers and went back to the hotel to eat supper. We just about got that down and Elsie developed a terrible pain in her side. And of course we knew that was food poisoning from the salmon, but it wasn't. I tried to get a doctor and nobody would even talk. "Well", I said, "I am going to the shore patrol station down here." I went down to the shore patrol and told him I had a sick wife up there and had a baby. I said, she's got terrific pain and I need help. "Well", he said, "I'll go up with you." He said, "I was a pre-med student before I came in the navy." He was a Navy Shore Patrol. He said, if I don't miss my guess she's got appendicitis. So he called an ambulance, Navy, and loaded Jinny, me and Elsie in and out to Oak Knoll Hospital. Before morning she had her appendix out. I went into the room as they brought her breakfast in. On Wednesday in the Navy they served pork and beans for breakfast. Elsie wasn't really enthused with her breakfast. I'd forgotten to take Jinny's bottle up, so one of the nurses found me a bottle and some milk. I gave that to Jinny and she wouldn't have anything to do with it for it had a black nipple on it. I took that off and poured it in a glass and she drank milk for me. We got back to the hotel and I'm in touch with the Red Cross and everything and I'd called back to the base told them I was in trouble and I'd be in as soon as I could. I found a woman that was keeping kids and got Jinny stashed there and Elsie was in the hospital about a week and when I got out that appendectomy cost me nine dollars. I had to pay for her meals for that week and she was thoroughly convinced that if pork and beans was for breakfast that was too much.

But while we were there (in San Francisco), they had the premiere of the Fighting Seabee movie starring John Wayne, and our Seabee Band led the parade down Market Street for that show. And I had the privilege of being in that. Not too much later (our battalion prepared to go overseas), and I brought Elsie back to Illinois. I about lost her in Cheyenne (when) the train split in two sections. When you'd pull into a town and were going to be there so many minutes you'd run to town and get something to eat. We ran to town and got something to eat and got some milk for Jinny's bottle. We got back half way back to the train and Elsie said, "Where is the bottle?" And I said, "Sitting on the table. You take her and get on the train and I'll run back and get that bottle." So she got on the train. I ran back and got on

the train and Elsie wasn't there. I just started to get off the train and here she came walking back the tracks with another sailor. They got on the section going to Cheyenne instead of the one to Chicago. And they discovered it in the yard and stepped off down at the end and walked back. But you live a lifetime in a few months like that.

The next time out, we went to Pearl Harbor. And at Pearl Harbor what is now International Airport was John Rogers Field and I did the ramps for seaplanes.

**CG: Okay, go ahead Jack.**

JH: Work on John Rogers Field was interesting in putting the load docks in. Had a lot of trouble there with stakes, you drive the grade stakes in and the motor patrol is suppose to level the coral out. I'd get the grade stakes in and somebody would knock them out. I heard something popping one day, I looked around the corner of the building and the grader was coming down on the stakes we had set that morning. (He) just ran his front wheel down. He liked to hear the stakes pop off. So he got on out of the area and I reset them and then I drove an iron pin right by the stake and set another stake right beside of it so it didn't show. Next time I went out that motor grader was sitting there with a flat tire. I didn't have any more trouble with my stakes being broken down. We left there in September and went into the Marshall Islands and stopped there until time for us to move on. We were in there about a week on board ship. We didn't unload. And we went into the island of Tinian. Now the bad thing about Tinian (was that) we went in there and the Navy and Marines had secured the island. After we had been there three months the Army came in and they landed on Tinian at the same place we had got and then staged the landing of Tinian. They took movies and everything of it and the Army came ashore with their heavy equipment and everything, you'd thought they were making an invasion. We could set up in the brush and watch the whole thing. Now the bad thing about that, the island was secure when we went in, so we didn't get any points for it. The Army came in three weeks later and they got five points on their points they had to have for discharge. We took a dim view of that, but it didn't help any.

On Tinian I had the lead survey crew on the first strip that was put in for B29's. That's the strip that the atomic bomb was flown off from to go to Japan. It was interesting work. You worked day and night, and they got me up one night about ten o'clock and said, "Jack, somebody has torn out all the grade stakes. Is there anything you can do?" So we gathered up some

flashlights and went out. You'd shine a light under the transit so you could see the cross hair and then you'd shine a light on the rod so you could see your target for setting grades. (Sentence edited out.) One of the fellows backed into the edge of the cane to do what you do when there is nothing around and you got to get rid of something, and he came out pulling his pants up and said, "There's a Jap in there. There's a Jap in there." I grabbed my rifle and tried to shove a shell in the chamber, and I couldn't get it in. When I looked to see what had happened I'd been carrying the clip on my belt and the lip of the clip had got down so that you couldn't get a shell out of it into the carbine. So, I would at least have been shooting at a Jap if that hadn't of happened. The rest of my life I have been thankful that that didn't happen.

On the island of Tinian we had, on this particular field, four parallel strips each 8500 feet long with a constant grade of 1% and then there was another field that had two more. We had the capabilities there and we did (drop) firebombs on Japan. We were putting six planes a minute into the air off of the Island of Tinian. They were loaded with napalm and they load those things heavy. And as they came down this (the planes) went off the strip. It was a forty-foot drop. The plane could actually drop a little and then get pickup and go on out. I remember seeing as high as four planes burning when they had crashed in takeoff. It was kind of sobering.

Another time a plane was coming in and our camp was just up above the north field where the big bomber base was. That's the one that had the four parallel strips 8500 feet long and that's where they had the spot that was (where) the atomic bomb was assembled and loaded on the airplane. The first plane to land on our field (put on our battalion emblem), which was a black cat. So there was a big 13 on the side of the plane with a black cat on it. And I did see the Enola Gay. Now I was not on Tinian at the time the bomb left (for Japan). I was already on Okinawa. But I did the layout on the hydraulic lifts. The hydraulic lift to put the bomb in the airplane is the size of a hydraulic lift in a station that lifts an automobile. They talked about how small the bomb was, the bomb may have been small but the shielding around it was such that the B29 had to have special construction around the struts in the bomb bay to allow that to be delivered. At the time it was dropped the skipper came on the air and said, "You did this to the Japs. That bomb was flown from north field." And the minute he said it, I knew where it had been assembled and I knew where it had been lifted into the airplane. Cause I'd been there.

I did get a citation on Tinian for survey work and mapping. Mapped about 5000 acres of sugar cane that was about 12 feet high. I devised a tripod that

could get the instrument 12 feet in the air. We were working through areas (where) we'd find the Japs' water, food and clothes. They were hid out and around us all the time. But if you had a show of strength they would stay away from you. If not you'd be targets. In one particular case, some Seabee's had been out souvenir hunting and Japs got a hold of them and drug them into a cave and that was the last we saw of them. The skipper didn't like that very well, so he went out with well drills above those caves. The island was porous with caves and (he) drilled down into the caves and took a truckload of gasoline out and poured it down through the holes he'd drilled and then touched her off. Now I don't know whether it killed the Japs or not but it cured their appetite for (killing Seabees).

The Seabee's motto was "Can Do". You'd find a way of doing it. It was interesting work. The work that I had and was able to do has made me a living the rest of my life (ever) since I've been back. You experienced things and did things that you would work here a lifetime and never have a chance to do. I was detached from the battalion in April and sent on to Okinawa and attached to island command to do mapping and planning for the construction of the bases there. Now Okinawa was the hospital base for the invasion of Japan. On my trip out there I flew off of Tinian in a C46 and went down and landed at Guam. I was there a couple days and then went up to Iwo Jima. And just before the invasion of Iwo Jima a part of the fleet had come in. Some people I'd been in the Seabees with before had made it in and visited with us. And I saw (one man) again when I got to Iwo and you hear about turning gray. In the battle of Iwo he turned from a dark haired man to a gray haired man. You hear of that, but I saw that happen then. Now they wanted Iwo Jima because it was suppose to be fog free. Our planes were in danger in bombing Japan. (They) would be shot up. So they wanted (Iwo Jima) for a base where these planes could cripple back into and save lives and planes. (We) were there three days. The fog came in while (we) were there and we couldn't get off to fly on to Okinawa. Now we were walking up along the runway and here came a plane flying in the wrong way on the strip and touched down. They threw parachutes and everything else out the back door to slow that plane down. It had been shot up over Japan and come back. His tires was shot up, his brake lines were out, (he) had no brakes and they threw the drags down and they bounced off the end of that (strip) down onto another strip and did a 180 degrees and the crew climbed out and walked away from it.

We did get off of (Iwo). We took some fighters with us when we went to Okinawa. They didn't have navigation with them so they had to go with a bigger plane that had navigation. Well on the way to Okinawa we hit a lot of

thunder (clouds) and they moved around through those and the navigator got a little off. The fighters left us and when we sighted land the map showed what it was. It was Japanese territory instead of Okinawa below us. On Okinawa we landed in Kadina and flew in over Teshima. That was just a short time after Ernie Pyle was killed. Now at the time we landed, the Japanese were on the south side of a river from Haha that ran up into the mountains and then on across. We (were)down on the (inaudible), which later became Buckner Bay. That was the battle line. The marines had tried to get across the river and they couldn't because the Japanese fired. The army had tried it and they couldn't and they pulled back and the navy pulled the battleships around and the leveled that city. It just looked like they had took a giant roller and rolled over the whole thing. The only thing still standing were a very few buildings that had concrete pillars and steel in them. And all the walls was shot and burned out of those with holes. The Navy leveled them. So we landed at Kadina and went down to the eastside of the island.

The next day I took a survey crew and headed to the front and we were starting surveys an air field at Buckner Bay. That was down close to sea level and they had rice paddies and sweet potato pads there. They dig the dirt and throw it up and grow sweet potatoes and where they had the water they'd grow the rice. And they had narrow walkway in those areas. Now that day we were in there taking cross sections for an airport and the American tanks were dug in behind us firing over the top of us (at Japs on the mountain) ahead. I knew right away that it was a Hell of a poor place for a farm boy from Illinois. On the way out that evening, walking down one of those little pathways about 18 inches wide, I hit a trip wire. The minute I hit it I knew what it was and I saw it. There was a box of explosives about a cube, about a two foot cube down aside that walkway. And I hit the trip wire, (but) it didn't blow. That night they came in and said, "Is there anybody in here that knows how to run a drafting machine to plot all this up?" It is the only time in my life I ever volunteered for office work, but I did work in the office then until the battalion got back out and when the battalion got there, they grabbed me back to the battalion for survey work for the battalion. (The) first day back (they) called me in to engineering and said we got to run a road around the upside of that airport, the mountain side, and intercept all the water and carry it around the airport, we can't take it under it. (They) said, "Can you do that?" I said, "How much lead time have I got?" They said, "Well, the equipment went to work last week." They had crews out there that couldn't do it, and I went into that and laid that road out around the airport.

(I saw a) lot of interesting things. You saw the burial tombs. The natives there were Japanese or Okinawa's and they would bury their dead in the sand and the ants and termites would clean the bones. Then they would take those bones out and scrape them and clean them and store them in big urns. Then they would store those in the sides of the hills. I have pictures and everything of all of that. One of those had been in the road, this road that I had to build, so we had had the Japanese come in (edited) and move (edited) their remains out. And one of those, I had a demolition man with me. I said, "How much will it take to blow that?" He figured a little bit and he told me. So we got up and we went out there the next day and he set the charge. We got around behind the hill and he set it off. It just kind of blew the top loose a little but it didn't blow up. So he said, if that's all I did it will take four times that much. So we got it and come back. They got it all carried in and they came back out and said, "Jack I don't think that all blew up this morning" and I said, "Well, touch it off and we'll soon find out." We had a little low ridge there we were going to watch this and duck behind it when they blew that up. Well we forgot about the high trajectory of this thing going up in the air and out and coming down. And when he blew it, instantaneously the top of that thing was out in the air over us. I only had one man on the crew that did what you are supposed to do. That's just you don't run, you don't do anything else, you stand and watch what is in the air and side step what is coming down. He got hit on the arm. I turned to run and fell in the track rut and laid there with the top of that thing and didn't get hit at all.

It's the things you live through, you know that the hand of God has to be with you in times like that to get through that kind of thing.

**CG: While you are on that Jack, tell us again about the explosion of the ammo dump and how you just nearly got it there.**

JH: Ah, the ammunition along the seashore and on the storage? Or on the mapping of the large area in Tinian? I would do traverses. I'd go out so far and loop back so that I had loops, every time you looped back to where you started from. (Inserted by Jack: In mapping on Tinian, I would loop back in sections, then compute for accuracy. There was a large bomb dump by the seashore. At noon I told the crew, "When we come back we will loop back and then tie in by going down through the bomb dump.")

**CG: You had the loops?**

JH: We came back and set the gun up. I said, "Oh, let's go ahead this afternoon and loop back tomorrow. And we had just got about 200 yards from that ammunition dump and she went sky high. Had we not gone ahead we'd (have) been right in the middle of that. Now there was a crawler cat down there with an overhead crane on it that lifted bombs to put them on carriers to take them to the airport and one of those, or all of them down there, the biggest piece (left) wouldn't have been as big as a wheelbarrow. It killed every living that was there, the birds. It stripped the leaves and everything off the vegetation. Nothing was alive. And evidently it was sabotage because where we were in our work we constantly found the clothing, we found the water, we found the food. But, when I went into that job I told the skipper that I had to have twelve riflemen. I said, "I've got six surveyors." He said, "What do you need riflemen for?" And I told him. He said, "Oh we'll give each of you a 45." I said no, and here I am a seaman telling the commander what it's going to be. And I told him (that) my men are busy with survey work and Japanese are looking for that type of thing. I said, "I want riflemen that have nothing whatever to do. I want one ahead and one behind every man I've got working." We weren't shot on or got anybody hurt. And we did our mapping job and had we not gone ahead. So all my life there has been things like this that you suddenly change your mind and then it is for a good cause.

So on Okinawa I put the road around (that's me showing Charlie a picture of that road here) and every time you crossed a valley you'd dam that valley and then carry the water in the ditch on the up-hill side of the road. And this was under construction at the time. And my ditch on the up-hill side would be about, depending on how much water I was trying to carry, maybe about twelve or fifteen foot wide and six or eight feet deep. You came to a ridge you might cut, might fill thirty feet and cut forty. At one particular time I had the crew out there and we had our stakes all set and knew where they were, sitting in the back of the truck paying cards. A new complement of officers had come in and there was an young ensign come up and he wanted to see (the) stakes. He wanted to know how much cut there was. I said there was about forty feet. "Well, I want to see stakes." So I said, "All right." So he went off and he went down to the end and he was watching to see what was going on. I told the boys take the tape walk right down through the middle of that cut and drive him a stake every twenty feet. I got my notebook out and I walked down to the other end and there was a motor grader operator down there. And I said, "Now I'm going to write a number on those stakes that don't mean a damn thing. Within fifteen minutes after I get it done you make a pass down through here and tear them out." So we

put in about fifteen or twenty stakes down through that cut and I walked along and put numbers that looked like they could be alright on it. I saw that guy crawl out of his jeep and he'd look at that stake and then he'd look at me. He knew I was pulling his leg but he just didn't know enough about survey work to know what to do about it. So grader operator came along and tore out the evidence and we got back to playing cards. I then got involved in laying out the big hospital and I don't remember, anymore, how big it was or how many thousand beds it would have been.

**CG: That was again Jack on what island?**

JH: Okinawa

**CG: Okinawa**

JH: We were in the process of building the base to take care of the wounded from Japan. And it was there, when we were building that, the radio came on one night and said the Japanese had made a sneak attack on Iwo Jima. They went in at night, they slit the side of the tents and threw grenades in and gassed the troops. Along about ten o'clock that night all the lights and every thing went out completely black and the ships in the harbor shot every thing that was loose. It was the darnedest display of fireworks of ever seen in my life and I've seen some big ones. And we were blacked out. I was on the floor of that tent digging under my cot trying to find my blasted gas mask. Never did find it. And after about an hour the radio came back on and Japan and sued for peace. The ships in the harbor picked it up on short wave for we had no way of knowing that that was what it was. And we were right on the flight plan of the Japanese planes that came in on bombing action. Their suicide missions came right in over our camp. There was so much stuff shot in the air (that) we had people that were hurt by projectiles coming down. We had fellows in our tents that were there. Projectiles came down through the tents and lit in their beds, but, luckily, nobody was killed that I know of, from that night.

**CG: You actually have never seen any kamikaze pilots yourself?**

JH: Yes

**CG: They were coming at you?**

JH: Yes, on Brickner Bay when I was doing the office work. There was an air raid and you run and got in your shelter and you could see down in the harbor. There was an LST down there that had the ramp down and that plane came over the top, dived into the side of it and I saw somebody on the dock run just as he got to the opening into the ship. Which was big the whole end opened up, the plane hit the side of that thing and blew up. And it was just like he was on a Yo-yo string and just threw him back through the air and looked like he hit on the dock, I don't know if he lived or not. All of that was right under us and you could see it. And there sitting under, I've forgotten, we had some kind of a tin thing over us with some dirt and at the side. And some metal came down right at the side of where we were sitting. We got to see that. Now it was on Tinian, I was souvenir hunting and I found a Japanese machine gun with a magazine still nearly full. Well, I was afraid it was booby trapped so I got a hold of the telephone wire and I hooked it and I went about 50 feet around the hill with that wire and drug that machine gun. And when I was satisfied it wasn't going to blow up I went back and got the magazine off of it. And this was in '43 and ah early '44 and the ammunition in that was stamped Winchester Repeating Arms, St. Louis, Illinois. The ammunition was made for the Japanese machine gun, different caliber than what we had in 1941 at the time we were anticipating war. And I carried that magazine and intended to get it back to give to politicians in Washington to show. And when I flew from Tinian to Okinawa I had to cut down the weight. I had enough (that) I had to leave that magazine there. Never did forget it. Didn't bring much in the way of souvenirs home. I have few Japanese shells. You know you can have a lot of fun with those. On Tinian in our camp there, the Japs were all around us and I had live ammunition and everything. And I had a grenade and poured the powder out of it and put the detonator back on, I didn't have any powder in it but the detonator goes off. Had a bunch of fellows up working on Quonset hut, and it's surprising how many doors there are out of a Quonset hut if a bunch is scared. I walked out and leaned over the window and acted like I was drunk. And I said, "I wonder what makes this thing go off?" And I pulled the pin out of it. I had to hit it and I held it down and you could hear that thing sizzle. And in about four seconds there wasn't a man to be seen. And once again, I got out of there before they could get around to do anything about it. (It was) a lot of fun. My service life has made me a living the rest of my life. In such a short time, you've got so much experience. So, Charlie, now I got home for Navy Day in 1945. Came home on the Topeka and several years later, I have a son-in-law that collects Marine stuff and he took me down in the basement to show me he'd got a porthole out of

a ship that had been salvaged. And he'd got a porthole out of the Topeka that I had come home on. And he didn't know I'd been on the Topeka. But Dutch Harbor was interesting. Everyplace that I went was interesting. I went into the Navy for survey engineering. I did it the whole time I was in there and I commend anybody. There are a lot of opportunities in service if you go in to take advantage of the things that are offered.

**CG: Okay, You want to tell us about now, after the war, what you did here in Clark County?**

JH: I got home in the fall and in the process of looking for work. In the early '40's the State had started a lakes program. They had put out to the politicians that they were going to build a lake in every county. And Marshall was in line for a lake in Clark County. They was going to have one here. Well, Dad was a politician at the time. He and Bob Flowers and I don't remember who all at that time. John Lewis was a (Representative) in Springfield. Met John at the Department of Conservation to see how Clark County's lake was going to be. At that time, Clark County had applied for a little lake on Route 40 west of town that was above old 40 in what was known as Starkey's Hollow. And it would have been about fifteen acres of water. And Dad came home and said they said they had hired an engineer, an engineering company, and he is looking for some surveyors. The next day I was back in Springfield and went into Sam Parr's office in the State House and Sam sent me to an M.P. O'Brien that had the contract for the engineering. And with my experience in mapping and survey work, I was hired on the spot. Went to work and I worked from December of '45 until the spring of '50. Now Adali (Stevenson) was elected governor in Illinois in '48, by the time he got in office. He set out to shut down all conservation work and that time the contract had been let for the clearing at Mill Creek and I had been the resident engineer on the construction on the one at Ramsey, north of Vandalia. I'd done the survey work in Kewanee and in Murphysboro. Stevenson completely stopped the projects. At Kewanee they had the contract let, reinforcing steel was on the job. The reinforcing steel was buried in the ground on the site and the contractor was paid as anticipated profit to shut the contract down.

I then went to work for Warren Van Pragg out of Decatur and in four years Straton was elected and I then knew the lake projects would be back in business. So I'd gone into Springfield to go to conversation to see what was going to happen and where the work was going to be. Cause I'd been... Sam Parr, who was Mr. Conservation at that time, had become a close friend

of mine and I knew that I would have work. And in talking to the Department of Highways, people there said, "You don't want to go there. Too much politics."

Said, "Why don't you go to work for highway?" Well, I said, at the time I talked to highway before they wouldn't talk to anybody who hadn't completed a degree. Said, "That's changed." And my friend said, "Would you talk to the highway department?" He knew my background. So he made a telephone call and I went at one o'clock to a man by the name of McCree. In about twenty minutes in talking to McCree, he said, "We got a job for you, where do you want to work?" Told him I preferred Paris. Well he said, "If you don't get what you want at Paris, you come back." And he called Paris, I stopped in Paris on my way home and I didn't think got much satisfaction out of it. I went on back to Fort Knox where I was working and at ten o'clock the next morning I got a call, wanted me to report to work on Monday. I said, "I can't do that." I had two million dollars worth of construction in my area. I said, "I've got to turn this over to somebody and I can't do that in less than two weeks." And so he said, "Come when you can."

So I left Ft. Knox in Kentucky and came back to Illinois in the highway department and was there from December of '52 until late December, '55. I was there three years. Came back to Clark County and I've been here ever since. Came first to do the engineering work for Van Tarble, who was County Highway Engineer. When he decided to retire, I went after the job and got it. Went in as superintendent, I came in here and did all the engineering from '55 on. At the time I came here there was one oiled county highway in the - now the township roads around Casey were oil, but county highways had one oiled county road from Old York to West York. All the rest of the county highways were gravel or sand. When I left office in October of '84, 100% of the county highways system were black with good base. Here we are 16 years later, they're still traveling on those bases and those roads.

**CG: While you are along that line, I know you are going to get to it in a minute, along with Doctor Mitchell and yourself, I know. Tell us about the Route 40 bypass, because I remember the road used to come just to the Indiana line. There was new highway there, but it stopped there and didn't pick up until it got almost to Montrose or Effingham, I believe. And there were so many deaths there. You had something to do with that, I believe.**

JH: In the early '50's they started the four-lane 40 across Illinois and this section had been brick and some of it hadn't been widened out, so that's the first they did. The section came in from the west and I think it was about Montrose. And they worked on that location of 40, but they just did two lanes. They wanted to get more good highways in because the old brick was just torn to pieces. And so they put two lanes of it in and that was to be going one direction and then they'd come back and put the other two lanes in for the other direction. So they had just got the two lanes finished when they decided to come under Eisenhower with the Interstate System. And the idea of the Interstate System then was that in the case of conflict or war or something, you'd need highways you could move a lot of equipment in a hurry. So they wanted a four lane limited access that you could shut all the traffic off of. So they immediately went to work and build those and they had no military men that was paying any attention to anything because they build Interstate 70 with 90% of the bridges too low to allow army equipment to get under it.

So, if you had to move anything every time you were coming to a railroad crossing or something you had to go under you'd had to detour. Anyhow, that put Route 40 out. Route 40 had so many deaths on it because the highway had been built for traffic going in one direction. So when you got traffic going in two direction the sight distance was off. Well they had speed limit signs on those but nobody paid any attention to that. And the highway safety engineers didn't want to come in and yellow line anything and make it look like they didn't know what they were doing when they built it. They did know, but they did it for traffic going in one direction but they were using it for two directions.

And a group of us here - I don't remember now how many - had, I suppose, an 80-some feet long petition with names on it to do something about it. And we took that to the governor and he was undoubtedly as good a governor to talk to as I ever met with. And my Democrat friends won't believe it, but he was Otto Kerner. And you could get in Otto's office when you had a problem, when you had a problem you could get in Otto's office and talk to him. And we took that to him. The petition with all those names on it and submitted and we had that all reproduced and had it all taped together. So we had enough paper to stretch that 80 some feet out in the State House for him to take a look at. And they came in then and did put lines on it and we did cut the deaths down.

But, I lived west of town and there were a number of people killed. What was happening - it was about the advent of the little Volkswagen and the automobiles that could get up to about 60mph if they were going down hill.

And you'd be on a long down. You might be able to see, if there was nothing there, you might be able to see a half-mile. But they'd come in behind a semi and be a slight curve in the road. They'd get out along that semi and they still can't see ahead of them because the road is curving a little and all of a sudden, here comes one head-on. To far along the semi they haven't got speed enough to go ahead and they can't brake enough to get back. So they had head-on after head-on out there on that highway. Those of us that understood what was happening had trouble to get the State to listen, and George (Mitchell) was on the committee and he went into all the fatal wrecks and checked for blood alcohol and all type of thing, did a lot of that. And we had a meeting here in Marshall at Tom's. And the traffic people from Springfield came down and they was giving us the song and dance about how this and that met code this and that, this and that and I looked at my watch and it was about 4:30, and Terre Haute was an hour ahead. And at that time the people from Terre Haute were coming back to Marshall. I said, get in my station wagon and I'll show you what I am talking about. So they had a police captain out of Springfield. He got in and we got the traffic people in from Paris and Springfield and George and myself. Don't remember who all. I had a nine-passenger station wagon and it was full. So, I headed out toward Terre Haute. Well every once in a while there would be nothing ahead of me and I'd pull over in the left lane. I said, just imagine now that I'm passing something here and all of a sudden one would pop up over the hill. Well, I kind of exaggerated a little. I always cut a little hard to get back in my own lane. After I did that about three times, one of the traffic people from Springfield said, "If you'll stay on your own damn side of the road, I can see just fine." So out of that he told Paris. He said, "You do this survey and you do this survey and this survey and you send it to me. I'll make the decision." And so out of that trip, they came in and put more yellow lines on them, they put more signs up "No Passing" and that did make the road safer until we could get 70 open. And when they built 70 it went bad in the fall of '78 and I was able to do something that just couldn't be done then and it can't be done anymore. But when there is a will there is a way. They had 30,000 ton of asphalt that they cut off of I70 between Illinois Route 1 and the State Line. And that amounted to 30,000 ton of asphalt that had to be taken off that road. They put it down the fall before. It had been so soft it sealed over. And the frost hit it in the wintertime. The water came up under it and froze and popped that stuff loose, and then when hot summer hit it just went to pieces. It bubbled, it boiled, it flaked off and it had to come off. By the time they got around to doing anything we were already into late August. I heard that noon on

Friday that they were going to take that blacktop off the road. I called the district office and told the district engineer, I said, "I could use some of that blacktop coming off that if you've..." "Ah," he said, "we got a place for all of it." About an hour later he called me back. He said, "What do you have in mind? You know how big 30,000 ton is?" And I told him yes. I did. And he said, "Could you come in?" Now I took a Clark County map and a Cumberland map laid it out and I made places on my system and the State's system that they had plenty of roads that needed repaired. And I could say I need so many tons here and so many tons there. And when I hit Paris I had two maps that disposed of 30,000 ton of material. I laid that down in front of him and he called Springfield and they said, "Could you come in?" Well we went on to Springfield the next morning. We laid it out with the district engineer from Paris. And Harold Maloney who had been in Paris worked down here on Route 1 and on Route 40. He was chief highway engineer. Harry Handley was, at that time, was secretary of transportation, and the federal man was Jay Miller. He was head of federal highways. I spread my maps out on the table. And you know you can't do anything with the Feds 'cause there is too much red tape. I laid it out and there was a way of taking hot-mix asphalt and putting chemical additives to soften that asphalt so that you could work it without having to heat it. And my purpose was to take that and put it on their roads and my roads. I said, "You give me 10,000 ton and I'll credit you with 50,000 dollars in equipment and put the rest of it down on your system. And we'll keep book on it and whatever is left in expenses, balance the pen." And I laid that out and Harold looked at it and said, "Looks good to me." And Jay Miller says, "Can you do that, Jack?" I said yes. And I had known him for sometime. He said, "Looks good to me." So, for a federal project that was passed for 30,000 ton of that between Friday noon and Tuesday, and everybody had signed off on it, now that's just unheard of. It was so good that that winter, Harold called the maintenance people from all the districts in Illinois and the district engineers to meet with Paris and myself. And while we were in the meeting one of the engineers that had known me all the time I worked for the State said, "Jack, have you ever done that before?" I said not that I knew about. "Well," he said, "how did you know that the county would come out alright on a deal like that?" I said, "Hell, there was no problem. I was keeping the books." (laughter) My engineer went right through the ceiling. (laughter) Rest of them got a big kick out of it.

We put that down in 1980 and that is still down, still in perfect condition in all the places we put down. Many of you that may read this or hear about it, may have known Bill Davidson. Bill Davidson grew up in Marshall, but he's

been out by route 40 half way between Auburn and Martinsville. Bill had just put a foundation in for a new house on a piece of this road that I was going to do just at the west edge of Marshall. And we laid that road down and it was the old brick. It had been full of holes, it was terrible to drive on, and there wasn't any way the State was going to spend any money on it. But, if they'd used something like this and put it back in shape and went down to Dick Newlin's and tied back into 40 again... Bill had a habit of stopping in Tom's Bar down in town, so I went in and said, "You talk about politics. Ah, poor old Dick Newlin has been trying for three years to get that road fixed out there and Bill Davidson poured the foundation for a new house and they rush over and do it." And nobody knew I'd done it. Bill came in for his drink and they were all on him. They carried him high for a week or two. And then I said something to him about politicians the other night. He said, "Damn you. I bet you spread that story in here." (laughter) We did a lot of work but we had a good time doing it together. Our crews in this county during our construction and putting the whole system under it many times would get a job ready to go at two o'clock in the afternoon and we'd work right on through the night until we got it done. If you held it over and you got rain then you had a day's work to get ready again. And my people from early May until late October would average 60 hours a week. Now, that is a lot of hours, but they didn't make much an hour. But, the board had agreed that after 40 hours they paid time-and-a-half overtime. Sometimes we'd work right through work the clock around. By Wednesday they would have their 40 hours in and then we'd work 6 days a week. They made enough money that they bought their homes and they sent their kids to college. And in other counties their people would work 40 hours, they didn't make a lot of money. Then whoever was working there would work at minimum wage in a filling station someplace. Instead of that my people were working time-and-a-half for those extra hours. And the turn over in my personnel in those years was very rare. I was a hard man to work for. I took no foolishness. It was my responsibility. If I told them to do something that was wrong I stood behind it. And at the time I retired there was a fellow working for me by the name of Bill Baker. And I set Bill down three or four times and about 6 months later he said, "I'll tell you I couldn't wait till you retired and got out of here. You hadn't been gone two weeks until I wished I had you back." (laughter) So all my people were good friends and remained good friends the rest of the time.

**CG: Before we run out of time, I want you to tell us about the park. I know my father was involved in the building. But you were**

**instrumental in Lincoln Trail and Mill Creek too. Tell us about Lincoln Trail.**

JH: When I went to work in the parks program under Sam Parr I was working for Morgan O'Brien out of Springfield. We had to contact every county and look at what they had available. And if their site wasn't good we helped them pick a site. When I came in here they had a little one out here at Starkey Hollow, and that wasn't good at all. And we went out to Clarksville where now Mill Creek is and we laid that out. We had that all ready to go, had options on the land, and Sam Parr came down to look at the site and the farmers were in there cutting timber in the areas they had already optioned to the State. Sam said "When you cut the trees, that's all." So we had to find another site. So we went south of town to where Lincoln Trail Park is now. And we picked that out and went in there and did that now. We started out with one hundred and two lakes, one hundred and two counties. Well, they'd get down the road a piece and say that was going to be too much money and we can't do that. We're going have to cut that down. Well I'd know when the cut was going to be and I'd call Bob Flowers in Marshall and I'd say, "They're going to meet tomorrow afternoon at one o'clock and talk about this lake program. And they are going to try to cut this number down. It'd be a good time for a delegation to come in." So about the next morning at about ten o'clock they'd show up at Sam Parr's office. And John Lewis was instrumental in the legislature at that time. And by golly, then Marshall and Clark County would be on their list. Heard them talk about that, can't cut that out. When this came on down until they got down to nine. Every time they'd go to cut I'd tell Bob, and they'd go back to Springfield. Then when we got ready to go with this they sent me to Marshall to work with Bob and pick up the options on the land for Lincoln Trail.

Bob was donating his time. I was being paid for mine at least 8 hours a day. And when you are dealing with farmers and people that have got jobs working you have to do it Saturdays. You have to do it Sundays. And you have to do it nights. And many a night we were up to one or two o'clock. And the first man we went to had just bought about a 200-acre farm right square in the middle of it where the water is now and right around it. And that was Herman Wallace. We went to Herman the first night because he was a key. We talked to him. "Well," he said, "now I just bought this," and he said, "I've got to have a place to farm. If you can find me someplace to get into for what I can get out of this, I'd go along." Well there were two families in Marshall that had got land in the depression. And the value of

land had gone from \$10.00 an acre up to \$100.00 to \$125.00. And there wasn't any way they were going to sell any of that land because they would have to pay too much taxes. And we went to Grabenheimers and we went to Cole's and we talked to them about what we were trying to do. And they wouldn't go along with us. We put together the place that was just east of the - well it's about straight north of where the gate is now on across the creek and north. The next road above it would take in (inaudible) and we got Herman a nice farm up there for the same money he was paid. I drove a car all over the valley where water is now as we did the surveys and things there. Bob donated untold hours and every time I called him he showed up in Springfield with his delegation. He never did get the credit he should have had for the work that he did on it. But, it's kind of like I told Joy Miller one time in church. She was talking about all the work she'd been doing. I told her she'd get her reward in heaven, she sure wouldn't get it in Marshall. (laughter) But Bob did do a tremendous lot of work.

**CG: Okay, then what was the deal with Mill Creek? I know it folded up there for a while.**

JH: Mill Creek folded up when Sam saw them cutting the trees. Then about 1960 the federal government came out with small watershed development for the prevention of flooding and Mill Creek started up in Edgar County and came down and the other tributaries came in and it flooded everything out from Route 1 on and all the creek bottoms above. Totally destroyed it every time you had a flood. And to qualify for Small Watershed Development you had to show that the improvement over a period of time would pay for itself in revenue back from the areas you were protecting. So we started into this in about 1960 in Small Watershed Development. I was buying the postage out of my pocket. We were meeting and getting this thing going. We were working with the Wabash Valley Commission and then the site was picked for the big dam on Mill Creek exactly where we had the dam picked for Lincoln Trail Lake. Then a number of others were built around. I don't remember the amount of money now. I had creek bottom land west of here that was protected by it. And I was assessed so many dollars on the land that was flooded to pay for all these reservoirs that we put in that protected us. That's mostly been paid out now. It was a low interest deal. I think maybe 3% or something like that over a period of time, maybe 20 years, to pay out. I think that there were eight small lakes put around as well as the big one at Mill Creek.

**CG: I know my dad had worked on some of those projects out there. Okay, I guess that brings us up to “911”. I know that you were the main person on that, too.**

JH: After I had retired Herb Trefz had left the Methodist Church better than a million dollars in assets. And they wanted to modernize the Methodist Church and I got involved in that. That took about three years. I donated my time there in working with the architect to put the plans together. And then I was the construction engineer on it. We didn't have a general contractor. We let a contract to the plumber, we let a contract for excavation, and we let a contract for building and various things we had to do. But then I co-ordinated the work and put that together.

**CG: It's a beautiful job.**

JH: And then Dulaney Bank had got in a bind and I had... When I'd taken two counties in my last ten years of working I had been county engineer in Clark and Cumberland County both. And at the time I went out there I got off of one board because I didn't have time. But, they told George Nichols what I had done at the Methodist Church, and they had taken bids on an addition at the bank that came in about \$35,000 higher than their architect had told them it would be. He was an architect builder, and that was his bid. And he called me and said, “Jack, they told me what you did at the Methodist Church. Will you do it at the bank?” I said, “I'll look at it.” And so I had gone to the bank and looked at it. And the same contractors that I had had at the Methodist Church had submitted proposals on the bank. I took a look at that and I said, “If I can use these we can put this together and instead of \$125,000 we can put it together for around \$90,000.” In getting into it I found a number of errors in the design. That had to be corrected. We did that, and I finished that, and “911” came along.

I had good friends who been on the board on that and they bounced me about working with “911”. I said no, I was not going to do it. I said there was too much red tape, too much politics, and I wasn't going to do it. Sam (Deahl) said, “If you were going to do it, what would you do?” I said, “I'd... first thing I would do is I'd get an architect and he can service the job, and I'd talk to him to see what he can do.” “Well, where would you go from there?” I said, “I'd go to Terre Haute to see if I could find somebody in 16 miles instead of getting an architect from Springfield, Decatur or St. Louis. They're too far from me to service them.” “Well would you go with us?” So, I went over with them and I had had an architect on the church that I'd had

some trouble with. But, we'd worked it out and he'd been doing good work for me. So we went back there. And that had changed hands. We went in to meet with them and sat down and said, "We're gonna build a "911" building and we want to move on it. Do you have time to move on it?" They wanted to know how big it was and I told them. "Yeah," they said, "We think we can probably do that." Said, "We'd like to have something going on that this fall. So when spring breaks we could get into it." So then I said, "If you do that, what are you talking about and what are the fees?" Well, we talked a little bit and kind of laughed. They said, "Now we've done two things since you've got here that we weren't gonna do. We weren't going to give you a time limit and we weren't going to tell you what it would cost." (laughter) But, we started in with them, but everybody had wanted this, wanted that. And they came in the first time, they put so much stuff in it, it was clear over budget. Then they came back and allowed us to cut that down to what they could afford. And we put together what we have now. And we were able to do that the same way. We had a general contractor but I was on the job as supervising engineer. When they worked, I worked. At the church I had donated and that I charged "911" five percent of the construction cost for the engineering on it. And I lived with that from start to finish. One of the meetings with an electrical engineer that had to be changed and he wasn't going to change his plans. I said, "Now you are not hearing me. This is what it is going to be." "Well," he said, "that would be extra." I said, "This is what it has to be." And so the generator we didn't have anybody involved. I handled the contracts on that. I handled the contracts on a number of other things that didn't go through anybody. And we saved them many thousand dollars in fees that we put together with local contractors. We finished "911" and that has been operating beautifully. Put the generator in and built a house for it, so it's in good shape.

**CG: Jack, we're both members of the Historical Society. I know you've been in a lot longer than I have. Do you have any comments about what the historical view is as we see it in the year 2000?**

JH: Here's what... The big problem we have there is that about 75% of us are 80 years or older. And whether we like it or not we're not going to be around here long. We do have some young people that have come in in the last two or three years to take hold of it. And it... There is so much in the history. There is so much available. Everybody has pet projects in them. We put the place (the Clark County Historical Museum) together. Now it was started in the 60's erroneously. They got it on the National Register

because it was the first post office in Marshall. And Uri Manley was the first postmaster. The part that was good was that Uri Manley was first postmaster. At the time he was postmaster, there wasn't even a house there. I didn't know that until later I was looking at the abstract and found my great-great grandfather had bought the whole block for \$200.00 when William B. Archer went bankrupt and they sold his assets to defray the debts. So a lot of things like that get to be of interest. We have gone through it and put it up in shape with new windows and new siding, and it's in operation now so that you don't have a big bid out every year in trying to maintain an old building. And it is an old building, but we've got a good look on it and we've got good siding on it and we've got good air in it. And everybody seems to be enjoying it. But, it needs young blood. Now young blood in the Historical Society, for the most part, needs to be people retired between 55...

End of side 2 of tape " Oral History Interview with Jack Huffington"  
Interview conducted by Charles Gamm – Dated October 23, 2000.