

Jack Phillips: *The Vietnam Experience/Civil War*

Jack Phillips: Okay, my name is--

Steven W. Franklin: Go ahead.

JP: My name is John Howard Phillips, Junior, but I go by Jack. I was born in Wheeling, Ohio County, on 13 March, 1943 at old North Wheeling Hospital. I live at 47 Dorothy Avenue. And I've lived on that street my entire life, although I was born and raised at 41 Dorothy Avenue. I'm a Presbyterian by faith, a Civil War reenactor, served in the United States Army from '66 to '72, Vietnam '67, '68, the TET Offensive. I was with the 23rd Infantry Division, 39th Infantry Delta Company, 18th Brigade. I fought a TET Offensive. I was a Zero Five Bravo Twenty, which is a radio operator, plus a One One Bravo, which is a light infantryman. I saw action at Duck Fo, Chu Li, Quang Tre, and Tam Ti. I laid in a field hospital at Chu Li for about four weeks, and then I went back into my rifle company. And I deroast home in May 7, 1968.

???: If you could, tell us about the neighborhood you grew up in. What your neighbors were like, what your friends were like. Just your basic life until your involvement in the war.

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TP: Okay. I was, like I said, I was born and raised on Dorothy Avenue in Elm Grove. It's, it was a real nice, quiet section of Elm Grove, which is a suburb of Wheeling, about five miles from Wheeling. And I, like I said, I still live on the same street I was born and raised on. The neighborhood had a lot of older folks in it when I was growing up, like the age of my grandparents. And, in fact, every house on that hill at one time or another I was inside as a child or as a young adult. And the neighbors were very nice, very quiet people. They were mostly ethnic people. Like, for instance, my ancestry is Slovak and Hungarian. There were Russians, Italians, people of that nature. Ukrainians, Russians, Germans. But the neighborhood I grew up with there was quite a few kids my age. I still have to

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laugh at myself that all those people that I grew up with are all gone and have their own lives, and I'm, I'm still on the same street I was born and raised on. But I think it's quite unique. I love my city, Wheeling. I'm very proud of Wheeling and Ohio County and Elm Grove. I'm very proud to be a West Virginian. And my experience

of being in the military gave me a more, a more perspective on what I thought of my hometown. A lot of times people would say, 'well, how does it feel to wear shoes since you're a hick from West Virginia' and things of that nature. And they couldn't understand that I didn't speak with a hick accent because we're up here in northern panhandle. And I was quite proud to say that I was a West Virginian, and I'm still very proud of it. I have a Civil War group that I started group, that I started in 1974, excuse me, the Seventh West Virginia Volunteer Infantry, Company D. We have about 23 to 25 rifles in the company. And women are also included that run the business part of it, and I command the troop part of it. The season's about over for reenacting now because of the weather. But I got interested in the Civil War when I was in the fourth grade looking through a history book and I saw this photograph of soldiers fighting. And I had little soldiers at home, and I just painted some of them gray and some of them blue and started fighting with them instead of Indians and soldiers fighting. And I start read all the books that I could on the Civil War from the time I was nine till my present age now. I have quite a collection of Civil War books

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that I've read over and over and over. And I still look for more, still buy more. I have about seven or eight uniforms, Union uniforms. I have one Confederate. I have four muskets, two pistols. I have all the camp equipment. We have all our tents and chairs and tables, everything that the Civil War soldier or officer would carry into the field. Like I said, I majored in history at West Liberty State College. And I wanted to be a history teacher, plus a football coach, but as you can see that has not transpired yet. But other than that, what really got me involved in the Civil War was just always wanting to be a soldier since the time I was a little boy. That or a race car driver or football player. And I can say this with some pride that I have tried all three that I have mentioned. Of course I must not have succeeded in too many of them because right now I'm not doing any of it except the reenacting part. But being over in Vietnam I would think of my hometown and Wheeling. And you took, you would take a lot of things for granted while you're home. You take for granted your parents, or your wife or your girlfriend or your sisters and brothers or your neighbors. You take for granted that asphalt on a street, sit down on a toilet, sit at a table, turn on a faucet with water. Over there it was nothing at all like that. The heat was unbearable. It was up to 120, 130 degrees at times.

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And the misquitoes and the bugs and the snakes and the wild animals and the people trying to kill you and, and the fear of unknown, the unpopular war. There were times eating sea rations that had the year I was born on

them. I was eating still sea rations from the Second World War. And there's times that we were, a time we were cut off out on a patrol. And our water had run out from our canteens. We were cut off, we thought we were goners. I remember me and three other guys pushing scum away from a shell crater and drinking the water out of a shell crater which had leeches hanging on our faces. One come out of the water. You take for granted a simple thing like toilet paper, toothbrush, toothpaste, a candy bar. You know you would give your eyeteeth for a glass of ice cold water. But I would think about all these things I've taken, took for granted here back at home. And I never realized how fortunate I was to be where I was. As you can see, I'm still living at the

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same place, and as far as I'm concerned this is the best place to live on this earth. And other than that, the people in Wheeling are friendly, which is known as The Friendly City. I wish that they would get more involved with the historical part of it and save some of our beautiful buildings and our streets. And people would get behind these projects that these people are trying to do and to, to make our city something more than just banks and parking lots. Because it tears my heart apart when I see them tearing down these old buildings. If they could only talk and tell you what, what went on. And go inside these rooms and, and these different things that go along around here that people just take for granted and don't appreciate. I don't say that you should have to go through a war to appreciate this, but maybe if you'd be away from Wheeling and go to another city or something, then you could actually understand and appreciate what we do have here at home.

???: What was your father's livelihood?

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JP: My father was a steelworker at Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel in Benwood. He put 38 years in a steel mill. He's also a veteran of World War II in the Pacific campaign, the 81st Infantry Division.

???: Do you think that had some bearing on your choice to go into the military?

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JP: Well, I-- Probably. I was always proud that he was a soldier. I, in fact, got a scholarship to military school. I went to military school for four years. It was Linsley Military Institute. And if it wasn't for that scholarship, I could have never afforded to go to that school. And to this day I consider it an honor and a privilege that I got to go to such a prestigious school. And I just say this with regret and sadness in my heart that it's not military anymore. But ever since I was a little boy, I always wanted, always playing soldier or playing football or want to race cars. And-- But the big desire, I think, most in my life was to be a soldier.

???: Do you remember how your father felt-- Maybe he was, maybe he was finished with the steel business before it practically left the valley. Do you remember his feelings about that?

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JP: When he went into the military? He went in day after Pearl Harbor. He went to enlist in the Navy. And they turned him down for flat feet. Next day he was drafted; he was put in the infantry. So he went, he went to the Pacific. He-- I think he had worked about close to a year in the steel mill when he was drafted. And then when he came home in '45 he went back to the steel mill. And then he retired.

???: And when did he retire?

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JP: In 1978.

???: During that time was the steel business doing pretty well in the valley?

JP: It was doing quite well. So were the coal mines and everything else. As you can see, there's nothing now.

???: Do you have any feelings about the, the coal and the steel business sort of on the wane?

JP: Well, my grandfather was a coal miner. My uncles and my kid brother's a coal miner in the Shoemaker Mine. And you have to take your hats off to men like that. They'll go down in the bowels of the earth and, and dig for coal. And to go underground like they do like moles. And it was always part of known as West Virginia. It was a steel mill state and a coal mining state. And it's a shame that there's nothing really left of it.

???: Where did you go to high school?

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JP: I went to Linsley Military Institute.

???: Oh.

JP: I graduated in '62.

Carrie Nobel Kline: Tell us more about those early years of growing up as a kid. What'd your family do? What was school like? As much detail as you can.

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JP: Well, I went to Bridge Street School from the first to the eighth grade, which was a stone's throw from my house. In fact, I could sit in the first grade, look out the window and see my mom hanging clothes on a Monday. And I went, like I said, from one through eighth grade. Then I received that scholarship to high school. I liked going to-- I didn't really like school when I was a kid. In fact, even when I was in college, I would get up in the

morning and kind of get sick to my stomach because of tests and things of that nature. And here I want to be a schoolteacher. But I enjoyed-- I had a good time going to school. Of course to play sports and of course history. But mathematics and science were not two of my very strong subjects. But I did squeak through somehow. The growing up had, you know, all kind of friends you played sports with or played army with on a hill and run around. Go to the shows on Saturday afternoons for a nickel or a dime, you know. And it was great. Those

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Saturday matinees. Watching *Gunsmoke* on TV on Saturday night and cowboy movies on Saturday mornings. And really it was a time that people say 'well, boy, you're,' you know, 'you're an old man.' But I would not trade the time that I grew up because the fact that when I grew up I grew up with rock and roll starting with Elvis Presley and Bill Haley. There was-- You didn't hear about dope. You didn't hear about AIDS. You didn't hear about all this discrimination and things that are going on. Trouble with teenagers now. No punishment in schools anymore. You look cross eyed at a teacher at school and they would, they'd strap you. At the military school you would get demerits. You would march punishment duty. And sometimes they would kind of throw you around a little bit. That's kind of like off the record. But it was strict, and I loved it. And if, I think, we have a little more discipline back in our schools, people will go to church more often and not take for granted.

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It's terrible to say again, but you take a lot of things for granted till you don't have them. And then when they're gone and you can't get them back or you're trying to get back to them, then you appreciate it more. I, I always thought of that, you know. I took so many things for granted. In fact, I'm going through a trial in my life right now that I took for granted and I'm suffering right now for it. And I won't go into detail with that, it's sort of personal. But you don't know what you have until it's gone or it's, it's on the other side of the door and you can see it, but you can't get to it. But growing up, like I said, I'm glad that I grew up when I did. I had a lot of friends. Of course they're all gone now. They're either moved away or whatever. And-- But I would not have trade anytime or place. I would rather have grown up in Wheeling than any place on this earth. This is, this is a wonderful place.

???: What are some of the events of Wheeling that you remember growing up?

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JP: The most important event of my life, and to this day, is the Wheeling Christmas parade. I look forward to that with so much anticipation. Our Civil War group marched in it last year for the first time. And we're going,

we're supposed to march again in it this year. The, the excitement of coming home from work or from school. And, and-- Well, they have it in the evenings now. It used to be on Saturday after, Saturday mornings or Saturday afternoons. But I like this Friday night because you come home from work or you come home from school, whatever you're doing, and you run home. And you get cleaned up, and you run into town and you see all the anticipation of all the people sitting around with little things on the sidewalk. Like cushions and blankets and-- To watch it it puts you in the Christmas spirit. You know Thanksgiving's coming up, then Christmas. And-- But to actually

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participate in the parade like we did last year with our Civil War group, I consider that an honor. It was great that you got to march, and you hear people yelling your name from on the sidelines or something. It makes you feel kind of good. And it's your unit would get some exposure. You were on TV the next day with Channel 7 and things of that nature. It was great. Other than that, that was one of the highlights that I really liked. The other thing is the Oktoberfest up at Oglebay Park. That's another wonderful thing to get to go up there even if you don't participate. Just to walk around in the fall to see the beautiful leaves and the trees. And Halloween's coming up, one of my favorite holidays. Other than that, the, the competition where we had the different schools in the city would-- The school's consolidated now, but it was a great rivalry when you went to Linsley to play Wheeling and Triadelphia and Central and Warwood. Things of that nature was, it was-- You had more-- I think there was more school pride. You had, even if you didn't do too great in subjects in school, you still have pride. It-- You go to this school and we go to that school, we're going to play your, play you tonight, and we're going to kick your but or something like that. It was a great rivalry. Our

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parks. The city itself. All kind of things that you just really, really like. But the main thing that I wanted to say is that the Christmas parade was really one of my favorite things. Another one is right across the street there at Independence Hall. I just get goose pimples when I step into that building. You go up into that courtroom to see where our state was born on June 20, 1863. That's a great big thrill for me, and it's an honor and everything that that building is there. And god bless the people that had enough gumption to want to restore it to its, its natural beauty and to, to have it stand for what it really stood for. I can remember when there was a liquor store in there. And there was a barbershop. And there was an attorney's office. It was just a building that was being not appreciated for what it stood for. And now it, it stands out like that, and I'm very

proud of that too.

???: In the year or two before you got involved in the war, do you remember what the political climate was like in Wheeling?

JP: About the Vietnam War?

???: Yes.

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JP: Read about. I remember reading about it in our history class at military school. I never heard of Vietnam. And I just put it in the back of my mind. I'm not going to go there. Then when I went into the military there were five guys in my company that were picked to go to Vietnam, or chosen to be picked by the, the administration. Whoever was running the military there. Five names were picked, and I was number three out of my company of about 350 men in our AIT company, which is Advanced Infantry Training. And I remember walking around, that was at Fort Dix, New Jersey. I remember walking around in a company area that night looking up at the sky and saying, "Why, dear god, why me. There's thousands of other soldiers on this, at this fort, why was I picked?" But I was picked to go, or chosen to go, and I went. And I did my duty to my utmost. To this day I don't know how I came home alive. I honestly don't know how I made it through that place alive. Because I've seen scenes and suffering and pain that I couldn't even describe to you or write it down with a piece of paper and pencil because it's, it's in your head. It's branded in your brain. You try to forget about it. You try to go on with your life, but there's different things that bring the war back up. Sometimes it's a summer rain. You can smell the jungle. Helicopter flies by, and it reminds you of Hueys flying into a hot LZ. And they're going to come back and pick you up or you're going to go back in a body

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bag or you're going to be just left there or whatever, you know. Different thoughts come about it. I go to my support group on Thursday nights up here in Wheeling. It's a great help, and we have some great counselors. And they help us out tremendously. The political view of it, when we were in basic training at Fort Jackson and then sent to Fort Dix and then I got orders to go to Vietnam, they try to psyche you up a little bit by telling you that you're fighting for a democracy. That you're ... coming to a country that wants to become a democracy. Or you're stopping communism before it gets over here. They kind of like, I don't want to use a term, but I will, brain wash you to make you, to, to make a, a fighter out of you. A killer, to be truthful. A war is nothing but murder on a mass scale, and you're allowed to do it. And my biggest concern was that the last five days I was in

combat over there, our position was run over, run by NVA regulars. At Tam Ki they came right over our perimeter. And we were in hand-to-hand combat with them to an extent until they were pushed back. And then I got my orders that day to go home, and I'm still fighting that day. And 37 hours later, I'm standing here in Pittsburgh International Airport looking at my parents. And my mind was from here to

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there yet, you know. And you never did get to wind down properly. And a lot of people don't understand that. They tell you to try to forget it, but when something you see in which you've done and was, were exposed to, it's, it's pretty hard, to an extent, to try to forget about it. You can put it out of your mind, but it will always be there. And at times there's things that you see or smell or hear that brings it back. And I have suffered from flashbacks and different things of that nature. But it's just like that with probably about the majority of veterans from other wars also. But some people can handle it different than others.

???: How do you think your father's experience compares with your own?

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JP: Well, he was in action a little longer than I was. He was in action for 41 months. I was only in action for 12. But what, between-- The World War II was-- I don't think any war is popular, but the country really backed the troops. In our situation the country kind of like-- I don't know, I don't want to say anything against my country because I love my country and I'd fight for it again if I had to. It was an unpopular war. Very many-- There was a lot of protesting and-- When I came home I still had three and a half months left. They sent me to Fort Mead, Maryland. And then I was in my company there for about two days, and the next thing I know, they had me in Washington, DC, and in Baltimore fighting riots. So you're fighting Vietnamese, and a few months later or weeks later, you're fighting your own people throwing rocks at you. And it was, it was confusing. Went back to school.

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I was discriminated against at times by some of the professors. I won't, I won't mention any names. But I won't even mention the institute I went to. But it was discriminating. Calling you baby killers and if you want to be a schoolteacher, they never want their children in your class because you people are all crazy. It just was a very unpopular war. It was a war that-- It was at the wrong place at the wrong time with the wrong people, I guess. I don't know-- The Vietnamese should have fought their own civil war. No one came over and helped us fight our Civil War, although the French and English were kind of eyeing the Confederacy if they made a big victory

at Gettysburg, which they didn't. But it was an unpopular war. Something that maybe we should never have gotten involved in, but we did. And it was handled wrong. If they would have let us alone and fought the war like we were capable of fighting it, it would have been, it would have been over in really not, I wouldn't say no time, but it would have been over and we would have won.

???: Do you think there's a significant psychological experience between what you went through in the Vietnam War and what your father went through fighting the Japanese in the Second World War?

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JP: When, when my dad came home, and I would say the majority of World War II veterans, they were brought home on troop ships. As many as-- They might have been at sea for three weeks, two weeks to three weeks, maybe longer. Had time to wind down. In my case, I was taken out of a combat situation and taken town to Kamron Bay and changed my uniform and put on a plane and flown back to the United States. Didn't have any time to wind down. Didn't have any counseling, anything like that. Maybe some of the boys got it, but I know majority of us didn't. And it was, it was, like I said, an unpopular war. It was a war that no one really understood until the veterans started-- Some of our guys have committed, many of our guys have committed suicide. They have drinking problems, drug problems. A lot of them are in prison. A lot of them are on the streets.

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Very fortunately I'm very fortunate to have a mother and father and a wife and somebody that people that understand you to an extent. But the experience with me, I'll just use myself as an example, is it just didn't have time to unwind. And I handled it for a while, then after a while it came back. I got over it again, and it comes back. But I'm getting therapy and counseling, and it helps out tremendously. But I think that any, any person that's put into a combat situation, they react differently. You, you try to survive. While we were over there, we weren't, didn't seem the Vietnamese cared who was fighting for them. You did the fighting and they were in the background reaping the fruits. I was wearing combat boots that had black electrical tape holding my soles onto

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them. And a lot of these ... soldiers were walking around with tailor made fatigues and jungle boots. And I'm still wearing state side combat boots with tape holding them on till I was issued a pair. And it was a place that they just didn't seem to care. Some of them did. I'm not saying all of them are like that, but they just think they

should have fought their own war. Maybe we shouldn't have gotten involved. Or if we did, they should have let us alone and let us fight it the way we could have won it. The soldier didn't get defeated over there. We didn't lose that many battles. We were-- It was a type of war that where you got to a point that it was just attrition. They'd make us take, like for instance, we were fighting for this Hill 63 up in Quang Tre. You'd go up there and fight, take casualties and suffer and die and wounded. They'd pull you back after you took it, and then the Vietnamese, the NVA or the Viet Kong would come back up and take it. And a couple days later, you'd go back and do the same thing over again. It was like senseless. It was just like playing chess or something.

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You just-- But you're playing with lives on both sides, you know. I, I had a hatred for those people over there. But you had to respect them. They were doing, told what they were supposed to do. They were soldiers also. And it was just something that, to my experience from talking to Korean veterans and World War II veterans, they had a little more time to wind down. Maybe not the Korean veteran as much because that was a, a forgotten war. Those fellows suffered terribly too. But not saying that World War II vets-- I was up the V. A. Hospital about four weeks ago. And I hope to god I never have to be put up there because I see veterans up there from World War II yet suffer. And it's, it's terrible. No one should have to go through a war because somebody in political power or country decides that they want something over in another country. They don't like what's going on so they send some

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poor soul over that has nothing to do with it, don't even know what's going on. And he has to do the fighting, you know. It's, it's-- To me it's senseless. Just like our American Civil War. Why, it got so that all the ... always liking, wanting to be a soldier. But to fight a war because somebody wants to keep somebody in bondage or somebody doesn't like your state's rights or you're getting a higher tariff on this or imports or exports or whatever. And then to go into something like to fight a war over and, and cost lives, young boys that never had a chance to grow up and didn't even know what life was, and they're gone. And when I came home I was approached by some people that I knew. They didn't even know where I was. They asked me 'Where'd you get the suntan? How come you lost so much weight?' And they didn't know where I was. And you know that when you're home and you get up in the morning, everything is just going on like it is now. Everything, people just going to work or going to school or going shopping. And there's your bros over there dying. And nobody knows or don't

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care. It, it-- You get a bitter feeling at times. And then you get in sometimes into a shell and you don't know what to do. And they say you have mental problems or you're, you're weird or crazy, you know. They just don't understand at times. But other than that I'm-- There was a time that I was ashamed to say that I was a veteran. And now I'm very proud to say that I'm a veteran. I, I served my country. I think every male should serve his country. Not in a war, but they should serve their country in some capacity, whether it be military or something else. Because it teaches you values. It teaches you to respect your elders. It teaches you to respect yourself and your peers and your family. And to have pride in your country and pride in your state, pride in your city, pride in yourself.

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The military teaches you a lot of things. They take you out of an environment you grew up in, and they put you in their own environment. And they make you, actually make you conform into what they want you to be. And that is, is some kind of a machine, a fighter to defend your country. And if it wasn't for veterans, it wasn't for soldiers, it wasn't for Marines, and Air Force and Navy and Coast Guard, we couldn't have this beautiful country we live in. For a prime example, look at all the people trying to get here from Haiti and Cuba and different places. They all want to come to the United States, you know. And it's the greatest country on the earth. ???: Do you have memories of what it was like in those last few months within your family, within your neighborhood, before you went overseas?

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JP: Well, I got my notice when I went in the service in September. And I gave a two weeks notice to my employment so that I could take a little time off for myself. And I rode my motorcycle. I hung around with some of my buddies. And just tried to take all everything that I could because I didn't know what kind of situation I was going to be put into. I thought well maybe by some chance I won't have to go to Vietnam. But it's like everybody tells you, plus in the personal situation I'm in with now, you could expect the worse and hope for the best. And that's the way I took it. And I thought to myself when I got that notice or my papers were cut to go to Vietnam I said it was in, all in the hands of the lord. I was chosen to do that, and I was going to go and do the best that I could. And that's what I did. And I just tried those two weeks prior to going into the service, I tried to enjoy life to its fullest, you know. Going shopping. Ride my motorcycle. Going to a movie. Seeing my friends. And just taking in life as much as possible, not knowing what to expect.

???: Where did you shop in Wheeling? What theaters did you go to? Where did you ride your motorcycle?

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JP: Well, movies, of course one was right across the street where Straub's is, there was the Liberty. And right by Independence Hall was the State. And there was the Virginia, the Colonial, the Rex, the Victoria, the Court, the Capital. Beautiful movie houses we had. Out in Elm Grove all the kids went to the Princess in Elm Grove. And it was just, it was great. I remember going to a show for a dime, into town for 50 cents. Then when they raised it to 90 cents, you go oh, my golly, 90 cents to go to a show, you know. Shopped at The Hub, Stone and Thomas, Murphy's, L. S. Good, Stifel and Taylor. They had all kind of beautiful, beautiful stores here in Wheeling. Anywhere you wanted to go were stores. Little stores, dry goods stores in Elm Grove and different places. I rode my motorcycle mostly through Oglebay Park, up and down Route 2, over on the Island, over in Ohio, over into Pennsylvania and things of that nature. And-- But the, but the movie houses were, were quite numerous here in Wheeling. And it was great to go. Now you have, you have to go out to the mall. You got to fork out about seven bucks to get in to see a show, you know. It's, it's just outrageous at times. But I, I--

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Those were the fond memories of going to a movie on a Friday night. Thumbing into Wheeling with a buddy or two and then going to the Liberty for 50 cents and seeing a movie. Then going up the street to 12th Street, get a hot dog and a French fries and a Coke for like 50 cents or something like that, you know. Then thumb back to Elm Grove. Or if you had enough money left to catch a bus and come back out to Elm Grove.

???: If you could, would you take us through the chronological personal history of your enlistment, your combat activity and your return home to Wheeling?

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JP: Well, like I said, I went in the Army in September of '66. I had basic training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. And we were down there for about nine to ten weeks for basic training. And then they give you, give you a battery of tests and you, these tests that you take signify what you're most adaptable to in military service. Then basic training you're trained as an infantryman, and you go through riflery, target detection. You go through the place where they throw chemical agents at you like gas. They put you through this building and they shut all the doors. It doesn't have any windows. And they make you take your gas mask off, and they just pour gas in there. Give you your service number and your name and unit. And you come out with burning eyes and watery eyes and coughing and hacking. And then they take you on a rifle range and qualify with the M14 or

the M16 or whatever weapon they want, want you to use. And then my schooling or my test came back that I was adaptable to, most qualified to be a radio operator. I went to Fort Dix, New Jersey, for advanced training. And I was schooled in Morse Code and voice and learning how to use different radios and setting up different antennas. And then when I got my orders for Vietnam, I was put in the 23rd Infantry Division, and I was a radio man, which doesn't mean that I get to hide in the background somewhere. I had to put one on my back and carry it along with the other equipment. And a lot of times Charlie would like to take you out first because you can bring a lot of smoke on him with that little radio. You can call in air strikes, artillery or more infantry support. And my life expectancy in combat was four point one seconds, being a radio man. And after surviving Vietnam and coming home, I went to Fort Mead, Maryland. And was at Fort Mead for three and a half months. And like I said, most of it was on riot duty in Baltimore and, and Washington, DC. And then I wanted to reenlist in the, reenlist again and stay in and make the Army my career, but they guaranteed me another tour in Vietnam, and I thought one, one time over there was enough for me. I could see what was going on over there and seeing what was going back on over here in the states about the unpopular war. And I, I didn't reenlist. I wanted come back, came back home and I went back to

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West Liberty State College to finish my education, which I did not do for some other reasons I won't mention. And went back to my job and here I am now.

???: When you were overseas during your days of combat or time out of combat, when you had thoughts of home, where would you be? What would bring on those thoughts and what would you think of?

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JP: Well, for instance, Christmas Eve. A couple days before Christmas Eve, I'd say about the 22nd of December, we were up at Quang Tre. And there was a little pine tree, a baby pine tree, I don't know how it was. It was out beyond our perimeter. And the bro I loafed with most over there with, he was from St. Louis, Missouri. His name was Dennis Best. We crawled through our consitina wire, and we went out and we're digging up this little tree. All of a sudden you saw dirt flying around you. You hear like bees buzzing. We were being shot at. So we pulled the tree up and drug it back. And we decorated it with Vietnamese corn and pins from hand grenades, sea ration cans. We decorated a little tree. And I remember that Christmas Eve we put a star with Christmas lights on a star of one of our trucks. And we cranked up a generator and had the lights come on. A bunch of us in our platoon stood around a truck and sang Christmas carols. And we got chastised for that because the

Vietnamese started to mortar us, so we had to quit singing and turn out the Christmas lights.

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And I'll be thinking that time, that Christmas Eve of my mother and dad would be having their Christmas Eve party for my mom's family. And all my cousins and uncles and aunts would be there, and that I was over here. And I would think about that. And Thanksgiving, you know, you get to open up a can of sea rations or something. And everybody's having turkey and dressing and all the fixings that go with that. But that's some of the things you look forward to to come home to. And that gives you inspiration and a will to, to hang in there, you know. We called ourselves grunts over in Vietnam, and we always said that a grunt could take anything. Whatever they dished out to us, we could take. And we had to be survivors or I wouldn't be here talking to you right now. And many things, you know. Like the Fourth of July you would think about what's going home. Fireworks and Patterson. The fireworks in Wheeling here, you know. That Christmas and Memorial Day, I wondered if the veterans were thinking about us guys that are over here now, you know. Different, different all kind of things.

???: When you got back Wheeling from the war, where did you live? Where you employed? What did you do? Did you get in touch with old friends? What was your neighborhood like? What changes did you notice about Wheeling?

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JP: Well, one of the changes I noticed was that the tunnel was open, the Wheeling Tunnel. The neighborhood, mom and dad had like a welcome home party for me and a lot of my relatives came. Some of the neighbors came. The first thing I did when I got home, I went to church and thanked the lord that I made it home. And went back to my old job after a month, at Scott Lumber Company. And I stayed there for-- Before Vietnam, before the Army, and during the time and after the Army I was there for a total of about 17 years. And then I went on to the police department in Benwood for six years and one year in Triadelphia. But the neighborhood was all the same. Some of the people were moved away. There was some new neighbors, but the houses were all the same, the yards. I remember coming home and seeing girls in miniskirts, and that was a big thrill. I remember watching seeing what guys were dressed like. What kind of shoes were they were wearing and different things like that so I could run home and the first thing I did, went to Tom McCann's up here in Wheeling bought myself a pair of wing tips, which, incidentally, I still have. Of course they're

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out of date, but I still have them, you know. And what records were popular and what movies were playing and different things like that. It was just good to be home. They still had the-- Wheeling Ironmen were still here for about one more year. Got to see them play another year. Then they had these Ohio Valley Panthers came in. I, I actually tried to go out for that team, but I was too old! I guess I just didn't have it in me anymore to be a defensive halfback so I didn't pursue that. But it was just, it was great to be home. I mean I could see different -- There were some businesses that were gone, there were some other ones. Everything was still kind of booming. They were tearing up Elm Grove to put the Interstate 70 in. They wiped out all those beautiful homes, and they brought down our church, Stone Church, and all the old Princess Theater by right. The Confectionery. All the places that we knew, Dairy Queen, as you knew as kids. All the little gas stations were all gone. Scott Lumber had to be torn down and moved. But those were the big changes that I saw.

???: Any questions?

CNK: Talk about the, the Civil War activities, how they fit in with the rest of what you were doing.

JP: Oh, the--

CNK: How your involvement really gelled.

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JP: During Vietnam too?

CNK: Whenever your Civil War activities were.

JP: When they started or--

CNK: Yeah, more about fourth grade and just take us from there.

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JP: Okay, fourth grade, like I said, I was looking at a history book, and I saw that picture and it just fascinated me. And I got tied up ... I would start reading. There was a little library in Elm Grove where the Waco Cable is now was called Hoag-Davis Drug Store. There was a library on the second floor. And I remember crawling up those steps at the age of nine, ten, eleven years old. I read every Civil War book they had. They sent me into Wheeling where, down by 20th Street, now where it used to be. And I read everything in there.

CNK: But why?

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JP: A fascination with it. I don't know. It was a, like being addicted to tobacco or something. I just got involved in it, and it fascinated me, all the aspects of the Civil War. Why it was fought. The Civil War was fought for,

people think for slavery. It started out to preserve the Union and state's rights. For instance, the Battle of Gettysburg, that was the, the high point of the Confederacy, which they ... If the south would have won that battle, and they almost did, probably France and England would have come out on the side of the Confederacy. And then they'd send troops over for the Union army to fight them also. But the Battle of Gettysburg showed, proved it was a place for the, it was going to either be one United States on this continent or two, two countries in this one continent. And it, to me, the tragedy of this war-- I've read stories of families that were devastated. I mean there was a woman that lost five sons. Abraham Lincoln wrote her a personal letter. There was a soldier was found sleeping on guard duty, and he was sentenced to be shot. And his mother went to Lincoln, and Lincoln pardoned him. And he hadn't slept for days. And me myself in Vietnam, I went for five days

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without sleep; we were constantly under attack. And I know what it is to be tired and hungry and thirsty and scared. And it just that, it was a war that, I think it was-- I know for a fact that the Civil War was the last of the ancient war and beginning of modern warfare. It was a war where civilians suffered, and private property and industries were torn up. It was where wars were fought with new technology, the repeating rifle, the rifle musket that would have the bullet go out and be more accurate, more, more yardage. The soldiers were still fighting shoulder to shoulder in Napoleonic formations and well, well aimed rifles with rifling in them and cannon with rifling would just devastate them. And it was the first where submarines were used. They used torpedoes. They had a machine gun, some sort of a ..., a coffee grinder was like a Gatling gun. The repeating rifle. Some of the soldiers like General Buford could see that cavalry charges were, were something of the past.

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He used his cavalry as mechanized infantry. He got his soldiers into a place. One man out of four held the horses, the other three went in a line and fought as infantry. There was none of this cavalry charges anymore like a-- Of course there was at Brandy Station. It was a big cavalry fight right prior to Gettysburg. But it was the last of ancient warfare. ... modern. In fact, Winston Churchill said it was the last war fought between gentlemen. That you could fight and kill each other. Say you were a Confederate and I was a Union and we're trying to kill each other. And we're both wounded. Then you're trying to help me, and I'm trying to help you. There was no more animosity. Up at old North Wheeling Hospital they had Civil War soldiers wounded. And some were Confederate that were brought here, and they laid them side by side. There was no more animosity. Oh, there was still talk and some, not, not all cases were like that, but the majority. There was no more fight in

you. You were just a human being with another human being. And you were hurt and they were hurt, and you just tried to help out as much as you could.

???: Tell us what you discovered in your own readings or in your own conversations with people about Wheeling's involvement in the Civil War and what influence the Civil War also had on Wheeling.

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JP: Well, Wheeling was like a gateway to the west. We had the Suspension Bridge, the Ohio River. And it was a staging area for a lot of, for the armies that fought out on the western theater of operations and on eastern operations. And the army-- The Potomac of course was on the eastern part of the operations here. And of course the army, the Cumberland army, the Ohio army, the Tennessee over across the Mississippi River. We had the B & O Railroad. We had industries. We had coal mines. We had the river traffic with, with riverboats. We had the La Belle plants, glassworks. We had nail factories, coal mines. It was, it was industrious city. It was a gateway to get across this, to this bridge to, to get to Ohio. And it was, it was a staging area for, for soldiers, like I said, going from different parts of the war to the front. The Custom House had, for instance, I think this is correct, that they had a, a arsenal down in the basement somewhere. And there were a lot of southern sympathizers here in Wheeling. In fact, they formed a company, and they were known as the

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Shriver Grays. A man by the name of Shriver, he's buried out at Greenwood Cemetery, and they would go and train out in West Liberty and Triadelphia and Valley Grove out there. And they went south as a company, and they became Company G of the 27th Virginia Infantry, which was in Stonewall Jackson's brigade. And the importance of this city, us becoming a state. This was known as the, this was know as the northern capital of Virginia against Richmond and the counties that were loyal to the Union. We were, of course up here in this panhandle. And of course down around Charleston and below there were sympathizers everywhere I guess. But we became a state. So it was important for the Confederates too to try to cause havoc up here. In fact the, another regiment

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was formed here. And Wheeling was the 6th West Virginia Infantry, and they were formed for the sole purpose of protecting the Ohio River, the B&O Railroad and the Suspension Bridge and, and watching what's going around here in Wheeling. They never actually fought as a unit. They fought in companies, but not as a, as a thousand man regiment. The, the--

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JP: Like I said before, the 7th West Virginia was known as the banner regiment of all the Civil War regiments that performed here in Wheeling, which were 17 regiments. They fought with the army, the Potomac. They fought in all the major campaigns with the army, the Potomac. They were at, they were at Rich Mountain. They were at Antietam. They were at Gettysburg, Chancellorsville. They were at Fredericksburg. They were at Appomattox, Petersburg. They fought at, at the Battle of Sailor's Creek. And then they marched in the Grand Review in Washington, DC, at the end of hostilities. And it was the banner regiment. In fact, the lieutenant colonel that commanded them at Gettysburg is buried in Moundsville. And there's three soldiers from the 7th West Virginia buried around him. And original colonel of the 7th West Virginia was Colonel Snyder, but he was wounded at Gettys, correction, at Antietam in September 17, 1862, so Lieutenant Colonel Lockwood took over the regiment. And he had them at, he had them at Gettysburg. At Gettysburg the 7th West Virginia suffered 47 casualties, of which 11 of them were killed. And they were in the second corps, third division, first brigade under Samuel Sprigg Carroll. They were brigaded with the 4th and 8th

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Ohio and the 14th Indiana. They were known as the Gibraltar Brigade. At Gettysburg I think there was only about 252 of them left. And like I said, they suffered 47 casualties. They helped repulse Oak's and Avery's Confederate charge on East Cemetery Hill on July 2 at Gettysburg. And there are three, four monuments to the 7th West Virginia at Gettysburg. The beautiful monument of a Civil War soldier on East Cemetery Hill, two markers where they hit the Confederates and another marker where they went down and stopped and ended their, ended their attack. And then in Ziegler's Grove there is another marker to the 7th West Virginia where they were brought back and put in line during Pickett's charge.

???: What areas in Wheeling have a reference to Civil War history? What were they called then and what is in their location now if you know of any of these things?

(027)

JP: You mean the histories of the Civil regiments or the archives or anything like that?

???: Buildings and homes of people and that sort of thing.

JP: Buildings and homes, of course, of course Oglebay Park stands out because it was, it was there. All these new, these homes up in North and Center Wheeling and South Wheeling, there's very numerous homes that were here during the Civil War. One way you can tell a pre-Civil War home in Wheeling is the double chimneys.

If there's a chimney coming up the side of the building that's doubled, it was there prior to the Civil War. And Stone and Thomas was here in 1847. And of course if you look up at, like the old Center Market, they sold slaves up here where the plaza is up by Stone and Thomas down at the old Center Market they didn't. The 7th West Virginia met in a building right down here by Center Market right across from Coleman's Fish Market. And they had Union rallies and things of that nature. These other buildings here in Wheeling, what I think the Historical Society should do or the Friends of Wheeling or whatever, like they do at Gettysburg. There's a plaque that you can put on the side of your building here or side of your house that says 'here during the Civil War.' I always thought that would be nice for people to put that for a minimal sum of money. Maybe the state could buy it or the government could furnish something and put those on the buildings and say that when people come to the Capital Music Hall or come to see the city of lights and the Christmas parade and that, and they could walk around these tours that we have. Say 'wow, this building was here during the Civil War,' you know. It was something. That was always my big thing, that if this, if this wall could talk to me or this brick could say something to me or this tree or the something that could tell me what went on or who was here and what they said. But of

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course I live in a world of the past, you know. I'm, I should have been born back a hundred years instead of when I was. But it's, speaking about the Civil War, ... Gettysburg there's a grave of a soldier that was killed at Gettysburg on the first day's battle. He was a private in the 95th New York Infantry, Company F. And his name was John H. Phillips, the same as mine. I'd have been the same age. He was born in 1843; I was born in 1943. It's just, it's ironic that I was up Gettysburg this past September by myself, and I stood there, looked at my name on that, and it gives you a funny feeling, you know. And I went down immediately, and I bought an American flag, and I stuck behind a little headstone. And what makes you sad and I don't know if anybody appreciates that, is all the tombstones that say unknown, unknown. They not only didn't know the soldier's name, didn't even know what regiment he was from or what state. It was just somebody was laying there, you know. They didn't know who he was. And I saw some markers that says 'five unknown U.S. soldiers,' 'three unknown U.S. soldiers.' It makes you appreciate what you, what you really have, and you just take it for granted. And to an extent at times I still do. And like I said, I'm going through a very personal affair in my life right now, and I took a lot of things for granted and I'm suffering for it.

???: In reference again to the Civil War history and Wheeling's involvement in that history, you mentioned the

Custom House?

(065)

JP: Yes.

???: What stands where the Custom House did stand? Or does it still stand there?

JP: It's standing right across the street in the same place that it was. And it's, it's a, like I said, it's a magnificent building. And at times I'll just come around.

CNK: Excuse me.

???: I'm sorry. Okay.

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JP: For instance, like I said, the 7th West Virginia Infantry, along with the 1st and the 2nd and the 3rd, the 8th, all of them trained on Wheeling Island on the north end of the Island. Last year, 1993, our Civil War group, the 7th West Virginia, we put on a living history and encampment on Wheeling Island on the original camping grounds, which were still there. It's up by the marina, up by the Aetnaville Bridge. And we put on a living history and a Union encampment there last year. And it was the 130th birthday of West Virginia. And we got a fairly good, good turnout on it, and we marched from Wheeling Island, the direct route that the regiments would have marched, and we marched down across the Suspension Bridge down Main Street to the Independence Hall here. And we had a 35 gun salute, and we had speakers. And we were, we had probably about 40 some soldiers marching. And of course I was a captain, and I had a major marching beside me out in front. And I would glance over my shoulder, and I would see the 35 star, six by six American flag that our regiment has, our regimental flag of the 7th West Virginia, the drums, the fifers, and a tramp of those soldiers in their Union uniforms, their equipment and the ladies dressed up in their period gowns and things like that. I had tears that streamed down my face from the time I hit the Suspension Bridge till it was over over there. And it was 93 degrees, and I had goose pimples. I was freezing in that woolen uniform. But that's the thrill I had because that had not happened for 130 years, and I was part of it. And to me that will always be in my memory. I'll never forget that. And in this past

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year we had it again, but we had it on a Sunday. And I think we made a mistake by having it on a Sunday. Plus it was hotter this year than it was last year, and we didn't have that great of a turnout. But still it was a thrill to march down and have that ceremony again. And some of these buildings that are standing, like I said,

the Custom House and different places like Stone and Thomas, old North Wheeling Hospital, Linsley, where I went to school. There-- Linsley was up here at the medical building, and then it was on 14th, or on 12th Street by, across from the Court Theater by First Presbyterian Church. That used to be Linsley also. Those buildings are still standing. And if people would go over on Wheeling Island and just walk where that marina is and just know that all the thousands of men that went there and trained and went off to war. And there's a plaque over (099)

there now that we, our unit got from Charleston, it's a brown plaque and it says 'Camp Carlisle,' which was the name of the encampment, Civil War, 'Union Civil War training center.' It stands right there on the main drag going right there on the Island. And Camp Carlisle was first known as Camp Logan and then Camp Carlisle, then Camp Willie. It had three names, but it mostly goes by Carlisle.

???: Can you give us a reference where the fields are that you trained in from the Civil War besides the Wheeling Island?

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JP: Mostly, mostly they probably had militia companies would train on farms. But most of the drilling was done over on the Island. There were two streets that weren't there now. There's houses there, but the, the majority of the, the ground is there. And you walk on it. Of course there's been floods and there's been other things, but still it's still the same ground. And they had militia companies they probably trained, but mostly the Union soldiers trained over there. They weren't all, not all from West Virginia. They came from Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Connecticut, Pennsylvania. They were all mustered, most of them were mustered in over there and sent off to, to different parts of the front. But other than that, I would say that except for the Shriver Grays that snuck out towards West Liberty and Triadelphia, all the training was done on the Island.

???: Any questions?

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CNK: Yeah. Talk a little bit more about the relationship between the wars for you. You know, why, what's the relationship now? What does the Civil War mean after coming back from Vietnam?

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JP: It still hasn't changed since probably the time of the caveman. You kill or be killed. Technology wise, you get shot with a rifle. Today it makes a nice, clean hole in you. In the Civil War it was a lead conical shaped ball that, we had a muzzle, the rifle had a muzzle velocity of 960 feet per second. So it, when it hit you, it's lead, it

flattened out on impact. That's why there were so many gaping wounds and shattered arms that were amputations of arms and legs. In the Civil War you were shot in the head, stomach or chest they just, they didn't know what to do. They just kind of probed around a little bit and let you die if you didn't survive. I've seen guys that were hit in my rifle company that, I mean they were in and out that quick if, if a medivac could get in there to them and could get your life

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saved. The medical technology wasn't advanced. They didn't have always time to wash their hands, and infections would set in. And they were holding scalpels in their teeth while they were probing and amputating. And then they'd just wipe it off on their pants and go to the next patient, and germs would set in, things like that. But wars, to me, it just boils down to one thing. You either kill or be killed. And you just try to survive. Over in Nam it got to the point that we weren't fighting for the Vietnamese. It got to the point we weren't fighting for our country; we were fighting for ourselves. We just wanted to make it out of there. You were fighting day by day just to survive and get ... and get out of there and then come home, you know. But a war is a war. I mean no matter how you're killed, you're killed, you know. Whether you get shot or you get blown up or you get machine gunned or you get bombed or you get mortared or whatever. It's still the same thing, is it you take a life or your life is taken. And it, it will continue like that, I would imagine, until they decide it's not the solution to the problems of the world. But I used to have to-- Guys would laugh at me over in Vietnam because I

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would say, "Hey look, today's July 1, first day's battle at Gettysburg." And here we're fighting in a fire fight, you know. "You're nuts," you know. Okay, I'm nuts, but it still is. Today's December 13 is Fredericksburg, you know, which is ... And I-- Just, just fascinated, but when I wanted to be a soldier, I didn't want killing. I just wanted to be a soldier, and that's a part of a soldier's job is to fight. And when you see people torn apart, it's unrecognizable. You, you stop and think that 'hey, if Washington gets mad at Moscow or Peking gets mad at Seoul, hey, you guys that are behind the desk, you go out and put on some boxing gloves and do it. Don't call the rest of the people to go out and do it. There's so much suffering even with the civilian population that you, that you just destroy. You just destroy everything or be destroyed.

???: You probably have had a lot of time to think about this, and forgive the obvious, but in what way do you think the, the psychology of war and the thoughts of home of the Civil War soldier and the Vietnam soldier were the same and different?

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JP: Well, over a hundred years ago, there are values and way of living was more, not as complex as today. Majority of the troops probably weren't as educated as the troops of our, our day now. But still there was always the thoughts of home, looking forward to mail call, to come back alive from a patrol or an ambush, to fight at a fire fight and survive and come back. You knew it was over for a while. You didn't know how long. It might have only been for a day, maybe only for hours and you go back again. But you know you survived one, and you were thankful for that, you know. And you knew what-- You try to pick up your ... well I did this to survive, maybe I'll do this to survive some more and add something else to it, you know. But a soldier, no matter what, what era, what everything, it's, it's to get home alive and in one piece and get on with your life. But I would imagine that it would, was like that with the Civil War soldiers. A lot of them went off to war because they thought it was the thing to do. They thought it was a way to get off of a farm or get out of their jobs. And they were getting out of the city or out of the suburbs. Was a chance to move around and see something was going on. They all thought the war was only going to last like a couple days to a week.

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It lasted almost five years. And it got to the point that it was just-- When Grant took over the northern armies it was a, it was a war of attrition. We had more people than the south had, and you just wore them down because there was nothing left of them. But it's, speaking for myself and probably the majority of guys, it's just to survive and come home regardless of what era it is or what year it is or what war it is. You just want to survive and come home.

???: What thoughts do you have about Wheeling's future in reference to your experience with Wheeling's past?

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JP: Well, my personal view is that they're just, at times they're just tearing down buildings that should be, try to be renovated and tried to be fixed up and made something out of them. They tore down that Pythian Building down Center Wheeling, you know. A beautiful building that, it was probably had a, I heard it had a bowling alley in it. It had offices in it. It had a theater in it. And they just tore it down, and it's just nothing but a, just empty ground now. They tore down schools like Wheeling High School, Webster, Washington. I mean they're try to consolidate everything. The businesses have gone away from Wheeling. There's just nothing here. And it hurts because I don't want to leave. Even if I was 20 years old, I still wouldn't want to leave and go somewhere else. This is home to me and I appreciate it and I love it. But seeing it now today is-- Back when I was growing

up it's just, I'd say like three quarters of the stuff is gone. There's just nothing. There's banks and, and there's some buildings here yet, but there's no businesses. I mean there's Stones left and maybe Kaufman's, Murphy's Five and Ten, you know. Bernhardt's, but the Hub and, and all these stores

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that were there. Stifel and Taylor and just different-- The stores that I went in as a kid with my parents or by myself as growing up, they're all gone and there's just nothing there. It hurts. And what the people are trying to do here is restore these buildings and that. And I said that's great. That's what should be done. If we can't become industrious like we were with our coal mines and our steel mills and our businesses here, then we could maybe become a good tourist attraction. Get people to come into Wheeling just not only see the city of lights, but to see Camp Carlisle. To see Independence Hall. To see the old Center Market. To tour these old Victorian buildings. And appreciate things like this building we're in right now. The, the beautiful structure of this building and what it stands for. You know there's so many things that we still have, and we just got to keep after them.

???: What thoughts do you have about the Ohio River?

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JP: The Ohio River? Well, it was-- Well, where the Wharf Parking lot is, it was a place where these paddle wheels would come in and drop off their cargo and pick up things. We had-- Of course not only did we have our nails and steel and glass factories, but we had Marsh Stogies and, and all this stuff, you know. It was-- Block Brothers, you know. All this stuff was picked up and taken to different places in the country. The Ohio River is, was the main transportation in coming down from Pittsburgh and going down, farther down the river into Kentucky and places like that, you know. It was, it was a means of transportation. It was, it was-- That was why Wheeling was so vital during the Civil War. It was because the waterway also. And the railroad. And the Suspension Bridge. And the industrial parts of what we had here. But the river not only means people ride around on boats now and different things like that. It was what it, what it stood for. It was actually a means of transportation, and it was very vital for Wheeling to survive in other parts of the, parts of the states.

???: Do you have any memories of your father's stories or your mother's stories or grandparent's stories about Wheeling?

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JP: Oh, a few. When my mother and father grew up it was prior to, prior to and, and during the Depression. It-

- You had to make every penny count, and you had to grow a lot of things out in the garden to, you know, to, to eat. And, and dad, my dad, he had to go to CC Camp when he was 17 to, to provide food and money for his family, you know, and then go back to school. And mom would tell me at the time that they could go to a show and buy things for pennies, that you could get numerous things for a penny. And a nickel was something like probably 20 dollars now, maybe, I don't know. But it was just a, a more simpler time. Dad would tell me he walked five miles to hear the Pittsburgh Steelers on radio. That's why I'm such a big Steeler fan myself. And--
CNK: Where would he walk to to hear that?

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JP: He walked to Bellaire or up here to Wheeling from South Wheeling.

CNK: Who had the radio?

JP: His, people that he knew, maybe friends of his family or somebody he would know or work around their farm for. Something that when he was growing up, and he would, he would go just to listen to a ball game. And today you can't get people to walk across the street. They have to drive across, you know. And I love to walk myself. Maybe that's that infantryman in me yet. But it was just a simpler time, and like I said before, I'm, I'm glad I grew up when I did. I don't think I could handle what's going on now as a teenager. I wouldn't know what, I just wouldn't fit in I guess.

CNK: What you were saying about your, the similarities between Civil War vets and Vietnam vets or any vets and how maybe the people in power should just duke it out among themselves, is this interest in the Civil War now and in reenactment maybe a way of paying homage to veterans?

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JP: Well, I think the most reason why people are really involved with Civil War reenacting is because it was a tragedy that happened in our country, in our, in our United States. And if you look at it, it wasn't that long ago. I mean it was only like 80 years probably after I was born, you know. And it, it was something that, it's not, but Caesar and the Roman legions, you know. This, this happened in this, this, on this continent. And it was, I think that the reason for it is, is like I said, it was a tragedy that happened here. Whether we were going to have two countries on this one continent or one. It was, it was a tragedy. It was something no country, I think, really wants to fight a Civil War. And it, it broke families apart. It broke brothers and fathers and sons and, and mothers and relatives. You, you chose a side that you thought was right and you went. Or you were, you were born up here or you were born Pennsylvania or South Carolina. It's your way of living, you're going

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to fight for it, you know. And I'm, I'm sure that it could have been resolved in other ways, but it wasn't. And over a hundred years ago we didn't have the technology or the, or the knowledge that we do now. People say that history is, is a boring subject. You have to know history to know the past, the present and the future. And I'm sure that with some of our people now, that, that this may have been avoided. I would imagine there'd have been a conflict, but I don't think it would have come to arms. It might have just been in Washington, DC, maybe senators and congressmen or whatever fighting it out with president or something. But I think it is because it was a romantic time of period too. It was a time when there was a big industrial revolution in, in the United States. Technology. We had telegraph wires. We had gas lights. We had indoor commodes and some facilities. There were trains and boats, telegraph. Different things that it was, it was modernizing. And people get involved with the Civil War like maybe for the same reasons I do. Or maybe they just want to play soldier. And it's the most popular one. Although they do World War I reenacting. They

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do Revolutionary War. They do World, World War II. And I heard some do Korean. There, there even one down in Virginia that's starting to do Vietnam War reenacting. And you pay homage to these men because both sides, you weren't fighting foreigners; you were fighting Americans. You were fighting another American. And to me there's no better soldier on this planet than the American soldier. And when you pit, pit the best against the best, something has to give, you know. One was better equipped maybe than the other. Other one was maybe better trained. One had a little more nerve than the other one, you know. You don't know what you're going to do in combat. You don't know how you're going to react. They can teach you and brainwash you as much as they can, but then when, when it comes down to the brass tacks, you know. You're on your own, and you got to do what you got to do.

CNK: I have one more question. You-- Did you say that there was a slave market, a slave block where the Market Auditorium is, downstairs, that market, not in Center Market?

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JP: I don't believe it was in Center Market. I'm almost sure it was up here at the, where the plaza is. That used to be, there was a market up there too. And I'm almost sure there was. Maybe you could check with Catherine Jordan at Independence Hall, but I, I think that's where they, they had them. I always thought they were down here too, but I was misinformed. I think they didn't have them at all down here. It was up there

where the plaza is here between Stone and Thomas and, you know, Kittings and Becker's Food and Lou's Hot Dog Stand and all that, you know. That's where, that's where it was.

CNK: Up till when?

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JP: I would imagine probably up in to and including the Civil War. I guess when West Virginia became a state, they probably abolished it. They probably didn't have it here anymore. But prior to and probably the early parts of the Civil War, they, they did have a slave block up there. But I'm sure if you would check with even a librarian at the library, they could probably tell you. But I'm sure that they would know over there. But that's what I was told, and that's where I heard that that's where they had them.

CNK: Great.

???: To conclude, is there anything from your personal experience in Wheeling or in your reference, in reference to the Vietnam War you'd like to share with us?

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JP: Well, my experiences in Wheeling, I never want to leave Wheeling. I want to stay here the rest of my life. The experience in Vietnam, I never want to go through that kind of ordeal again. I was proud now, very proud that I served my country in that capacity. If anybody thinks war is glorious, they got another thought coming. The reason I still portray the Civil War is to pay homage and respect to the Civil War soldiers that fought to keep this country one, keep it whole. And to see war first hand and to reach your hand over and try to pull somebody that's just been hit with a mortar, you start pulling on him, his body comes apart, it gives you a, it gives you a thrill. And to see somebody just mangled that you can't even tell what it is, you know, and to smell dead bodies and see them bloated, see dead animals, have snakes crawling on you. You don't even know what they are. Spiders or stuff like that. You appreciate. I don't care if you were born in poverty. You would rather have that than what you had to go through over there. And it gives you a better outlook

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on life. That you appreciate more things. I, I've come to the conclusion that I do appreciate a lot of things. Especially what I'm going through now. And I'm going to lose. I hope I don't lose. But you take a lot of things for granted. And when you take things for granted, it's going to come back and bite you, you know. You have to, you have to live for every day, and you got to praise the lord for everything that you have. And you got to just take one day at a time, I guess, and just be thankful of what you have. I feel, I feel sorry for myself, a lot of

times. That maybe I don't have a job or I don't have enough money to buy this or buy that, but yet I'm not hungry. I got a vehicle to drive. I got a

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home to go to. I have clothes to put on my body. And I'm in good health as far as I know, you know. You have a lot to be thankful. You woke up this morning, you know. You got out of bed. You put your clothes on, your shoes, and you brush your teeth and washed your face and shaved or whatever you had to do. And go to work or go have a day off or be unemployed and go look for a job. But you were alive, you know. The most precious gift that can, can be given is the gift of life, you know. I've heard kids say 'well, I didn't ask to be born.' That's the most precious gift anyone can give anybody is life. And then to have-- Then the second thing is to share it with someone. And you don't appreciate that till you lose it.

???: This is a good place to stop.

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JP: Yeah, I'll start crying.