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Interview with Horace Wright

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HORACE WRIGHT

Interviewed by

Susan Bennet

on

March 31, 1967
This is a tape of Mr. Horace Wright, who was the nephew of Wilbur and Orville Wright the son of Lorin Wright. Today is March thirty-first 1967. Mr. Wright, where will we begin?

Well, as a kid we probably spent most of our Sundays at the Wright's.

Hawthorn Hill?

No, it was on.....

Hawthorn Street.

Hawthorn Street there yes, and.....

Now, how many members of your family were there?

There were, there's four of us kids.....

Oh, I see. You and.....

There's Milton the older and Ivonette, Leontine, and myself.

Now you, are you and Ivonette the only ones who are living? Or......?

No, Leontine is living. She lives in Chicago, at Winnetka outside of Chicago; and of course we used to do down there and....

Now, where was your home? During this time?

Now, we lived on Second, West Second street, which was about three blocks from them at that time. And we used to Second, Third and then Fourth, Street, Hawthorn ran off of Fourth Street. So they were right near Fourth. And they used to, we used to go there, they used to read to us, of course some of us were small kids, and....

Now, this was about what time?

Well, I can remember pretty well, from oh, say 1906, through, they lived in that house till 1912, well a little after Wilbur died, then they moved out to Hawthorn Hill. And I remember Uncle Orv used to make candy and he of course made fudge at first. That went too fast so he got making chewy kinds of candies, he'd make caramel or butterscotch. And then of course, my sisters always wanted something new. So we always had a new name for it, although it was the same thing. (laughter)
SB  The same candy. Now did he cook it?
HW  Oh, yes, he used to cook, he was a good cook.
SB  Is that so.
HW  In fact this housekeeper that he had for years...
SB  You mean Carrie?
HW  Carrie, she died just recently, he was able to tell her what was wrong, and he trained her into being one of the best cooks you ever saw, and....
SB  I wondered how she appreciated that.
HW  Well, she, of course she was always close to the family.
SB  He must have done it good naturedly I can't imagine....
HW  Well, of course there was an awful lot of humor in their family, I mean they were inclined to always be kidding each other.
SB  Was it, was it a barb humor or just a good nature humor?
HW  No, it's a, they'd laugh about something and....
SB  Now, who, now who by this time there was would be your grandfather.
HW  My grandfather was living and then Uncle, up till 19, well on Hawthorn Street, Wilbur was there, see he died in '12, and Orville and Katharine were there.
SB  Did you always call them Aunt and Uncle?
HW  Oh, yes. Yes.
SB  And Bishop Wright, when the family sat down to dinner did he always give grace, or?
HW  Oh, yes, yes. He was always asked to give grace, because I don't know if the others could. (laughter)
SB  Did the bishop see that the boys and Katharine got some Christian education?
HW  Oh, yes. Of course they were brought up in, he was the United Brethren Bishop in the church at that time. And well I guess he retired from there sometime during that. But they were always, of course, they didn't attend too much as they got older, because, well there was none of their church around much anymore.
SB Is that so? What church did they attend here?

HW Well, I don't believe they belonged to any here in Dayton.

SB Well, there's the United Brethren church here I just wondered.....

HW Well, you see there was a split in the United Brethren, and that was the other division in Dayton.

SB Oh, they were in the original...

HW Original group

SB In the original group before the split.

HW Yes.

SB Oh, is that so? Well, when there was the trouble with the grandfather, within the church, what was the nature of the trouble?

HW It started out as one of the persons connected with the "Telescope", which was their publication. Made off with some money. But as it ended up it got down to beliefs; the split was on beliefs but the original split was caused on that. But before it was through they split on other...

SB On other, oh, on beliefs. What was the bishop's stand on the...

HW Well he was a very, he was one of the strict of the old strict division of it. I mean.

SB In what way?

HW Well, Sunday you couldn't do anything on Sunday with him. And he didn't believe in any secret societies, didn't believe in, well, I would just say, closer to the old, strict religions.

SB The old Calvinists you mean.

HW Yes, Calvinists.

SB And well that's strange, I wonder why they didn't, they just gave up church completely then I guess after that.

HW Well, I would say they're all religious, but I'm inclined to be the same way. I'm a religious man but I'm not a church member.

SB A church member. And that was you think the basic belief of your Uncles, do you think that was it?
Well, they were of course more liberal believing, than grandpa, my grand-
father was. But they were very, I would say, they lived a very clean and
they were very conscientious, I mean, and they could forgive I think about
any weakness in a person except a lie. And if somebody lied to them, they
didn't have much use for them anymore. And in other words, they were both
very careful to be absolutely fair and they had I'd say the highest of
morals and everything else.

Do you think that the trouble within the church that the that your grand-
father, did he did he feel sort of left out after the schism had occurred?

No, I think it happened, well it happened I believe before 1900. But he
was just about at a retiring age anyway. It wasn't too long before he
retired after that.

Oh, I see.

But of course......

Well, I just wondered it seems you know, why they didn't associate with
some, I just wondered why they didn't associate with some church when they had
such a strong church background. That they ever expressed an opinion?

Well, maybe its the same thing I've got. I do a lot of thinking on relig-
ion, but I don't practice it in connection with a church. In other words,
I think, I've always had a feeling that no two people have the same relig-
ion. (laughter) If you'd get into that.

I see, well I wondered how did Mr. Orville feel when they used, they used the
airplane for war, did you feel that had any basic conflict with the teachings
that he had absorbed as a child?

No, I don't. Of course I don't think their thought was on war when they
designed the airplane. Of course, it was a problem. And the more interesting
they got in it the more they worked on it. And of course, the amazing thing
on the development of the airplane, is how few mistakes they made through the
years.
SB Yes.

HW And that is probably due to the fact there were two of them. And when one would get an idea, the other would try to prove him wrong. They didn't try to prove they were right. They tried to, and they avoided an awful lot of mistakes, and....

SB Oh, I think its amazing, they, the well we still use the same principles that they found in the plane.

HW Yes, its, its used in everything flying today.

SB Everything

HW Because, but....

SB Did you ever hear them discuss the moral aspects of the plane, being used in war?

HW No, I've never of course at the limit of what they thought might happen in a war was the scouting, they thought it was a possibility on scouting, not as a dropping bombs.

SB Well, as Mr. Orville got older and in the first World War and the second World War, did he ever express any, to you, any opinions on how it had, what had happened?

HW No, I never, he never talked too much on things that way.

SB When you went over there on Sunday dinner or as a child, what was the significant difference between the two of them?

HW Well, I would say Uncle Will was inclined to, I've seen him sit for ten minutes never say a word and you knew in his head, he was thinking. He was very, an awful, did an awful lot of thinking. Now Uncle Will I believe would have been a great man in anything he had taken up. By that I mean, he had, used perfect English. And he could use the English language to, I would say he could really make it work for him. Now Uncle Orv was inclined to be mechanical more and one of these unusual things on Orville, Uncle Orv, was he could
think in three dimensions. He could see machines that are working in three
dimensions just as clear and very few people have that ability.

SE Yes, I should say so. He could figure out what it was going to look like in
his mind in other words.

HW Yes, and of course, in the early days, they were in the printing business,
and I know one day a fellow from the manufacture printing equipment, came
and said he'd heard about their machine, wanted to see how it worked. And
he got down and looked at it all over and when he got through, he says, well
I can't see how it works, but it does.

(laughter)

SB That's a marvelous story. They could work things out, isn't it? Did one seem,
did one seem more talkative than the other?

HW Yes, Wilbur was never the person to talk much. But he could put an awful
lot of meaning in a few words. And he could be awfully cutting in his re-
marks. In the trial, when they had the infringement trial, I know there's
places that he made some, (chuckles) he'd put some words in there that were
quite sharp. But I don't think they realized until ten minutes later what
he really said.

(laughter)

SB Well, that's an art, isn't it.

HW Yes, he was that type of person. But he was also an awfully, he did for
people more, he was inclined to think of people and please them. But as I
say, if somebody tried to be dishonest, he was pretty sharp.

SB He had no place for them. Did they ever, do you remember of any other
people coming to dinner?

HW Oh, there was always people coming there. I remember, oh Capt. Arnold.
There used to be there young lieutenants, and a lot of those army flyers
used to be there. And of course Grandpa used to have in a lot of people,
ministers from different parts of the country, and......
What did they talk about?

Well, of course I don't remember too much on that. Then, of course, after they got out to the Hawthorn Hill, I used to go down there. Of course being the youngest, I was still in school, my sisters were getting up in high school and my brother was, see he's nine years older than I am. And so I was the one that continued to go out alone during that time more, and I used to travel, go through that woods, and I've run across books I still have that we had our bird list of birds we saw at different dates.

Oh is that so?

Through the.....

What, did, did your uncle enjoy kids or did they.....

Yes, yes they did. And of course Uncle Orv was an awful tease, but....

Oh, is that so? (chuckles) Did they ever have any lady friends over?

No, neither of them ever were interested in anybody that way, and.....

I wondered how they ever escaped?

Well, of course, I think Wilbur wanted to go to college, and I don't think, I think his whole ambition was to go but his mother got sick at that time, and he was the one that nursed her, and it was, they say, he was one of the best nurses there ever was, but.....

Why was it he nursed her? Of the children?

Well, I believe Katharine, I forget when when she died but,.....

Katharine was quite young.

Katharine was young then and.....

Yes, I think she was twelve or thirteen, something like that.

And Wilbur was the one that it fell onto and that's the reason he never went to college.

Did he ever express a regret that he didn't get to go?

Well, (chuckles) of course, you come right down to it, they got more out
of books than most of them got out of college, because they were both extensive readers, and....

SB Did they ever express their regret as not having had a family since they enjoyed children?

HW No, of course, they never talked much of that. But I don't think that, I don't know what happened, of course, when they were, oh, say in their high school or that, but after that I think they were so intent on what they were doing, I don't think they thought much about it.

SB And of course after Mr. Orville developed the airplane, I had a feeling that there a number of young ladies in Dayton who would have been very happy to go out with him. (laughter)

HW Well, of course that makes him a little more afraid. (laughter)

SB Oh, dear. Well you might have a point there. After they moved out...

HW Oh, do you remember when Mr. Wilbur died?

SB Do I remember it?

HW Yes.

SB Well, yes I was, we were down there off and on. But I forget it was, it was in, it must have been 1912, because the flood came in '13.

SB It was 1912.

HW And I remember they took out my grandfather, and others got out later and then they couldn't find my grandfather for about three days, they were hunting all over for him.

SB This was after Wilbur's death?

HW Yes, yes, that was the flood.

SB Oh, this was during 1913.

HW Flood, and finally they found him, he said they'd taken him someplace and he was having a good time (chuckles) But.

SB Oh, I see the family was separated.
Well, they didn't know where it was. They tried to get word of where he was and nobody knew, nobody'd known where he went.....

Oh, my goodness. Did he continue to live with Orville and Katharine?

Yes, he lived until about 17. Oh, well. I can't figure the date on that. I think he was born in '28.

Gee he had a...

He was up there.....

a long full life didn't he.

Yes, '17, '28, that would be about eighty-nine years old. Of course I could be off on.....

Oh, that's alright. That's a minor point as far as that's concerned. Do you think that he enjoyed his sons' fame.

Yes, I think he enjoyed feeling, and of course, I think there was very little said about such things, but I've found that our family were inclined to be very critical if we didn't do right. But if we did, why of course they did, they should.

Take it for granted in other words.

Yes, in other words they expect, they should be if they're right they should do things right. And...

I don't know if that hurts anybody.

Well, I know I never got praise in my life, but I got criticism and yet you knew very well that they were pleased at the things I did.

They just didn't praise you though?

Yes they.....

Well, would that be part of that old Calvinistic.....

Might be, I don't know.

That you're sin, sort of sinful to begin with, and you have to fight against it. I wondered if that has something to do with it.
HW I don't know what it is, but...

SB You look like the family, or the family pictures, of course I've never seen...

HW Well, I look, they always tell me I look more like Wilbur.

SB Yes, I could recognize it.

HW Of course I never got quite that bald.

(laughter)

SB Well he got bald fairly early didn't he?

HW Yes, I think that generation wore tight hats, and I think it stopped the circulation in their hair is why they....

SB That might have been. They're all bald.

HW Of course that's Uncle Orv and my father.

SB Yes, I thought that was Lorin.

HW Lorin Wright.

SB Who, who it was. Did your Uncle take you on fishing trips?

HW Well, I used to go to Canada with him. That was from, well now wait, the first year I was with them was 1913. And they stayed at an island there, rented an island and then when I was in high school and college I used to go up every summer, stay with them two or three months.

SB You stayed with them....

HW And they bought an island.

SB That was Orville and Katharine.

HW Katharine, yes, and they had this island that had quite a few little cottages on it, a main house and little cottages off of it.

SB Where was it?

HW Georgian Bay, near Penetanguishene. I always had to, it was a three room cottage on the point and right out on the rocks right over the cliff. And everybody was afraid that it would blow, those high winds would affect it. And he sat down and figured it, and he says, why it would take a hundred miles an hour wind to move that cottage.
Oh, Orville did.

Yes, he figured it out. And well...

How did he figure it out?

Well, wind resistance and how much area, and the funny thing of it was, after he died, we had a hundred mile an hour wind and it moved.

Oh, it did, he was right.

(Laughter)

Well, did he stay in the cottage?

Well he had this, he had a little building in back of the main house, and then usually we stayed out on the point in this three-room cottage. And then they had another one down the hill that we later used as a bunk house when a bunch of boys or a bunch of girls were there.

Sounds like they were quite generous for bringing the young people along.

Well, they didn't too much. Uncle Orv always liked somebody, when I couldn't go with him anymore he used to have Bob Hadley come up and do work for helping. But he always liked the kids, and never would get older people.

Oh, is that so? Well did he, well did he pay you or did he, you just had the fun of going?

No, oh no he never paid any of us. I don't know if he did Bob but...

You were just lucky to get to go, in other words.

Yes, it was a real vacation.

How was, how was it furnished? Did they have any plumbing or...?

Yes, on that island, they had a pump. It pumped water from, it stood up sixty feet above the water, and they had a pump, pump water and before it was through, they had a big tank up there, and he had shower baths and he had water in all, in most of the rooms.

Hot water or....?

No, not hot, but water, and he made a bathroom under the shower there and it
was modern for that kind of a place. And he even had water run through the ice box coils for cold water to drink all the time.

SB

Is that so, he just worked this out himself, I suppose?

HW

Oh, yes. Of course Uncle Orv always hoped he had some problem to work out. Because he loved to get to work on things that way.

SB

Oh, he liked, he liked working with his hands, or thinking up something and then.

HW

Yes, and he was always doing something to ease the burden. Well, they built a railway, an incline railway, from the boat house out, and it was a very steep incline, and he had a motor on there, an old evinrude motor and that pulled a rope up and that would pull this little cart. And of course when the groceries came or people came with luggage, why he would just put them on that cart and haul it up. And....

SB

Ingenious.

HW

I always laughed when my sisters were there. He asked them how much they weighed, and they told him, he says, well if that's right that'll just just be a little clearance on bringing you up. And so they got sat on a box on this cart and it wouldn't budge. He said, how much did you say you weighed? (laughter)

SB

That's hardly fair.

(laughter)

SB

They had to come up one at a time, I guess.

HW

Well he knew how much it would haul.

(laughter)

SB

That's interesting. Did he kind of like things for his personal comfort?

HW

Some things yes and some no. Some things he would never change, and others he wanted absolutely modern.

SB

Is that so?
Of course, I guess being a bachelor that long, he would get certain...

Yes, married man would probably change all that. When they read, you said originally they read to you. What did they read?

Well, of course, originally they were the kid books. I don't know if you've ever seen the "Goop" books or not?

No, I know, I don't know that one.

Well, the "Goop" book is put out as a group of little kids, there was rough sketches, and there was always, these kids there always perfect except for one bad trait, and there was one Queeratus now, he had wonderful kids, but he didn't have good table manners.

And another, those and I, one of the funniest things was Uncle Will was in Europe... no I forget where he was. But this fellow came calling and wanted to know if he could come up and see him, he was an author. And oh, he said, I'd like to see you. He says, I've read your book more than any book I've ever read. And this fellow happened to be a, he wrote some very scientific subjects too. And he had come up you know with a bunch of books under his arm and he asked him which book he read, and when he told him the "Goop"...

Most of them today, I mean for a kid say...

The kids liked them.

Two to four or five somewhere in there.

Big, in other words you kids liked them.

Yes, and then of course, there was a group of old books that were put out that I remember they always had the adventures of Mel Tities Peter and Paul.
And they were for a little older, but I know they asked the maids, he had a tricycle and he wanted to name something that went fast, and she told him to call it doughnuts.

(laughter)

SB He had a sense of humor too, then

(laughter)

HW Well it was a humorous little skit like that, you....

SB When they read you the stories, did they put the expression in it and...

HW Oh, yes, and of course I always laughed at Uncle Wil. He was awful patient, but when he was through, he was through. And he would just straighten out and there was no lap, you just slid off. And when...

(laughter)

HW And when that happened, you there was no use trying to get him to read anymore.

SB Oh, that's a nice touch. In other words, you just climbed up on his lap....

HW Yes, and, but when he was through reading he was through. Now Uncle Orv had more patience than Uncle Wil.

SB Of course Uncle Wil was a little bit older. Who do you think made most of the financial arrangements of the two?

HW It's awful hard to separate. I think that, I think they did it, about like everything else. One would have an idea and the other would find fault with it, and then they would argue it out, until they had a pretty good solution.

SB Do you think they did their own arrangements, or do you think they got financial advice?

HW No, they didn't, they never had much, weren't too sold on lawyers I wouldn't say.

SB How about bankers?

HW Oh, yes. They'd believe in banks, but I don't think they would trust too much on other people's.
SB Other people's judgement.

HW Of course, neither of them were good business men. I mean anybody else would have made ten times what they did out of it.

SB Well, they did fairly well considering the period, you know, considering.

HW Yes.

SB The times, the money. Do you think that if Mr. Wil had lived, that perhaps they would have done better?

HW Well, I don't think Orville did bad, but, he's not a businessman and, he was pretty smart on his investments, but he wasn't a gambler and never tried to make big money that way.

SB When he sold out in 1915, did he express why he sold out?

HW Well, I think the thing was growing to the point they couldn't, it had to be a bigger company, and I don't think either of them liked business.

SB They didn't get out of it what maybe Henry Ford did, out of the automobile.

HW No, they could have made, somebody that was a good businessman, could have made probably a lot more out of it.

SB They didn't wish to do that?

HW No, they were just not interested. I mean there's some people made for that and some people not, that's...

SB Well, they did quite well, in some ways though, because so often when a person who has the genius to create something, they just, you know, end up with nothing, it seems so often in history.

HW Well, of course they were thrifty and they weren't gamblers. And they made money and they kept it pretty well. They didn't have extravagant tastes or anything that way.

SB Where did they put the money that they made? What kind of investments did they make?

HW Well, of course, I believe that most of it was in very safe bonds, up to '32. And at that time. I know Uncle Orv said that the stocks were selling for much
less than they're really worth. And he sold out a great percent of his bonds, and he put them into common stocks.

SB Well.

HW And he made money on that.

SB Do you think that that was his opinion or somebody's else.

HW Yes, in other words, he had an opinion and he carried it out, I mean.

SB He certainly did that right.

HW Well, he said the stocks were worth more than that and he said the bonds weren't bringing enough income to warrant their...

SB ...keeping them. Well that showed a lot of foresight, I would think, that he did very well. Did he ever express any political opinions?

HW Yes, of course, he was closely connected through the aeronautic board, he was connected with a lot of them, and he'd get good laughs out of a lot of things that happened. I don't think he was strong politically. I mean, like Roosevelt was in when he was there, and I know a lot of things he criticized and a lot of things he'd say he did that nobody else had the nerve to do. And so you'd get through. I mean he didn't talk like a Republican against, it was purely sizing him up as a man.

SB Oh, is that so? When he talked politics, did he enjoy talking politics or was this just something that he, or was it something that interested him, is what I'm trying to say.

HW It's hard to tell. Now he loved an argument. And I think that he argued many things that he didn't believe in. Just to see your reaction to it.

SB Is that so?

HW So, you never knew what he thought. I've seen him, many a time bait somebody on something or he just loved to get into a good argument, and I've seen our family dinners, Dad and some of the others get talking, and they'd get up there and you'd think they were going to have a fist fight. No, they didn't resent anything afterwards, I mean some people when you argue with them they
get sore. Generally, none of them would.

SB That's interesting. You mean when he was on the aeronautical board he'd go to Washington?

HW Oh, yes. He was down there quite often. Of course they, I forget the board's name that he was on. But its a national board for recommending, I think, moves on aviation.

SB Do you think he admired Roosevelt or.....?

HW Yes, and no, I mean he admired some things in him, and some things he didn't. (laughter) And I'd think you'd say that on almost anybody, I mean....

SB Well, I was thinking about the philosophy behind the New Deal. Do you think that he was.....

HW Some of it he was and some he wasn't. I mean a man's policy takes too much ground. It covers too much, in other words, some moves he made, he thought, were very good. Now, he thought Roosevelt was making too many boards and things. Breaking it up in too many pieces, so that nobody had responsibility. And I know he said that he was going to have trouble on those things.

SB Well, I mean, the efforts to kind of redistribute the wealth, to have more people enjoy, rather than just a few, enjoy a whole lot. Did he ever express any........

HW No........

SB Idea on that?

HW Of course, I don't think he was too much on that, except that he believed that a person shouldn't be able to make too much profit, there's something, not enough competition or something crooked if a guy makes too much.

SB Oh, I see, there should be. In other words, the government should step in enough so that a person shouldn't have a monopoly where he could get out all the rewards.

HW Yes, in other words, if anything's competitive enough nobody makes too much money. But on the other hand, if some of the smart men like Ford, hadn't been able to accumulate money, he could have not organized that big a company see?
SB Hard to know. It takes the right place to stop, I guess, that's it. How did he feel towards the, oh, the eastern interests that finally took over the company?

HW Well, he knew, most of those people. Of course Collier who used to publish Collier's magazine, I think was, if I remember right, was back of a lot of that. And he had a lot of respect for a lot of those men. They were wealthy men, but they were smart. That generation of them I would say were smart.

SB Yes, of course, the younger generation later made a different picture, I don't know what he felt on that.

SB The men, originally, who bought and formed the Wright company. What did he read? Do you remember?

HW Well, you'd be surprised, now little on engineering and stuff. He was always interested in something. He always had some problem and his chair out at his house, had a place here. And usually the dictionary and the book he was reading was in there but I know I have a lot of his books here, of course. I think through me he got interested in nature quite a bit, he had and they were great friends with Stephenson and some of those people, and Ackley. But as a kid, I used to cover birds through the woods, and I was interested in nature, and botany was my background.

SB Would he go with you on walks, nature walks?

HW Oh, once in a while, of course, not too often out there.

SB When you were up in the woods, what would a natural day be?

HW Well, of course he always had some project. And....

SB Now what do you mean by a project?

HW Well, he built his boat house, he built his docks,

SB You mean he physically built.......

HW Yes, of course, the dock was there. It was built wrong. So he set out to build it how he thought it ought to be, and he had this lodge up there, and he always had that motor out and something doing with it. And I never will forget we were out one night and towards evening, dusk, just before dusk, and
he was having trouble with that motor working with it, and he looked up and he saw many cars, which was a lot of, summer visitors there you know. He closed the lid and sat down and started and went right through there, just as if nothing happened. As soon as he got out of sight on the other side of them, he was trying something, and trying to find something, and he could have made it go, but...

SB He didn't want an audience.

HW He didn't want people saying he was stuck out there.

SB A little bit of vanity there, it sounds like.

HW Well, of course, they'd all ask him what he was happen...

SB What he was doing. Well, when he was working on a project, who did the cooking up there?

HW Well, he did practically all the cooking.

SB Did he like to cook?

HW Yes, he liked to cook and he had everything pretty well lined up. Now on toast, of course they used to get this sliced bread, but he had two plates that hinged, then lay them on the of course, they had oil, and toast them that way, and it makes kind of a crisp toast, not soft like, it presses them together just a little bit to......

SB How did they get the plates hot?

HW Over this oil heat.

SB Oh, I see.

HW Oh, they had an oil burner, and then they'd turn it, just keep turning it.

SB Oh.

HW And then, a lot of times they used to, if he was busy, he would have what he always called lobscouse, he started with a big piece of beef cooked in there, and then he'd put what ever he could find on the shelf at the time, corn or beans or peas, (laughter) and it would end up as a vegetable soup but he always called it lobscouse.

SB Kind of like a pot roast or....
Yes.

Watery pot roast.

In other words, you, he wasn't telling you all what was in it. (chuckles)

Oh, lobscouse, where did he ever get that word?

I don't know.

Must have made it up. Well, when you and he went up there, did Katharine come up too or.....?

Yes, she was there. Although sometimes she wasn't there all the time, I mean...

Did she do the cooking when she was there?

No, she didn't...she'd help with the dishes, but he usually cooked.

He usually cooked, well that's unusual. He must have really liked to.

Yes, well he wanted things his way, pretty much. (chuckles)

Was he demanding as far as telling you what to do?

Yes, I found it awful hard to work with him, because he had it in his mind how you'd approach a problem, and I'd approach it at a different angle and couldn't understand his approach, and it was awfully hard to work with, for that reason.

So it had to be done just his way.

Yes, and he assumed you were thinking the same line of thoughts that he was.

Do you think that perhaps since he and Wilbur for so many years had been able to sort of jive mentally, he just got impatient with anybody else who couldn't follow him around.

Well, he was very patient, but he couldn't understand why you did it this way, or that way.

What else would you do up there in the woods?

Well, we did some fishing. I mean we used to get enough fish to have fish four times a week maybe, and....

What do you catch up there, I bet that could be...

Your bass are the best, black bass. And we used to like them about a pound, pound and a half, and then cook them in deep lard. And if you get too big, he never liked them, they didn't cook through like.
SB Who did the cleaning?
HW Well that usually fell to either the kid, or, of course he'd clean up some, but any hard jobs I think he usually had the kids or I did some of it.
SB In a way, you were kind of unpaid help, weren't you?
HW Yes, but of course oh, I couldn't think of that because, I was getting a vacation and of course he helped through my college life.
SB Oh, I think they're different times now too. Kids now-a-days, it seems like they don't want to do anything without getting paid for it. In other times, taking care of the children and things like that which were taken for granted in a family.
HW Yes. Well, there were duties. I would say it would be a good vacation for anybody. Your work requirement wasn't near what you were getting out of it, see.
SB How, how did you get up there?
HW Of course, originally we went by train to Penetanguishene, and then this Will France had a boat. And they'd take it on over. We were about sixteen miles from Penetanguishene. Well, that was by the back route, and then later, they could get to Honey Harbor which is only about little over two miles, but he usually had his boat later, after the early days, he'd have his lodge fixed up and ready and he'd come in and take it and drive on out.
SB There would be quite a problem in food, wouldn't there? To get the food up there?
HW Yes, they had to buy for about a week ahead. And of course....
SB If you forgot the sugar you'd be out of luck.
HW .....they had, they had ice up there.
SB Oh, from the lake?
HW Yes, it was cut out of the lake and they all had ice houses.
SB It must have been a pleasant way to spend the summer.
HW Oh, it was, its a wonderful region up there.
SB I imagine it's beautiful. Were there any other people around?
HW Well, quite a few, according to how close. I think the nearest were about a half mile on another island, and then of course the people we used to know when we went up there first were about two miles away.

SB Do you think that he picked that because it was isolated and he wanted to get away from people?

HW Yes, he relaxed, and he loved to work on different things around there. I think if he ever, if the island was complete, I don't think he'd enjoy it.

SB Do you think he enjoyed being sort of an international figure, or do you think that he disliked it.

HW There was an awful lot of things happened that were annoying on it. Although I think he had a certain pride in it?

SB What happened that annoyed him?

HW Well, of course newspapers bothered him, in that they wouldn't get the account straight?

SB What did he say about it?

HW Well, well he got to the point where if a newspaperman didn't get it straight, he never could come back. And some of those fellows got to know that, and they were very careful what they put in.

SB Why did he, you know, get so adamant on this, do you think?

HW Well, he always wanted everything positive, I mean true, and he never liked to let anything slip through that was untrue. He said the records you go back on them will show that sometime, and it might be out of proportion.

SB That was part of, you think, just part of his nature?

HW Yes, it was.....

SB Or was that that old Calvinistic truth coming out again. (laughter)

HW I don't know.

SB That would be interesting to know. Well then, when you came back into town, do you think that he really enjoyed the big house? It seems so big.

HW Yes, I think he enjoyed it, of course, he wouldn't have, if of course Carrie
and while he was living, her husband lived there, and helped take care of the house too. And he wouldn't have found anybody else that could have done that, I don't think.

SB She must have been very capable.

HW She was, and of course she had help. She could get help, but he let her, be the general. And he liked that big house and....

SB Did he entertain very much?

HW Not too much. Of course, let's say he did quite a bit, people, one or two people come in. But not big entertainment. Somebody he wanted to talk to, or people coming through town and visit.

SB Were they generally people in maybe scientific work or....?

HW Well, all kind of people came, I mean. Of course I can remember I'd go out there, and there was always somebody, and he'd always bring us, he always bring us right in, and I think he was relieved that we were there, that maybe helped on some of them....

SB Get them out?

HW Maybe yes, well they'd get kind of dry on conversation after too long.

SB He'd include you in the conversation?

HW Well, I think he enjoyed it when we came when he had people there.

SB Is that so, well that's interesting. Did he ever talk to any, of course you were a child, about his problems with the Smithsonian?

HW Well, of course, I knew most of it. The original Langley was a very honorable man. It was some individuals that happened to take over the Smithsonian in between and after they had made certain statements, the later people didn't know how to take them back and that's where your trouble, in other words, they had to restate their whole case before he let that plane go to the Smithsonian.

SB Let's see, when was that, that plane went after the War, no it was after his death.
HW After his death. Well frankly England could have kept it.
SB Yes, but they sent it back.
HW But it was, they....They knew that he had an understanding that if the Smithsonian would do certain things, he was going to recall it. But his will said that if it hadn't been settled when he died that England, it would have stayed there. But diplomatically they let it go.
SB Did he have a particular fondness for the plane do you think?
HW No, he wasn't a sentimental sort of a person on things, but he was very accurate. And now of course, we've got those pieces they've put out with a piece of stick and the cloth of the original planes. Well some of the plane had to be replaced after that fourth flight. It had an accident, and there was some cloth and some broken spars that I think deeds had made up into these little....
SB Do you feel that he resented Katharine leaving him, when she was married?
HW Well, yes. I think he kind of built his life around her being there and I think it changed things for him.
SB Did you notice any difference in his personality?
HW No, nothing that way.
SB It seems like he would have had a lonely life. Did he ever give the impression that there were times when he was lonely? In his later years?
HW No, I don't think he was. He was very active mentally, and I think that he could be alone and his mind would work on enough different subjects - that he wasn't lonely.
SB He had his interests. What other interests did he, was he particular-ly interested in, besides flight?
HW Well, he would, I think he was covering all the developments in planes, and I know, well for instance, he had a phonograph, record changer there, that was quite an outfit. He could set a whole night's program on there, and it would play a pro-gram and if you wanted to it would turn it over. Take any size record, and he
had a little wheel that he'd put pins in what he wanted it to do. And that thing, as it goes, and he'd start working, reading and never touch the phonograph for a whole evening.

SB  What kind of music did he like to listen to?
HW  Well, of course he liked the classical, although when he was, well there was a year when he was done in bed, just couldn't hardly move, due to that sciatic rheumatism.
SB  Oh, is that so?
HW  And......
SB  When was this?
HW  Well, it must have been somewhere around '16 or '17.
SB  Now was that as a result of the injury in the crash?
HW  Well, yes, but it's the sciatic nerve, what do they call it the bone, at a certain age grows together, but it was pinching. During that time, he had the phonograph up there......

(break in tape)

(end of side two)

(start of side three)

HW  During that time he had the phonograph up there, and the only music that was soothing to him, was spirituals. They're the only ones that didn't get on his nerves and he played a lot.
SB  Is that so? Wasn't that interesting, the old spirituals?
HW  Yes, I remember the well "Old Kentucky Home" and all those things that were played time and time again. He liked the other music but it would irritate him in time.
SB  Did he have any subject in which he, do you think that he thought a great deal about? That bothered him, or that interested him?
HW  Well, he was quite interested in television at that time. Of course, he was at the laboratory after General Electric, when they started projecting little pictures about that size, and I think they had it somewhere, they had a disk that turned and put the spots different places, and it was always hard to get the exact timing to throw that picture right, and...
SB You said something Dunbar had told him that he couldn't eat here in Dayton and he could abroad.

HW Well, anywhere in the United States you'd go to a depot and there was no place there to, you couldn't eat with them, you had to go to the colored section and to get a room and everything else. And while in Europe you could. It makes you think right what was happening right there.

SB Where else did Mr. Orville, or to whom else did he contribute money?

HW Well, I think, like most charities, but I don't think people knew what he put into.

SB Is that so? Was he a soft touch as far as the kids are concerned or was he...

HW On some things he was, and others he wasn't.

SB What was he, what things?

HW But as I said, if somebody would lie about something, they were done, and...

SB As kids could you go to him and get a quarter out of him, or a nickel out of him?

HW Oh, yes, but.....

SB Did he want to know what you were going to spend it for?

HW Yes, he'd want to know. But we never needed money when we were kids. Like we do now. (chuckles)

SB Yes, you could have a lot of fun without as much money.

HW No, it didn't take any money. You could go most anywhere and not have any money in those days.

SB How was he as a bike fixer?

HW Well, of course, they had that shop and the main thing that went wrong with bicycles was tires. Tire repair. And of course, they used to use this I've got one of their old at that time, they had to, you'd stick in the hole and then squeeze it and that would form a patch on the inside of the tire. And they used to do most of their repair that way. Of course in their shop there they had a tire pump hanging on the wall and the bell would ring when the door opened, and then they had it so that they could take that pump and go out and pump their tire
without them coming out, they didn't want to be bothered with everybody that wanted to pump a tire. So....

SB I suppose you could ride downtown on a bike.

HW Oh, yes.

SB From there, no problems.

HW No, of course in fact, at one time they used to do bicycle racing, Orville did. And locally they were pretty good, of course Uncle Will would give him the, they run with them and start them.

SB Oh, is that so.

HW He was good at that, and they were in that quite a while, of course as young kids, we'd get into things that way. And.....

SB Were they fairly generous at Christmas? With all the nieces and nephews?

HW Oh, yes, yes. Of course as younger kids, we used to always get something bought. I remember I got a bicycle one year, and there's always definite toys but as we got older, it was in money, and...

SB Well, you can't really object to that. (laughter)

HW No, he couldn't buy for older people. I think he just gave up after we got so old.

SB Did he ever come down to school when you were at Miami, did he ever come down and see you?

HW They were down there once as I can remember. And, of course, they were friends of Percy McChel who was a poet that had a cabin on that campus down there. And then Ridgely Torrence do you know of him?

SB No.

HW Now, he was another writer from Yellow Springs and I know that he was a very unusual man. And they were friends of all those. But I can remember Ridgely Torrence used to teach an English class, and he didn't teach much English but they learned a lot on when he'd get wandering off on talking on other subjects.

SB He seemed to be quite exclusive, particular in his friends in his later years, or
selective. Was there any particular reason for this?

HW I think he had a feeling people weren't genuine friends, a lot of them. Now anybody he knew before he became, say before 1910, he could go off anytime and talk and have a wonderful time. But I think people cultivated him, tried to cultivate him, and weren't really interested in, I mean there was no basis of friendship. And now of course he was just, Deeds got to be very good friends, they were didn't know each other till later, and people like that, became very good friends, but.....

SB Did he ever squire a lady anywhere? Do you remember of it.....?

HW I can't, I can't think of any that....

SB Is that so, how about Miss Alice Hall? Did he ever....?

HW Alice Hall?

SB Yes, doesn't ring any bells at all?

HW Oh, they used to, Agnes Osborn, they used to have some stories about, but she was a great friend of Aunt Katharine's.

SB Oh, I see.

HW And I kind of think they tried to throw them together, but I don't think it took.

SB Agnes Osborn, now I don't know.

HW She married Beck, later, that was....

SB Oh, Mrs. Beck, became his secretary....

HW No, no, no.

SB No?

HW This is Agnes Osborn Beck. He used to be Miami Jacob's Business College, Head of that.

SB Oh.

HW Of course, I don't know if he's still living. He went blind before he died.

SB Oh, you think maybe the Katharine promoted that a bit.

HW Yes, I think it was, a lot of people tried to make something out of it, but I don't think, I don't think there was much to it. Of course, Aunt Katharine had a lot of her college friends, and a lot of the teachers got out there but I don't
think. Here comes my wife now.

SB Oh, that's nice. Yes, well I suppose that this well although I heard that somewhere that they had sort of agreed not to marry. And that that was one reason why he was distressed when Katharine married.

HW I don't know whether there was any agreement or not. Of course, he never talked about things that way.

SB It just seems, I don't know, of course, it seems kind of a shame that he couldn't have enjoyed a family after he had the fame and that was one thing that he, one pleasure that he did not get in life.

HW Well, I think that's the reason our family was there so much. I mean they enjoyed...

SB He enjoyed kids.

HW Our family, yes.

SB Well, that's nice that he could enjoy them in that way. Did he ever speak of his brother, in his later years? I mean Will.

HW Wilbur, now, oh, yes, I mean if it come up Will would do this or that but I mean I don't think he, he wasn't the kind that would just brood over things that way, but of course, as things happen and memories would come up to him of things that had happened.

(break in tape)

WIFE But then I'm a school teacher, you know.

SB Well you're used to thinking of these things. Mrs. Wright has just joined us, she's the other lady's voice. Would you tell me about being at Kitty Hawk in 1911?

HW Well, they were going down to Kitty Hawk to do some, well play around really with a plane, and Dad went down first and had the building built. And then got things, supplies in, and then Mr. Ogilvie was there.

SB Now who is he?

HW He's an Englishman that designed instruments for airplanes.

SB Now you say instruments, back in those days, what would be an instrument?
HW Well, he was experimenting with a cup to catch the winds to test wind velocities, you know, things you put on planes. And then I was taken along because I was in pretty poor health. I mean I was not very well developed as a kid, and they thought it would do me a lot of good. And of course, I did develop better after that, I think.

SB The sunshine, and the sand...

HW Sunshine and sand, and of course, they were experimenting at that time, on gliding. I think they set the gliding record at that time, off of Kill Devil Hill there, and they always said I was over at the cookie jar whenever anything happened, instead of (laughter) out there with them.

WIFE You might mention how the reporters stepped back on the hillside.

HW Well yes, the reporters would get over behind the sand dunes, and have field glasses, and try to find out what was happening. One day, Uncle Orv was in town and happened to pass one of them, he says well why don't you come over? Why are you setting way over there for? They thought they were doing some secret experiments, and tried to get in on it, and actually they were just having a good time, is what they were after, and then........

SB Well, they gone down, they were just with gliders this time?

HW Gliders and I think they were trying, I think there were a few problems that they hadn't quite worked out on some of the controls. But I think it was mostly just have a good time. Of course we had a book with all those pictures in it that Mr. Ogilvie took. He sent me a picture, a book of pictures.

SB Oh, how nice.

HW And....

SB That must have been pretty primitive living down there.

HW Well, our beds. The main part of the shed was for the plane, and we had ladders that went up and then between the two by fours they stretched canvas tight, and that makes a wonderful bed though.
SB: Gee, way up there?
HW: Up in the rafters.
SB: What happened if you fell out of bed?
HW: Well, there was enough cover there, that you didn't have a chance to fall out.
WIFE: There's a replica of the shed down at Kitty Hawk right now, you can see it, we were just down a couple of years ago.
HW: Uncle Orv did the cooking over a little, those were little oil stoves again, like they had up at Canada, and...
SB: How were the mosquitoes?
HW: Times they were terrible. The times, of course, mosquitoes don't like wind. And when you have good wind, there would be no mosquitoes.
SB: Did the newspaper people ever come over?
HW: Yes, they came around. We had a book of pictures there that I was setting in the midst of them.
SB: When they came over, were they oh fairly courteous, or.....?
HW: Oh, yes they were. But of course they had an idea that they were going to get a scoop somewhere by getting that secret, some new experiments, and there was nothing in it. So I think they were tickled to get some pictures and go home.
SB: How did you transport the plane down there?
HW: Well, it was in a box, sent freight, and then it was landed at a boat, down near Kitty Hawk. We have pictures of it.
WIFE: It was Sound Side.
HW: Sound Side, you see that's Albemarle and Albemarle Sound there. I don't know how they got it across, they must have thrown planks quite a distance there to get it off on the sand, but, then they had a horse drag it over and of course the wings. It was all in parts.
SB: Put it together after they got there.
HW: Yes.
SB Well, that really was quite a project just to get, of course that plane didn't weigh a whole lot did it actually?
HW No, I forget what it did weigh.
SB 1300 pounds or 1500 or something like that?
HW Yes, it...
SB All assembled.
HW I was going to say twelve but....
SB Well, maybe you're right, I don't know, but anyway, compare how you think of an airplane today, (laughter) a little bit more. You enjoyed this, little.....
HW Oh, yes, of course. I was over in the Sound catching, we had nets and catch these little fish, all kind of pretty little fish and then I used to go on the ocean side and I'd get my shirt stuffed with these corks off of the nets, the fishermen's nets, I don't know what I ever did with the corks but I had a good supply of them.
SB When did you become aware that your Uncles were very prominent, were, you know, sort of special?
HW I don't think I did. I mean....
SB They were just Uncles?
HW We used to get the papers with the headlines of that, and I used to have the feeling well why are they making so much over that? (laughter).
SB Sounds like kids doesn't it? (chuckles)
HW You don't think of them as well they're just your uncles, they aren't anybody.
SB Not anybody like Babe Ruth, or something like that?
HW No.
SB Well,
(break in tape)
SB Okay, here.
WIFE In knowing a little bit about his character, when we were married, he attended
the reception at my home, and it was arranged that he was to take us away to our car after the, to get away from the people, and it was parked on a back street and we had to run through a field, and it was one of those old time Franklin cars, and the driver felt high, and so we ran back over the field, and climbed in and of course other cars were starting towards us, but he buzzed right on pass them, just as speedy as he could be. Went out on to Dayton View, hit a couple of dead end streets, went right straight through the fields and on to the next street.

(laughter)

SB Oh, dear.

WIFE He enjoyed that sort of an escapade (laughter). And I think he had more fun at our wedding than we did.

(laughter)

SB Oh, dear.

WIFE So we went on through Dayton and clear out to his home before we could ditch the people. We dashed up the driveway on Harmon Avenue there and we ran in one door and right straight out the other, and went down over the hill and he threw on all the lights and as the guests came on up the hill behind us, well he opened up the door and said won't you come on in and we, of course, were long gone.

SB Oh, well bless his heart. He enjoyed it other words.

WIFE So that was the fun, and of course he saw two weddings of the nieces in his own home.

SB Oh, is that so.

WIFE Bus's two sisters.

HW My two sisters were married...

WIFE ...were married in his home. So he's had a lot of fun out of his own family I think.
It sort of made up for the fact that he didn't have one of his own.

That's right. And then he always was, of course, I can remember at, my family has known him ever since I was a little girl. And we always spent Thanksgiving, the family spent Thanksgiving at his house and they always spent Christmas Eve.

Is that so?

You might tell about his turkey that he kept for them.

Oh, this was a trick he pulled on the family, and because everybody liked dark meat, and he couldn't supply enough dark meat from the turkey. So he had them cook a duck and he sliced the duck and put it underneath the turkey and it was brought in and put before him. And he kept slicing out dark meat from underneath. (laughter)

(laughter)

And it was all duck.

It was all duck.

(laughter)

Oh, that's a good story. Well he did, he did enjoy...

He was a human, very human person and enjoyed a good.....

I just wondered how he escaped all the the young ladies. In Dayton, you know the widows, and all the eligible young ladies.

Well, his answer was always that he couldn't afford a plane and a wife too.

Well, yes, but even after he could afford, (laughter) after he got the plane...

I don't know why. I really don't, because he had a marvelous disposition, and we camped with him in Canada two summers, ourselves. He took me up the first year after I was married, and also the second year.

That was nice. And he was good company.

Yes very, very good company. In fact if we went home a little early one time because I had had a little upset of not being feeling good, and so he thought it was because he was running out of food. (chuckles)
Oh, is that so. Did he let you cook, or was he cook out there too?

He was a good cook, he was an excellent cook; he could bake pies, and he, he was particular, everything had to be just so. Like his toast, he had a special steel toaster he made which smashed the toast together and made it just crisp as he liked it. He also wanted his pies, his blueberry pies particularly, without any of the juice to run out of the top, and I tried to bake one up there, and he stood over me so, (laughter) and I was a home economics graduate.

(laughter)

Great, did he, I bet he didn't want his stove messed up maybe that was it.

No, he had a crispness he wanted in the crust, and he felt that that would make it soggy.

Oh, is that it. Isn't that interesting.

And...

He was very particular. I think it would be hard for the young bride up there, though, making him a pie.

It was.

(laughter)

Hard to make a pie, without that too. That's interesting. When he talked with you, what would he talk about?

Well he used to always tease me, because I was the home economist and I believed in vitamins and if he had any articles even in his office on vitamins that came in he would write my name on it, and mail it out to me, shoot it out to me just to remind me that there was new material on that, all the time. And that was just sort of a trick that he liked to do. (laughter)

Did he.

He always had some comment.

Comment about it too.

Oh, is that so, was he teasing you or.....

Yes, just teasing.
He loved to tease me. In fact he would take the opposite side. Many times, when we had our, when my husband was in the breeding of chickens, the broader chicken during the War, and was his specialty, and we used to take, he wouldn't eat anything else but my husband's chickens then, he thought they were the best. So I would take them in to him, and then he'd make me stay for lunch. And all during that lunch he would berate my husband, because he thought that would make me fire up, and he would get me to the point I'd be practically in tears.

But he just thought that was fun, that was teasing, and then his housekeeper would say afterwards don't let it worry you, Sue, he's having the time of his life. And then one day he had me in such a state that after I left she said, he said, "Sue was certainly in good form today." (laughter)

But he just thought that was fun, that was teasing, and then his housekeeper would say afterwards don't let it worry you, Sue, he's having the time of his life. And then one day he had me in such a state that after I left she said, he said, "Sue was certainly in good form today." (laughter)

He must have been (laughter), I hope.

Well, I think he had lonesome periods there, I really believe he did have lonesome periods, and when any of the family came around you were always welcome to stay. Many times on Sunday evenings my husband and I would stop in as late as nine or nine thirty if we were out in Oakwood, because, if we saw a light up there, we'd stop in, because we knew it meant a great deal to him. And he seemed to appreciate us doing that. We always apologized for it, but he never wanted us to. He'd say come in any time you feel like it. Always made us welcome.
That's nice. Who were his friends in Dayton that he would come out and see him.

Well, Colonel Deeds and Kettering, and, well he had the McCormicks from, where were they from Bus?

Well, McCormicks are from Dayton. At that time, she and her sister, Mrs. McCormick, was Cardinal Gibbon's niece, wasn't she?

Frank McCormick, isn't that Frank McCormick.

Well she was, now Frank McCormick was her husband.

But I remember meeting them out there a number of times.

Are they still living?

No, I think she's dead. Of course, she was a writer you know. Haven't you ever, Anne.....

Anne O'Hare McCormick.

O'Hare McCormick.

Oh, oh yes.

Well, now she's the one; well now she was a friend.

Ring the bell now. Okay.

One thing I've been trying to find, is where the the two of them were different in their personality.

Well, I think Wilbur was a very, you'd call him a genius in his mind. I mean he'd do anything well, and Orville was inclined, now Orville could write very well, but it was work for him. It wasn't natural, if you know what I mean. Wilbur did a lot, was inclined to be very moody, I mean, you'd find periods he'd be thinking, and not saying a thing. Uncle Orv was always...

Wilbur was more of an introvert, I guess to use a modern phrase.

Well, yes, but I've had people say that when he entered a......

(end of side three)

(start of side four)
SB I, in to...in within the family. The attitudes among the children?

WIFE No.

SB Do you remember?

HW Well she didn't...

WIFE Well, I didn't know Wilbur...

SB At all.

WIFE No, I can't remember Wilbur. You see, I'm a year younger even than my husband. And I cannot remember him at all.

HW Of course she.

SB Or the attitude, well I realize that. But I thought maybe. As Wilbur was remembered. In the family.

WIFE No particular difference. I read the diary that the grandfather wrote. There were a number of diaries that are in the possession of the family now that are very valuable. Of course those are all letters that came in when they were in Kitty Hawk or times of that sort you know. And they portray, I think, a lot of the character throughout those. But I don't particularly remember any one instance.

HW On those diaries, Uncle Orv didn't seem to think they were too accurate. In other words, Grandpa would miss a day or two and then go back on from what he remembered. But of course I think Uncle Orv was overly, you might say, trying to be overly accurate. Most of it is very.

WIFE Well there's more human impressions I think in the diaries, because they were letters written to him or to the family. And, of course, he recalled the incidents that were happening during the day when certain things happened to the boys maybe when they were making certain flights. And they notified home. They were very strong where, on in 1903, and that's what interested me most.

HW Well, I think he kept diaries, from 19...I think it was '58 to...

WIFE A lot of their dates are just.....

HW Up to '17 when he died.

SB Isn't that amazing. Have they ever been used by historians?
WIFE  No, no.
SB  They never have. Oh my.
WIFE  They are all little tiny letter downs, you know. And they are, they belong to 
the...
HW  They belong to the four.
WIFE  Four.
HW  Heirs.
WIFE  Heirs.
HW  In our family of course there's three of us left now.
SB  You and...
HW  My brother's dead.
SB  You and.....
HW  Ivonette and Leontine.
WIFE  Sisters in Chicago.
HW  But, Uncle Orv didn't want those to get out because he felt they were inaccurate 
in some thing.
WIFE  Well, I think he felt they were so personal things....
HW  Yes, partly that and partly he felt that grandpa put too much down from memory 
instead of putting it down right when it happened like he should, and....
SB  Well, of course he seems to have had an obsession with exactitude...
HW  Yes, he was. Inclined that way.
SB  Oh my. I hope you're careful to preserve those...
HW  Well.
WIFE  Oh, well they will be because....
HW  They belong to the, they belong to the three of us. Well Wick's got them now, 
but we're suppose to be any time we want them we can get them from one another.
SB  Would you be kind enough to let me read them?
HW  Well as you...
WIFE  They would never let them get out of their hands, that's the thing.
SB Well, I understand, of course not.

HW You ask Ivonette on that.

SB Okay, I would not want to take them out of your home, as far as that's concerned. Because that's a very, very personal thing, and something that you want to keep within your family.

WIFE But I do think, I really feel like, that they are valuable, and well...

HW Well they do show some characteristics that you probably wouldn't find.

SB That has distressed me, in reading about the brothers, that, they're all... they're never given any individuality. And nobody even within a family, they're always differences. I have four children, and people say, oh they look just alike, the two older ones are just twenty months apart, and they say, oh they just look exactly alike, and it hurts me as a mother, because they're very different.

HW Well, of course, Wilbur was the head of the family. I mean what Wilbur said on certain things went, and I know Uncle Orv used to kid Aunt Katharine, and Wilbur would say that's enough and they would stop right there.

SB Well, in the letters that he wrote from France, when they sent the plane over and he had to put it back together and he had to do it by himself, and he didn't have the tools, and he scolded them all. It really wasn't Orville's fault they had taken the plane apart, the customs people had, and then they had to put it back together carefully. Well of course Wilbur didn't know that, and oh, he wrote the scathing wire about all of things and he was just, it was almost like a father, writing to a son.

HW Well he was almost.

WIFE I think they were very critical of each other.

HW Oh, yes.

WIFE Very. Never messed with words. They'd say just exactly how they felt, if they didn't believe it was, correct.

SB Well, they had remarkably close family relationships it seems from what I...

HW Yes, they were very close.
SB Among all of them. Well, I've taken an awful lot of your time...

(break in tape)

(end of tape)
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