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AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID DALE DICKEY

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INTERVIEW BY

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KURT PIEHLER: This begins an interview with David Dale Dickey on March 6, 2003 at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, with Kurt Piehler, and -

JOHN BROWN: John Brown

PIEHLER: Let me begin by just starting with - you were born on July 27, 1927 in Williamstown, Martin County, North Carolina.

DAVID DALE DICKEY: Williamston.

PIEHLER: Williamston, excuse me. And your parents were - What were their names?

DICKEY: My dad was Charles Hadley Dickey, my mother was Billie Hall.

PIEHLER: And your mother was born in 1893, and your dad was born in 1888. Could you tell me a little bit about your parents?

DICKEY: Well, my father was a Baptist minister, he was also a writer. He did a, when I was a little boy, he did a column for the *Raleigh News-Observer*. At that time we lived in North Carolina. My dad was from Murphy, North Carolina, which is in the far western end of the state, in the mountains. He was born on a farm. My mother was from Cocke County, Tennessee, back in the sticks also, in the community that we know as Bybee today. Back then they called it Lick Skillet. They were - they were married right after World War I, and dad took several pastorates around the country. And when he went to Williamston along about 1923 or 24. That's where I was born and lived until I was seven years old. Then we moved to Raleigh, the capital city, and my dad died in 1937 when I was about nine. At that time, we moved to Morristown, Tennessee, which, uh, where my mother had lived as a high school student, as a young woman, and she had some property there in the family so we had a place to go. And so essentially I grew up in Tennessee, rather than my birthplace in North Carolina. I went to high school in Morristown, and after World War II, after my service, I came to UT here in Knoxville.

PIEHLER: Your father was a chaplain during World War I. Did he ever - I know you were very young when he died, but did he ever talk at all about World War I and what he had done?

DICKEY: You know, one of my great regrets is that I was too young ever to ask my dad about some of those things. I did talk to my mother about some of it, and she had some interesting stories to tell. And also, some of the writing that my father did, he wrote primarily for religious magazines, and his *Raleigh News-Observer* column was the Sunday column called "Small Town Musings," and it was a sort of a homey, philosophical type column. So a lot of his writings have yielded to me some information, maybe just incidental here and there, but I can put it together. But I know some of my aunts had told me that dad was a completely changed person when he came out of the army. They said that he had been deeply affected and saddened, and this was something I couldn't see because I never saw my dad as a sad person. He was such - you know, with me we were always having such good times and all. But he - I remember one of the things I read in some of his writings later on, he said it was so difficult to have to minister to all the different guys out there on the field. Here he was, a young Baptist preacher that had just gotten

out of college, and he was supposed to take care of the Catholics and the Jews and everybody, and he said it was just such an overwhelming thing, and he was so touched and so moved by ministering to their death, you know, their last rites, which was sort of foreign to his whole religion. But it evidently was a terrible experience for him overall. He never conveyed that to me.

PIEHLER: You didn't have that sense, but you - it sounds like you got it from your writing and you said from your aunt.

DICKEY: Yeah. I always - I was extremely close to my father. We were just good buddies. He took me with him everywhere, and he just gave me all kinds of attention all the time, probably just spoiled me to death. So, you know, my - my memories of him are only of the happiest sorts of kind. There's a little anecdote I might relate about dad and mother. My dad went to Carson Newman College in Jefferson City, and just about the time he graduated, a friend there at Carson Newman brought a pretty girl with him to campus one day, and my dad said, "Gee whiz, have you got a sister?" She said "Yes, I do." [Laughter] This is my mother's sister. They lived in Morristown at the time. But, uh, dad went on and, uh, took a church in Arkansas, and then he got called into the army. He still hadn't met mom, but they were corresponding with each other, and it happened that on his way to Camp Dix, New Jersey to ship out to Europe the train - I think it was coming from Missouri, it was scheduled to come right through Morristown. It was going to make a stop there. So he sent her a telegram and asked her to meet him at the train, and they'd never seen each other. I think they'd exchanged photographs. But sure enough, mom went to the train, and here were two thousand troops, and dad jumped off and ran over and hugged my mom and gave her a kiss, and everybody was hollering 'Look at the chaplain! Look at the chaplain!' [Laughter] And then from there, and I won't drag this out, but dad went on to Camp Dix. Fort Dix today, I guess. And my mother and her sister went up and visited with him. Sister was the chaperone for them, and they went up to New York City for the weekend, and they didn't see each other again until he came home, in 1918, I guess.

BROWN: So your father, was he - Did he grow up as a Baptist, or did he convert?

DICKEY: Yes he did [grow up a Baptist]. His mother I think had a lot of influence on his choosing to be a minister; that's what I've been told.

PIEHLER: Does any of the correspondence - Obviously, some of the writing survived from your father. Does any of the correspondence from your father survive from the war or afterwards?

DICKEY: Unfortunately, we had a lot of things stored in the garage in Morristown, and a big house across the street from the garage caught fire one night, and it consumed our garage too. Fortunately, there was a neighbor who didn't know what he was saving, but he ran in there and pulled out this file cabinet, and this was the writings of dad's magazine articles, newspaper articles, and some of his sermons, and many notes, but , but no letters. They were in a separate trunk, and they didn't survive at all.

PIEHLER: Oh, that's too bad.

DICKEY: Not a one of them.

BROWN: So your parents were both Republicans, weren't they?

DICKEY: Yeah.

BROWN: Did they talk politics much?

DICKEY: Not much. I remember down in Williamston, where I was born. Dad talked about the Republicans, and that was at a time when Hoover was going out and Roosevelt coming in, and I don't remember the specifics about it except that being from the mountain South, he was Republican, and there were lots of Democrats of course down there in the Coastal Plains, so - [Laughter] But it was a really amiable community, and this was a very small town, I guess it was about three thousand people at the time. Down in cotton and tobacco and peanut belt - really poor at that time - and everybody helped everybody else. You know, you asked about the Depression. I don't remember a lot about the Depression, but, but, what I do remember was so many people - It seems like an endless stream of them. I guess it was exaggerated in my mind. So poor, bedraggled man would come to the back door, and knock, and put his hat in his hand, and say, "I'd just like to wash up a little bit. If I could chop some wood for you, or maybe you could give me a little bite to eat," they'd always wanted to do something, to work, they weren't just asking for a handout. And these were people apparently that were coming back from the North, trying to go back home again cause they didn't have any work, and didn't know anyplace else to go. And my mother was a really good cook, and being the preacher's wife, you know, they were involved in all kinds of social things, and she cooked all the time. In our kitchen, we had three stoves. There was a wooden range, we didn't have any coal down there in the Coastal Plains, we burned wood, but there was a big old four eyed wooden range, and then there was a kerosine stove, and the great, wonderful day for my mom was when he got an electric stove. She cooked on all of them, all the time. She made pies and cakes, that was her specialty. And I think the - I think some of the transits got wind of that somehow, and they knew exactly where to go.

PIEHLER: When did your mother get an electric stove? It sounds like there's quite a memory of her getting this.

DICKEY: Well, before we got an electric stove, we got an electric refrigerator. And this would have been about 1935.

PIEHLER: So this was when you were in Williamston?

DICKEY: Still in Williamston, yeah. I would have been about six years old, in the first grade.

PIEHLER: Now, had you - Had you had electricity -

DICKEY: We had electricity, but the general countryside was still pretty primitive. There were a lot of shacks out in the country. In town there was a lot of tobacco money, there was some wealth from tobacco, tobacco because they traded in tobacco. The street we lived on, Church Street, was a pretty prosperous looking street, still is, by the way, it's been very well kept with great big

colonial type houses. This was sort of colonial country down there too. Where was I going with that? [laughs]

PIEHLER: Yeah, getting the stove - You didn't get these because of getting electricity then?

DICKEY: We had paved streets, at least right downtown where we lived.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

DICKEY: But the garbage pickup was till by an old colored fellow that came by, you know, horse and buggy, and he picked up the garbage, and I think, I think we kept the food garbage separate so he could feed that to his hogs. And the ice man also came by in a horse and buggy, and, you know, he chopped the right sized block to your icebox from a great big block he had in his wagon. So it was that kind of primitiveness, but of course we had indoor plumbing and electricity. Now the electricity, we had a lot of just bare light bulbs hanging from the ceiling. Now some of the more wealthy people had big chandeliers, of course. One of the things I remember about that era though in relation to my family was that my dad was in his role as a minister was pretty much like the town psychiatrist. People would come into our house at all hours of the day and night to talk to the preacher. They'd have troubles, or sometimes they'd come to get married, and I'd stand there in the front room and watch them get married. And if someone were sick, you know, you went to their assistance and if it was way out in - We didn't have a car at that time, but there were church people who did, and my dad would call up Jim Ed Harris and say 'Jim Ed, we've got a really sick person out in Evrets,' that's seven miles out in the country, and they'd get in the car at midnight and go out there to be with those people. That was just the general attitude of the whole community. I think the Depression induced all this. People were pretty much innately friendly, and hospitable, that was just characteristic, I think, at the time, but the Depression so heightened it because everybody had problems and troubles, and whatever you could do to help is what you did. Now, as I said, I don't really remember personally at home anything much about the Depression, because being a preacher's son, I mean, a preacher's family. You know, some people couldn't put a dime in the collection plate, but they'd bring you a bag of sweet potatoes. The guy down at the river would bring you a sack of fish or some frog legs. Now we ate really great. [laughter] I got nothing but good memories about that time. And where we lived on Church Street, the pastorium was right next door to the Baptist Church. There were three main churches in town all on that same street within three blocks of each other, and across the street from us was Judge Moore, and Doctor Kone, who was a dentist, and next door was Frank Barnes, who was a tobaccoist. These were pretty wealthy people, so the neighborhood I came up in, although we weren't wealth by a long shot, led me to have a really wonderful childhood. And the school I went to was only two blocks away, I walked to school. Law, I dreaded to go to school, I just hated it, and I can remember my dad literally dragging me, I mean he was digging into the sidewalk. [laughs] Dad was a very compassionate person, kind and understanding, but boy he'd bust my butt when I needed it. [laughter] [Crosstalk] He made sure I went to school, and then I adapted to it pretty quickly once I was there, and I have really good memories about the first and second grade.

PIEHLER: What memories do you have? Anything that sticks out?

DICKEY: Well, nothing of any great consequence, but there were lots of pretty little girls in the class, and I remember we sat - We didn't have desks, we sat at a table, and there would be eight of us sitting at each table, and we always had to take a nap after lunch, you had to put your head down. I couldn't sleep, and I pulled somebody's pigtails or something like that. [Laughter] Years later, I went back to Williamston, you know, just on a pass through visit going to the Outer Banks, and I found three of those pretty girls as young adolescents, and they were still pretty girls, believe me. [Laughter] But school for the most part, I guess I felt sort of privileged. I was an A student, and I made the honor roll, and that was expected of me, and I just took it for granted that I'd always be better than everybody else, I guess. Later in life, I sure got rid of that in a hurry. [laughs]

PIEHLER: I'm curious though when you were in Williamston. It sounds like you walked a lot to friend's houses, and so forth, is that -

DICKEY: Yeah, I walked all the time. Now I don't mean any great distances, but now also, my dad, when he had time, he liked to walk, I think, you know, just for meditation, and to get some relief from the tension. And there was a railroad track that we could walk about a mile down to the Roanoke River, and sometimes like on Saturday afternoon, we'd walk down to the river together. He was not a naturalist, but he loved the outdoors. In other words, he wasn't able to point out to me a lot this is a certain kind of flower or this is a certain kind of insect, which was something I really took to later on though, but he first introduced me to the outdoors, and having grown up in Cherokee County, North Carolina, I said Murphy, I think. That was the county seat. He was actually born in Ranger, that was a little community about seven miles west of Murphy, right on the - I forget the river - The Knotley River, and when he was growing up, the first railroad to come into Murphy was built, and it crossed their property, so he was a great train and I got that from him. I still like steam locomotives and trains. But we were always pretty much an outdoors oriented family, when we were able to get away. After we moved to Raleigh, when we had a car, quite often we'd go out in the country on a Sunday afternoon and have a picnic by a creek somewhere, things like that, and hike around the woods. My dad hunted a little bit, my brother who was seven years older than me, was able to hunt some with dad. I remember I went with them. Charlie, my brother, got a four - no a twenty gauge shotgun for Christmas. He would have been about thirteen years old. So we went rabbit hunting, my dad, and Charles, and me, and Charlie killed a rabbit, and I couldn't understand why they killed the rabbit, you know, when they said we were going rabbit hunting, I had pictured these little bunnies, and all, I just didn't comprehend, and I was so hurt that they killed the little rabbit. One of the things we did, my brother was always pretty adventurous, he grew up reading a lot of Mark Twain, we had a huge library. I was not a great reader as a kid, dad tried to encourage me when I just didn't do it. But my brother read everything that Mark Twain wrote, and I think that influenced him. He was always going out in the woods, he and some of his buddies, we were in a swamp there on the Roanoke River, just a half a mile from home, a really nice swamp. They'd go in there and collect snakes, and turtles, and chameleons, and sometimes they'd let me tag along, and we had a - we had big boxes in the backyard, and they'd fill with snakes, and the neighbors raised such a stink about it that we finally had to turn them all loose. [Laughter] Dad and mother encouraged that sort of thing, and of course they readily understood why the neighbors were upset, and there was no question about getting rid of them. But, but, what dad was encouraging, I think, was an interest in pursuing nature and learning about it, and actually having first hand information. My brother told

me in later years, he said that I was never afraid of the snakes, and I wanted to pick up all of them, and they had a copperhead back there, and a cottonmouth, and they had to teach me no, you can't touch those, and ever since that time, I've been very leery of snakes. I don't remember that, by the way, but they said that, you know, it was just natural, they were picking up the snakes and turtles, that I did too. But that was one of the nice things about growing up in a small town, and we spent a lot of time out in the swamp and out on Sweetwater Creek fishing, and sometimes we'd catch eels out of the creek, they were coming upstream from out of the Sound. Most of my immediate playmates were girls because it happened that all the immediate neighborhood, there were no boys my age. And my brother was always complaining that all I did was play with girls, and he'd go tell dad, "David's going to be a sissy, make him play with boys." It really bothered him, and that's just one of those incidentals, but being my big brother, and being seven years older, he'd beat up on me a good bit. We had a great love/hate relationship, he was just a wonderful guy, and we always loved each other, but we were always like this, you know [slaps hands together]. Always behind the backs of my mom and dad, and then he'd beat up on me, and I'd go crying to mom, and then dad would punish him. Typical arrangement, I think, of brothers growing up that way. We moved to Raleigh - Dad left the church in Williamston, he was offered the job of publicity director for the Baptist State Convention there in Raleigh, where his job was to travel around to churches all over the state and help them in their fund raising. He'd publicize their projects. He was sort of a public relations, publicity, home missions project, he was encouraging the home missions too. But when I wasn't in school he would take me with him on all these circuits all over the - every county in North Carolina. Often back into the little country churches. I remember one church we went to. I guess I was about eight years old then, it was out in the country from Siler City, North Carolina, and we went to somebody's home for dinner, you know, after church, dinner being the noon meal. They had possum and guinea, and persimmon pudding. I'll never forget those items on the menu, and I've never eaten possum since. [Laughter] But I don't have any bad memories. It was one of these huge country meals where they just put everything on the table. But this was still the sort of tail end of the Depression. And there was lots of, you know, home grown foods, sweet potatoes, and peas and beans and cabbage, and just everything just all piled up and they were huge, and you know, with a visiting pastor like that they always had to put on a little bit.

PIEHLER: You did - It sounds like you did quite a bit of traveling with your father while he was in the - He would occasionally take you along.

DICKEY: Yeah, whenever he could he took me along. This was mostly relatively local travel.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

DICKEY: I mean in the state of North Carolina.

PIEHLER: Big state.[Laughs]

DICKEY: Yeah, it's a long state. And there were a couple of occasions - he went down to Rome, Georgia to interview Martha Berry, who founded the Berry College there. Also, in that same trip, we went to Cuterville, Georgia where Carla Harris, who was a widow, had written a book: A Circuit Rider's Wife. We stayed about three nights in each of those places. Although I was pretty

young - this was when we lived in Williamston - I believe I was five or six - I have great memories of those two places, and how hospitable everybody was, and how attentive they were to my needs and all. I don't know why in the world dad took me with him to all those places. I mean surely, I must have gotten in the way, but I remember for some reason we went to Asheville one time, and he had a radio interview there. I sat - that was my first experience in broadcasting. After we moved to Raleigh, dad also had a weekly religious news program. It was only about five minutes long, but each week he'd give a religious report of some kind. This was not a sermon, it was really just news. And he would find an excuse to let me speak some line on there, you know. That was just the kind of relationship we had, and when my father died it was just the - it was the worst trauma I have ever suffered in my life. I'm sure you can see based on what I've said. But I didn't know he was going to die. I think everybody else did, and for one reason or another -

PIEHLER: Why did he [die]?

DICKEY: He had suffered from high blood pressure and from kidney disease depritis, which is associated - they often go together. He had - I just never saw him as being sick. My mom knew about it, and, as a matter of fact, she told me in later years that doctors had warned him that he had to slow down or he was going to die. The two of them talked it over - mother and dad did, and they decided he shouldn't give up his work. Maybe he could take it easy a little bit and slow down, but to give up his work would just be his death anyhow. So that, I guess, was just not disclosed to me My brother, being older, perceived a lot more of it, maybe talked more about it. When my dad got sick, you know, he was in bed at home for a couple of days, and I asked him what was the matter, and he said "Well, I've just got the Pip." Pip was a mountain term when you just sort of had the blahs, or maybe you got the flu or something. But they took him to the hospital a couple of days later, and he was still lucid, you know, and looked okay to me. I didn't know that going to the hospital indicated that something was serious. While he was at the hospital there in Raleigh he suffered a stroke on top of the other illness he had, and was unconscious. They moved him to the veteran's hospital in Port Smith, Virginia, and the last time I saw my dad I remember there at the train station in Raleigh. They were wheeling him out on a gurney. They placed the gurney in a baggage cart. Remember the old passenger trains that -

PIEHLER: Oh no, I'm a big train person, I know… the passengers -

DICKEY: But with the gurney they had him in the baggage cart to take him up to Norfolk. It was raining, and they kind of a plastic cover over him, and even then I didn't understand how sick he was. It's just - nobody said, and I just though "Well, dad's going to the veteran's hospital, that's where veterans go." His being unconscious I guess registered with me as he was just asleep. Now why the family wasn't more forthcoming, I don't know. It doesn't matter anymore. I guess I'm emphasizing that because that is - that experience of losing my father so quickly has strongly influenced everything else in my life ever since. I may not be able to give you specifics, but I do know that's it been… a constant presence with me. There isn't a day that goes by right now, I'm seventy-five years old, that I don't think of my dad, you know, just in passing. But that's how close we were. Then - and if I'm rambling, stop me -

PIEHLER: No, no, please continue.

DICKEY: But after… Dad died, we moved to Morristown. That just kind of pounded the trauma for me. This was a totally different kind of a place. Raleigh was just - at that time - was only 40,000 people. It was the capital city.

PIEHLER: Which is so funny - I mean, because 40,000 is not - I mean, compared to what Raleigh is now.

DICKEY: Oh yeah.

PIEHLER: I mean - you know, it's nothing compared to what it is now.

DICKEY: Raleigh… you know, the Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill research triangle, it's just one huge mega -

PIEHLER: Yeah, yeah. (laughs)

DICKEY: So please don't confuse that Raleigh with what I'm talking about. You know -

PIEHLER: But still, it was, by… this region's standard, it was a pretty large place though. Even at 40,000, I mean.

DICKEY: I do remember when we moved to Tennessee that somebody dug out the statistics that there was not a town in North Carolina, including Charlotte, that was as big, in population, as Knoxville. Now a lot of that is reversed now, of course. (Laughter) But what I was going to say about Raleigh is 40,000 people - that's still a relatively small town.

PIEHER: Yeah. Oh yes.

DICKEY: And everything really was in walking distance from me. We lived about… a mile from the Governor's Mansion and the Natural History Museum, the state capital, the legislative building, and downtown Fayetteville Street. And my recollection of it was such a clean place, it was so beautiful. And the schools were just really great then. It was - I can't think of a better environment in which for a young kid to live and grow up and to learn. There was just so much available there. So the contrast of coming to Morristown, which was still a little old mountain town, and pretty backward, frankly. Also, this was on the tail end of the Depression, and there was a lot of ignorance at hand, and a lot of poverty. Now we had seen a lot of that in Williamston, but somehow in the mountains - well, people in the mountains talked different too, you know. I saw them as ignorant because they didn't… talk right. Well of course their speech was every bit as valid as my own, but it was just so far into my ear. I don't know, the contrast with Raleigh. I don't really remember that much about Williamston's downtown - wasn't much of it. But in Raleigh, it was just so clean. In Morristown, you know, like any small town in East Tennessee, all the country people came to town on Saturday to trade. A lot of them came in on horseback, or with mules and carts. And poor folks, they… a lot of them hadn't washed in about a month, and… they would stand on the sidewalk and spit tobacco juice. I mean nothing against those poor folks, I have nothing but sympathy, compassion for them, but what I'm saying is that for me, as a little kid, I thought this was the end of the world. "My God, I got to get out of here," and I ran away

from home once. That didn't last long, I came back. (laughter) But I… I really… was never the same again. I was not a good student any longer. I cut up all the time, and in high school I was a complete - somehow, I got through high school, but I was a smartass. You know, I just plain was. I thought I was so smart, but I - it was some teenage rebellion, but in addition it was - I just angry at having losing my father, and having to come live in this lousy town. Actually, growing up in Morristown was quite an experience too. I have a lot of good experiences, but I still don't think of it as home. Home to me is still Raleigh. A Raleigh which doesn't exist, of course, but when I go through there now it's a search. You know, you just can't find it. It's something that maybe never did exist, but in my mind, that's still home.

PIEHLER: That's home.

DICKEY: You know we all have a place, I guess, and that is the place for me. And my father is buried over in Murphy, where he came from, and that's where I want to be buried too. Now I have lived all my adult life in Knoxville. I like Knoxville, there's no reason I have to stay here. I can leave, and I've threatened to do that, too. (laughter) But overall, I have found that all my needs are met here. I got lots and lots of friends and acquaintances. All my adult experiences - you see, I was - I came here as a News-Sentinel reporter. From there I became Executive Director of the Homebuilder's Association, and then ten years at the Chamber of Commerce. That kind of work has put me in contact with literally hundreds of different people. Now some of them I just barely know, but it still means something to be able to say hello to somebody. You just walk down the street, and you just wave and say, "who the hell is that?" But it's friendly, you know, it's comfortable. It's like - I don't make many close attachments, I'm just not that kind of person, but I really like people. I guess on my own terms, in small doses here and there. I really do. I like to talk with people, but I'm an introvert basically. But it's so nice to go to the post office - now there used to be on Gay Street, when everything was downtown, you could walk from one end of Gay Street to another, and you knew everybody. Well today, I'm lost. I don't see anybody that I know anymore. Of course, I'm older now, and all the people who were my colleagues downtown, they're not down there anymore either. So my home is really Bearden, that area - Bearden, West Hills area - which is where I have spent much of my adult life in Knoxville. I live in an apartment complex on Chestire Drive, which is just off of Kingston Pike behind the Olive Garden, if you know -

PIEHLER: Oh yes. I lived there for a year.

DICKEY: Oh, you did?

PIEHLER: For nine months, I know exactly -

DICKEY: Well, you know, that's - when I say Knoxville I'm really talking about the Bearden area, that's where - it used to be - it included UT and the Lawson McGee Library downtown. I had kind of a circuit that I made. I've taken lots and lots of non-credit courses here at UT, at night school, and I used to go to the library downtown about once a week. I don't do that anymore. But you can see the community that I'm talking about. Historically, this has been the place I know. And I've always had an affinity for Asheville and, as recently as two years ago, I was seriously considering moving to Asheville. I really went over, and I investigated everything. I did a lot of

research, I went around, I talked to people. I went to the newspaper. I checked on all kinds of apartment complexes, and all the surrounding environment. Man, I was ready to go, but when it came right down to it, I just could not… I just really belong here, so here I am. I still read about Asheville, and I still go there now and then, but I know now that I don't belong there.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

BROWN: Your mother worked at a retail store for a while, didn't she?

DICKEY: Yeah. When we went to Morristown, Mother had two sisters there. One of them had… established a woman's shop, a dress shop. Very successful with it. My mother had begun losing her hearing when I was growing up in North Carolina, by the time we got to Morristown, she was nearly totally deaf. But she could work in her sister's store in the back. She could handle the books, and the ordering, and all those - and at that time, when the war came on - what did they call it? The OPA? I don't know.

PIEHLER: Yes, Office of Price Administration.

DICKEY: But you had to price everything, and you had to coordinate with the government. There was price controls of some kind, and my mother did all of that, and my aunt said that was just priceless, that no one else could have handled it like Mom. Mom, having to live within herself as she did, you know, she took to it, because she couldn't participate in normal conversation. She could do a little bit of lip reading with some people, but she was never trained in lip reading. This, too, contributed to my… feeling of something of an outsider in Morristown. I didn't quite fit in. My Mom was deaf, and I didn't have a father, and we lived almost right downtown. That's where Mom's property was. The other kids lived further out in the neighborhoods. Now I didn't have any problem at all mixing in with the other kids. I had lots and lots of friends and acquaintances, but I never felt that I was the same, if I'm making any sense. I had intimate friends, still do, from Morristown, but I didn't quite attach myself to them. I'm a little bit embarrassed about that because in some cases, the friendship was really pretty close, but they may have put more into it than I did, and looking back on it, I think I didn't give my share like I should have. I think that just has bearing on my total background, and where I come from today. I guess that's about everything I want to say about that, I don't know.

PIEHLER: I'm curious that in Morristown - I mean, you mentioned that it was a very different community from downtown Raleigh, the town of Raleigh. What did you do for fun while you were in Morristown? You mentioned, you know, you did a lot of activities with your father.

DICKEY: Well, I almost immediately took up with another kid who didn't live close by, but about a mile away. He had a father, but his father had a bad alcohol problem, and would disappear for three months at a time. So in a way it was like two fatherless kids. Bones Atchley. And Bones was outdoor oriented. Bones' father was a great fisherman, and he had taught Bones to fly fish and to bass fish too, with rod and reel. On the other hand, I was oriented - my brother by that time had had about a year in college, and he had gotten me interested in zoology and geology. So I was forever out collecting beetles and butterflies and rocks and minerals and fossils. Bones was oriented to squirrel hunting and trout fishing, but the two of us just naturally fit together. And the

two of us, before we began hell raising, spent a lot of time out in the woods and fields. Morristown was small enough at that time that you didn't have to go far to be in a lot of open country. You know, that's hard to do anywhere anymore. It's one of the reasons I came back to East Tennessee, was there was so much beautiful countryside, fields, and woods. Now they're all filled up, you know. Bones and I, and we had some other friends who would join us from time to time, we'd do a little camping and Bones got interested in butterfly collecting with me, and we had a friend who ran a filling station, an all night filling station, with big spot lights. These big moths would be attracted to the lights at night, and they'd literally call me at two o'clock in the morning and say "Dickey, come over here. We have some kind of strange bug flying around." Bones and I would go over there and collect those big bugs. Well, we prowled a lot at night, that was a part of it, but we were so interested in, you know, as we… became teenagers, and had all the problems that teenagers have, we did a lot of talking, wandering around, and looking for girls. We didn't know what to do with a girl anyhow. (laughter) Then we learned to shoot pool. A kid moved to Morristown from Middlesboro, and he had friends back in Middlesboro, and we would hitchhike over there on weekends sometimes. If there were football games, say up at Greeneville or Bristol, we'd manage somehow to go up there. I didn't start drinking until I was about sixteen, but I started smoking when I was thirteen. There was a lot of drinking in those days. Of course Morristown was dry. As a matter of fact, in part of that period, beer wasn't even legal.

PIEHLER: But there was still a lot of drinking among teenagers it sounds like.

DICKEY: Oh yeah, and there was plenty of bootlegging going on. My God, I don't know why anybody, once he'd tasted moonshine, would even do it again, but we did. (laughter) We'd go over to Newport. You know somebody would always have a car, I'm talking now when I was fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, and we'd go to Newport and we'd go to - they had a lot of speakeasies and bars, and we thought that was really hot stuff, to sneak around to all those places, you know, and they had dance halls. This was sinful places, we just loved being there. (laughter) So we did a lot of that kind of running around in high school. We weren't heavy drinkers, but on an occasion like that, we'd pretend we were a big guy, we'd take a drink. Usually get sick on it.

BROWN: Wasn't Newport the self-proclaimed "Moonshine Capital of the World"?

DICKEY: It was more than self-proclaimed. (laughter) In 1952, when I was a newspaper reporter, I did a lot of work up there around Cosby, I would go with the revenuers. What was then the ATU: Alcohol and Tobacco tax unit on raids. It was unbelievable the number of stills that were up there. When we were in high school, by the way, we used to go over there and park at the foot of the mountain at Cosby. I know you've heard about how those souped up forty-one Fords came off of that mountain hauling liquor. That's no exaggeration. You could hear them cranking up way up on the mountain, and they would come zooming off of there, I mean - unbelievable. Often, the highway patrol would be waiting for them, and the chase would go on and on. I don't know if all that came out in Thunder Road: The Movie or not, I never did see that, but I understand a lot of that same sort of thing was in there. But what I was going to say is the ATU itself said that Cosby had more moonshine stills per-capita than anyplace in the world. (laughter) Now subsequently, when I was a reporter, they lost that to Wilkes County, North Carolina. I don't know why, but it really was the moonshine - I mean it was just accepted, it was the right to do that, they didn't see anything wrong with it. You know, with that mountain sense of fairness and morality, if they got

caught, they got caught. They'd go before a judge and say "yes, sir, I was making liquor," and they'd send him off to Atlanta for two years in the pen, and he'd come right back and do it again. But if he got caught, he knew that was the law. Now they would try to evade the law, but once caught, hey, you know - and they would kill each other, you know. Very religious people, lived by the Bible, but they had the right to shoot you or whatever. But that made an interesting place to go to from Morristown, and a lot of that spilled over into our community too. Bootleggers. There was one guy, Ed (Freshour?), he'd drive down the highway, and his house sat right on the highway, and any hour out of the day or night, you drove up to his bedroom window. He had a cash register just sitting there in his bedroom. (laughter) He'd give you a pint of whatever he had, and just ring it up. Those cars I was talking about, hauling the moonshine out of Cosby, if you saw them when they didn't have a load, they all had these great big overload springs on them. The back end would sit way up in the air. (laughter) So you could always tell who was a moonshine runner. But when they were fully loaded, you know, they just sat down perfectly flat. It was an extremely interesting place to grow up. I don't mean just because of these more outside activities. East Tennessee is honey combed with caves, for example. You know, it's lime stone country. We found lots of caves, and we explored lots of caves, and that was a learning experience, as well as being an adventure and excitement. We would hike as far as - I think Buzzard's Cave was nine miles one way, and we'd hike out there and go through. It was on the river. There's something else I was going to say: When we went to Morristown, we had the Holston River about three miles from town, and we'd frequently walk down there or ride our bicycles down there and explore. And then, about 1940, they built Cherokee Dam, and so they ended a lot of our old stomping grounds. But it brought a totally new environment, and, you know, about the second or third year of the reservoir coming up, the fishing is just fabulous. It came up over all this vegetation, and they feed and grow. We'd go down there and cast a top water plug, and boom! We'd catch a bass. And we thought that bass fishing was going to be like this hard time. It was easy. But we did have some fabulous fishing. I've never been a big hunter, but I always liked to go hunting, mainly for the outdoor experience. So Lee Lawrence and I, and Bones Atchley, we'd sometimes go duck hunting. We would hitchhike, with our shotguns, and we didn't have any trouble getting a ride down to the lake. It was just the temper of the times; people didn't think like we do today. We'd slog around in the mud all day, this would be on the weekend, you know, we didn't skip school for that. We hardly ever got in range of a duck, but it was just… glorious to me out in - you're in some pretty severe weather extremes, but that was part of it: pitting yourself against the elements. I don't know if we thought we were Tom Sawyers or what, but it was a great feeling, and I still retain that. I love to be outdoors. I don't hunt and fish either anymore, but I do some of the same things. I can still go out and wade in the creek, and I don't need an excuse for it anymore. If I just want to stand in the creek, by God, I'll stand in the creek. It feels good. (laughter) Now I can get away with it. "Look at that crazy guy!" I don't care. I've been divorced for thirty-three years, so I have lived by myself for all this time, and I am a pretty private person as a result. Being something of a loner, I go outdoors a lot. I mention that because part of hunting was - you know, the game you can bring home, whether it be ducks or rabbits or squirrels or doves or geese. You ate them. I killed two deer in my life. That's something I don't want to do anymore, but back in my hunting days - well, how can I use that meet now, living by myself? I don't want to kill something just to kill it. That's beside the point as far as I'm concerned. So for a long time I did a lot of with a camera what I had done with a gun. Now I don't even use a camera, I just sit and visualize it.

[END OF SIDE ONE]

[START OF SIDE TWO]

PIEHLER: I'm curious - Did you go to movies at all when you were growing up?

DICKEY: Yeah.

PIEHLER: Any movies stick out?

DICKEY: I've never been a big movie fan. I'm not today, although I have a daughter who's an actress, and she has been in some movies. Of course, I go to see her. (laughs) But as a kid, the Saturday movie was a big thing. It was always a double feature. In Morristown, I could go for a dime, and that was about four or five hours because it had two features. One of them was a cowboy movie, and I don't know what the other one was. There would be serial adventures that would -

PIEHLER: Like Tom (Nicks?)

DICKEY: Something like - it was just for fifteen minutes, then you'd have to come back the next week and - like a soap opera, I suppose. Then at that time, you know, there was no television. That was way far into the future. But they had what they called the march of time, which was kind of a news feature that would always be six weeks out of date by the time we got it, but at least we could see pictures of what had been in the news. Then there'd be a cartoon and a comedy. So that's what we did on Saturdays. We spent the whole afternoon at the movies. Those movies that I did go to - after I was in high school - I never had one girlfriend, but I dated some. When I said dated, I didn't have a car. That usually meant taking your girl to the movie. The movies during that era - you see, we're talking about World War II coming on. I'm talking about the early '40s, I guess. And the movies were all highly romanticized. You had… some really fine actors and actresses. A lot of them were real gentlemen and ladies. Had grace and (aplaum?) and actual - a lot of intellect, I think. Not all of them, of course, but they adhered to all the old traditional family values, which was a little - you know, they would smoke occasionally, something like that, or maybe have a cocktail. But the good guys always won, and the woman was always loyal, and there waiting for you. The husband, despite all - the husband or boyfriend, despite all the temptations, he was always true. They'd come home and live happily ever after. We were imbued with that. That was the outlook that we literally believed was in store for us, which was also quite a comfort. And of course, the war itself brought about a lot of changes in people's mores and feelings. A lot of guys who went away for four years, they came home and their girl was not waiting for them. You couldn't really blame the girl, but he expected her to be there. A lot of the guys who came home were not the same guy that left, of course. Many of them - even if they hadn't seen any combat - many of them had grown up and changed drastically. It seems to me, that although that was a wonderful period when the war was over and everybody came home and everybody was happy, it seemed like that was really the beginning of all the - what, to me, has been the falling apart of everything I ever believed in. You know, when I say that, I'm talking about the… Vietnam War, and the race riots, and the assassinations, and the change from swing music to rap music, all the demonstrations, the drug scene. All of this was so foreign to our

expectations - burning the flag. You can't imagine, at your age, what that meant to someone of my age who had experienced World War II. It was just unbelievable. All those things - I think it influenced my marriage too, and a lot of other people's marriages. Marriages began to really fall apart. It's like people didn't have the same discipline they once had, or the same investment - not sincere. What I was trying to say was I think the drastic changes that occurred in World War II must have been the beginning of that. That's just my own feeling about it.

PIEHLER: Now you mentioned - You don't have to name names, but you said that you had a sense that when people came back, one, that you knew girls didn't remain loyal. It sounds like in Morristown, some girls you knew - And also, that you could see a change in some older… friends, or friends of your brother. Do you have any particular people you have in mind? They came back from the war, and they were clearly a changed person?

DICKEY: You know, I don't have specific people in mind as I'm talking, but I can think of several. One really happy-go-lucky guy, Charley Harold, who was the town clown, he was two years older than me. We were in high school at the same time. I was one of the little kids, and he was one of the older guys. He was a drummer in the band, and he had aspirations of being a professional drummer. He was drafted, and in France, he caught a bullet right in his wrist, and that ended his drumming career. Well he was discharged, and sent home, and he didn't really lose his sense of humor, but he became extremely sarcastic, and he had a terrible drinking problem. He just went to hell. He just fell apart. Ultimately, some years later, he killed himself. This was many years later, but he did.

PIEHLER: The war had really changed his life forever.

DICKEY: That was a case were a specific person changed.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

DICKEY: Other guys would come home, I don't know if they were just more mature, or more embittered, or both. As I said earlier, many of them had not actually had combat experience, but they had had the experience of giving up home for three and four years, and maybe being sent off to some God-forsaken place, and having to live with four hundred other guys in a barracks. Common bathroom with fifteen commodes lined up with no separation, no doors. Having to get up and run, and try to shave with twenty other guys in the same - and then run and get in formation. This was a pretty drastic change. A lot of these guys were either married, or at the point of being married, or at the point of going to college, and they had great ambitions, and dreams, and all of a sudden that was stopped. Now I'll have to say that practically everybody I knew willingly went. They wanted to go. This was the spirit and the tenor of the times. Everybody wanted to contribute to that war effort, and believe me, everybody did, one way or the other. I don't think there's any way to convey to today's people that didn't live then how closely knit everybody was. It was like I said about the Depression, it was just - people just… they'd do anything to help each other. Like I was talking about hitchhiking down to the lake with a shotgun for God's - and nobody minded picking us up. I remember one time when I was in high school, Bones and I had come to Knoxville for something. I don't know if it was a football game or what, but we were hitchhiking home late at night, about midnight, and nobody was picking us up, and it

was cold. A bus stopped and we said "Go on, we don't have any money," they said "Get on, get on," and took us to Morristown. It was just - you know, it was two kids who needed to go home. It didn't matter that we didn't have any money, they just took us anyhow. That was so characteristic. I mean we had a lot, you know, we had gas rationing. Not everybody had a car. If you did have a car, you were extremely limited in what you could do. You couldn't buy new tires. There was a lot of bootlegging going on, and I think powerful people, influential people, politicians and wealthy people somehow got around some of that. But because of all those things, we willingly - you see, there was hardly a person alive, in my experience in Morristown, that didn't have friends and relatives in the war somewhere. Some of them got killed. This was community event, you know, if John Franklin was killed, everybody knew it. The standard procedure was the Western Union boy - at that time, telegrams were delivered by uniformed Western Union boy who rode a bicycle in our town - and he handed the envelope to the mother, and when she'd open it, it would say "The War Department regrets to inform you." Everybody knew those things were coming, but it hit close. It didn't hit my family, directly.

PIEHLER: But you knew of people who got telegrams?

DICKEY: And just see them fall apart. Now everybody knew this was going to happen. My brother, who was seven years older than me, was in the Navy Air Corp. We never knew where he was. He would write to us, but he couldn't disclose his whereabouts. We'd read in the paper about some big Naval engagement and say "wonder if Chum was in that one?" Actually, he had three tours of duty in the Pacific on aircraft carriers, the Lexington and the Enterprise, which were two of the big ships. He got the Navy Cross, which is the highest award the Navy gives, and he got, I think five Air Metals, and four or five distinguished Flying Crosses. He was highly decorated, and I think… he was a genuine hero in the sense of what he got the Navy Cross for. In my mind, everybody who fought in that war was a hero. I really mean that, every last one of them, to me. I saw them then, and I do today as heroes because of the sacrifices they made. I went in after hostilities had ceased, but I got a pretty good taste of what military life was like, and all the suffering that they had to go through. My brother, after dad died, he had gone off to college, and he wasn't really at home very much, but nevertheless, he sort of filled in as a father for me on those occasions. I was really close to him. As I said earlier, we had a love/hate relationship that lasted all our lives. Chum died about three years ago. We still had our ends and outs, but we loved each other, and we knew that, and we told each other that. I worried about him all the time. I was so proud of him, though, you know, I had a big brother in the Navy Air Corp, and he sent me a Navy Flying jacket with a collar on it. I wore it to school every damn day of my life. Air Squadron insignia - he was a torpedo bomber pilot. Big patch on the jacket; it was a vulture, a buzzard riding a torpedo. (laughter) Nobody else in the whole school had a Navy Air Corp jacket. (laughs)

PIEHLER: Well, I mean, aviation was so glamorous then too -

DICKEY: It really was.

PIEHLER: And then to have a jacket like this, not only your brother, but the jacket with it.

DICKEY: And boy, I'll tell you what, when somebody came home - you know, after basic training, frequently people would get a leave to come home before going overseas. So there was always some military person in town or group, and they were all - it was such a joyous occasion, they came home, and they'd go to an event. They'd have dances, and they'd have parties, and everybody was so happy to get together. It brought people together, even people who never associated much with each other, because you had that in common. But the uniforms were pretty attractive, particularly to the women. You know, if a guy came home in an Army, Air Force pinks and greens, and that crushed hat, God Almighty, was he glamorous. And the Navy uniform wasn't to be sneezed at either. The Army enlisted men's uniform was pretty tacky. (laughter) All drab, and the shirt and pants color didn't quite match, but even they too enjoyed, you know - Everybody wanted to know "What's it like? What's it like?" and "Where are you going to go?" or "Where have you been?" But then, when they left, I think most people wrote letters. I think those of us in high school, lots of us, wrote letters that we would never think of doing otherwise, because you wanted to support the servicemen. You didn't know if he'd even get the letter or where he was, but it turned out that was just about the most important thing to a GI overseas was the mail. It was more important than anything.

PIEHLER: Did you regularly write your brother while he was overseas?

DICKEY: I wrote my brother about every day. I really did.

PIEHLER: And he really - Did he appreciate it? I mean, did -

DICKEY: He wasn't - my brother was never very expressive about emotional things. He was more the masculine silent type, I guess. He had trouble being open in that regard. But he did appreciate them, and he let me know that. It's just he didn't make any big deal out of it. He wasn't - he didn't show any sentiment or -

PIEHLER: I'm curious about your - you mentioned how people were changed by the war. Did you notice your brother changed by the war? In what ways?

DICKEY: He came home an alcoholic. A very bad alcoholic. And I saw that in lots of others. He might have been an alcoholic anyhow, you know. But it was - the guys - so many of them who came back were heavy drinkers. I'm not saying all of them were alcoholics, but it was the only relief they could get in some cases.

PIEHLER: It's interesting you mention that, because I once interviewed someone, and he was talking about the - the president of where I used to be, at Rutgers. He would say - he was also a World War II veteran, you know. When he was president, he used to, everyday - every lunch, he'd go faculty club and spend about four hours there, and he'd have four cocktails. And that wasn't considered necessarily - I mean, if our current president did that, had four cocktails everyday at lunch, the whole campus would know within six months. That our president potentially has a drinking problem.

DICKEY: Yeah, yeah.

PIEHLER: But this was standard operating.

DICKEY: Well, I don't know how much the soldiers coming back influenced our liquor laws, but I suspect again that over a period of time it strongly influenced… you know, it was only about 1960 or 1961 that Knoxville got legal liquor. And then it was only package stores. And then -

PIEHLER: I've read there was a big fight over liquor by the drink.

DICKEY: Oh God, you can't imagine. But see, that was the norm. There's that peculiar mixture of vote dry but drink wet. (laughter) All these Bible Belt people, they practiced their religion, but… they make little exceptions here and there. That's okay somehow. But many people - this is true- many people didn't want to give up the luxury of simply calling up the bootlegger and saying "Bring me a bithe of chinley." They didn't have to go out and buy it, they just get on the phone and it was delivered to them. The only thing about it was you couldn't always get the brands you wanted. But you could get some liquor. There was a place on Sutherland Avenue. I forget the guy's name, it'll come to me later. But you drove around the back of his house, and it was like that Ed (Freshour?)'s window in Morristown. (laughter) You drove around back and, "What do you want?" He'd go back into the kitchen and come out. And everybody knew it was there. The police were paid off in some way. Everybody knew that too. More interesting, over here - Dale Avenue and Seventeenth Street - I don't even know what's there now, but there was a great big open field on the west side of Seventeenth Street. There was a huge wood pile. Slabs of wood and logs, the guy sold wood. And we called it "Drunk John's Alley," because you drove into an alley between all this wood, and Drunk John would come out and go "What do you want?" and say "Well, I want Jack Daniels." He knew exactly which piece of wood to pick up to find Jack Daniels. (laughter) And I mean, he had a virtual liquor store there. But we had to go through all this charade. But with that having gone on historically for God knows how long, people were so accustomed to it. And many people still didn't want to admit that they drank, and so they didn't want to be seen going into - Because if the preacher saw them going into a liquor store, see that was a bad sin. It was a sin. There's still people that think that way, but not commonly anymore I think. I wanted to say something else about the soldiers and being in Morristown. One thing I remember when a Vet or a trainee got to come home, he was so proud, you know, to be home, and so happy to be home. And they had all these little ways of showing off. But Bob Harris, who was an older guy, was in the Air Force. It was the Army Air Corp then. It was changed later. It was Army, it was not a separate Air Force. But he was ferrying a B-17 bomber. You know, that's a big four engine bomber, from somewhere out west back east. And we were sitting in class in high school one day, and we heard this damn air plane coming, and we looked out the window, and here came this B-17 right down at rooftop level. I mean, it looked like he was going to crash right into us. We knew it was some hometown boy, and he came across high school with those props pitched to make the loudest racket. I mean (boom, boom) (laughter). He flew down Main Street the same way. And I mean, people ran out of the stores, you know, hollering and waving, and of course he couldn't see them, but we knew it was a hometown boy, and it turned out it was Bob Harris. But other guys, if they had a chance, they didn't say anything, they'd come in at rooftop level. That was just so sensational. We weren't familiar with aviation, and to see a hometown boy come in like that, a fly boy, and saluting his hometown, it was just pretty thrilling, and made you, as a boy, that much more… gave you that much more desire to go get into the service, so you could do that too.

PIEHLER: I'm curious, in your high school, did you… say, have a bond drive or any scrap drives. Do you remember any of those things in your high school in Morristown?

DICKEY: Yeah, we frequently would collect scrap iron. In fact, I cleaned out our basement at home. There was an old hot water tank, and some plumbing pipes that were left over from remodeling earlier. We would go around and collect whatever we could. It would be particular drives, like Saturday, set out what you've got, and we'll pick it up. Also, we saved drippings from cooking, bacon grease, ostensibly those fats were used in explosives manufacture. I don't know if that was really true or not, but we collected grease. And we saved tin foil. Lots of candy bars and chewing gum were wrapped in tin foil, and you'd - and cigarette packages, and you'd just keep adding a sheet and filling it up. And I don't remember just where we donated that, but there'd be some collection place or drive. And that was fairly constant. Now on war bonds, that was - there were lots of posters in the community, like at the Post Office, and other public places, encouraging you to buy bonds and to "zip your lip," you know, to keep all the war secrets. So many workers in Morristown and all over East Tennessee were commuting to Oak Ridge at that time. People from Johnson City commuted to Oak Ridge. I mean, that's a hundred and -

PIEHLER: That's a long commute.

DICKEY: They would car pool, or they'd have buses, and some of them, as Oak Ridge grew, they would stay at a barracks for a week, and they'd go home on the weekend. But, a lot of people just did volunteer community work. Like there was a soloist in the Methodist Church and a woman soloist in our Baptist Church, and they came to the high school periodically for a - we had a - I guess it was called a Chapel Program, you know, we had an assembly in the auditorium for various purposes. Every once in a while, they would come and sing patriotic songs. The idea being to encourage us to buy war bonds or to encourage our parents to buy war bonds. It was always emphasized "We've got to win this war," and you know, everybody in that high school had somebody close to them that was in that war. It was that close. You know, if we weren't actually fighting the war, we had to do something, because it was by no means assured we were going to win that war. Looking back on it now we say, "oh yeah, we won it," but God Almighty, you know, they… took out our whole Pacific Fleet. We didn't do to well in North Africa when we first invaded over there. We got the hell beat out of us. Even up to D-Day there was no assurance that was going to work either, and it darn near didn't, you know, there was a lot of tragic circumstances about D-Day. So it was almost like a religious commitment with us. A lot of people grew what they called "Victory Gardens," which was encouraged by the media, you know, coming from the federal government. But people did actually have a little garden in their backyard that otherwise they wouldn't. And it's a good thing they did, because often the food was going to feed the servicemen. We never felt deprived, but you couldn't get much sugar. It was rationed, and you could get a little bit. And meat was pretty hard to come by, because most of the meet went to the services. I don't know how many hundreds of thousands of people we had in this country, and overseas too, but they had to be fed. Incidentally, going back those guys endured, and how they were changed, right after I got divorced, that was in 1969, I was reduced to living in a trailer for a while. (laughs) It cleaned me out. But I lived with some interesting people in the trailer park. And one guy who was a nice friend, we used to get drunk together, he had joined the Marines when he was sixteen years old. He lied about his age. So many people have lied - they

wanted to go. I wasn't that eager to go, I wanted to finish high school first. But I wanted to go. But it turns out that this kid, sixteen years old, after being trained at - I think at Pass Island for about two months, was sent to the South Pacific. And he was in the South Pacific for four years. Never got a leave or a referral to come home. He was on one island after another, living however they could in that damn tropic equatorial heat. How he came home normal, I don't know. He was reasonably normal. He drank a lot. But he had his own business enterprises, he was an entrepreneur, and he had several different little businesses, and he lived comfortably. He rented out some trailers too. So he seemed to be adjusted, but… when he would drink, he would talk about how - he didn't talk about combat, which he saw a lot of, he'd just talk about how horrible it was to not have a girl, to not have a home, to not have a mom and dad, for four years. That was not an a-typical experience.

PIEHLER: It's striking to me, because you sort of said, when you were talking about movies, that you have a very different image, I think, on the movies. Of what it was supposed to be like, and these experiences you're describing - it strikes me as something of a clash from what -

DICKEY: I think you're right, and there huge contrast - I think what I was trying to imply was that life was so sedate and sweet and everybody got along, and everybody loved everybody. And we were sort of living that kind of life, because of these hardships, and… I guess the old religious virtues had been pretty strongly instilled in all of us, and we had no reason to doubt it, you know, we took liberties with it as kids, but we really thought everybody would grow up and settle down, and love each other. And I don't know if it ever was really that way. But you see, that's the message we got from the movies, and from magazines. The magazines we had at that time were mostly - well, for the women, there were ladies magazines; Ladies Home Journal, and McCalls, and I don't know what else. Not much of the glamour and sex magazines, which is about all we've got now for males or females. They have different mastheads, but it's all about sex anyhow. (laughter) And we had Curriers and Saturday Evening Post, and Liberty Magazine were the three big ones, and they were basically short story magazines. And the short stories always had a happy ending, or they had a trick ending, like O Henry, or sometimes they had a dramatic, tug of the heart ending. Some of them were war stories, and sometimes it was about the loss of the war and the grieving. But it was always in the long run, it's going to be okay. That was - I don't want to call it propaganda, I don't think the government did that, I think that's just the way that the general temper feeling was at the time. The government I know, did a lot of propaganda, a lot of it, that we didn't recognize at the time. Or what we did recognize was the good propaganda. But, you know, the posters with the Japs - and I still think of them as Japs, I'm sorry, I know that has racist connotations, and I don't mean that, but that's what they were presented to us as. The posters would have some little grinning gorilla-like creature, it was little savage Japanese. This is what we believed they were like. Now, let me qualify that a bit. You know, they were brutal people, and they were so committed to their role in the war, and they thought their Emperor was divine, and they wouldn't give up, and they fought to the very bitter end. You look on the history of the Japanese Armies, what they did in China and Bhurma, the rape and pillage and murder and slaughter, we're talking about Hitler and Stalin, but the Japanese truly were engaged in a lot of horrible stuff. And a lot of our combat troops ran into some of that. So that - see, you're… Christian upbringing goes out the window at war. You say, "Let's kill those sons of bitches." I never wanted to kill anybody in my life, but had I had to go into combat, I don't have any doubt that I would have gone in there with the purpose of killing people, before they killed me. I don't

mean I would have enjoyed this, but it was my duty, my responsibility, and my desire to protect my country. And fortunately, I was spared all that. It just popped into my mind, going back to my brother, he, like many others, did not talk about his war experiences as such. He'd talk about leave in San Diego, and all the night clubs they went too. Sometimes, if you got them drunk, they would spill out a little but of stuff. Not much though, it might have - all the vets I have ever know, and I've talked to many of them, they just didn't talk about specifics. And you say, "Well, Charlie Harold got shot in the wrist. Charlie, where were you? What was it like?" And I remember, one day he said was, he said the first German that he ever shot, he was France, and they were going through some shot up village, and Charlie rounded a corner, and he said there was this German with a rifle. And he said he was an old guy, looked like he was about sixty years old, in an old tattered overcoat, with a rifle. And Charlie said I shot him before he could shoot me. I shot him. And then he said, "My first feeling was, what in the hell did I do that for?" You see what he was resting with. That's what the war was for him. And very soon after that was when he got shot, and he got sent home, and he didn't have to go through that anymore. I feel somehow that's the kind of thing my dad went through in World War I. You know, if you see the movies like *All Quiet on the Western Front* you get some notion of the trench warfare, and the horrors of that.

PIEHLER: Did your father see that movie, *All Quiet*? I'm curious, because it came out when your father was still alive.

DICKEY: I'm confident that he did, and I'll tell you why. I remember seeing that movie. I must have been five years old.

PIEHLER: You saw it when it came out? Roughly about the time.

DICKEY: I have often wondered why in the world my parents - I guess it was my parents - took me to that movie.

PIEHLER: They had taken you as a five year old?

DICKEY: Somebody took me, and I assume it was my parents. You see, we used to - we had the one movie house, and I don't think talkies had been there but about a year. That was the big place to go. I remember seeing a few films that were not talkies, and they'd have the subtitles. And I couldn't read. (laughter) I didn't know what was going on. But I was so moved by *All Quiet on the Western Front*, not the movie, but one scene that I vividly recall to this day, and I don't know if I'm recalling it accurately. But I think it was Lou Aires was playing the role of a soldier that had been shot, and he was lying and dying on the battlefield, and a butterfly lights near him. And he's… reaching for it, and I think he gets a sniper bullet. I can't tell you how that influenced me, I can only say it's always been a vivid memory in my head, whether I've got it accurately or not, it's still there.

PIEHLER: And… as a five year old, to see *All Quiet*, it must have left -

DICKEY: You see, I don't really remember anything else about the war aspects, it was just that one scene, and, you know, perhaps if I saw the film again, and I know it's till the -

PIEHLER: Oh yes. So you haven't seen the film since you originally saw it?

DICKEY: There was a second film made to, and I didn't see it either. No, as I said, I don't, I'm not -

PIEHLER: You're not a big -

DICKEY: For movies or TV either. I'm so print oriented, I guess, as a former newspaper man, and as a sometimes writer, that I'm just not - I don't have the patience to sit through it. (laughs)

PIEHLER: You mentioned - your father was a Baptist minister, and you were obviously very involved with the church. After your father died, how active did your family stay in the church, particularly when you moved to Morristown?

DICKEY: Well, my mother stayed very active. Again, in the little church at Williamston, little by comparison to today's churches, it was not just the preacher, it was his whole family. Mom taught one of the Sunday School classes, she played the piano. We had what he called Baptist Young People's Union on Sunday nights, and there were things like Royal Ambassadors on Wednesday. She taught or participated in all those, and, in addition, she had to manage all the church functions, the little social events, and the teas, and the entertaining of visitors, and if we had a visiting preacher they stayed in our house. So she was like a partner to my dad. He was a minister, but Mom was a part of his ministry. I want you to be careful with those words. My dad was not - he was a devout person, but he was not a conventional Baptist. And I don't mean he was a maverick, but he wanted to do things that the church fathers didn't much like. For example, Dad said, "If we want to keep our kids out of the roadhouses at night, why don't we have parties in the church parlor? Why don't we have dances?" Well they damn near kicked him out of the church. (laughter) And he believed things like that, and he didn't - he wasn't so much interested in preaching sermons as I said getting out and helping people.

PIEHLER: So he really liked doing pastoral counseling and calls? You mentioned, I mean - he… would visit the sick at any time of the night.

DICKEY: And I don't know if that was unique with my father, but that's how I grew up perceiving Christianity, or the role of a church, which was also drastically modified in later years. And another thing Dad did, I remember the night policeman we had, his name was Rix (Allsbrooks?). He had a moustache, maybe that's why I've got a moustache now. (laughs) But he would come two nights a week and sit in my Dad's den, his little study, and Dad was teaching him how to read and write. And… Dad's study, as we called it, was about this size. That was his private digs, you know.

PIEHLER: The size of this office.

DICKEY: And he went in there to write his columns and his sermons, and all. He would let me come in, but there were times you didn't disturb him in there. He would let me sit in with Rix (Allsbrooks?), and they had a desk about this size with a pullout shelf, and dad had a big Schaffer fountain pin, and he'd hand it to Rix, and he'd write. You know, R - I - X, and he'd say, "Rix, you

do it." I don't know how long that went on, or how successful that was, but that was so typical of the things that went on in my house. This was just routine. And it was nothing for me - as a little kid, I'd wake up before the household did, and I'd put on my clothes and go out and play. And they didn't know where the hell I was, but they didn't worry about it. I remember one morning they found me eating breakfast with the Crocketts up the next block, which was okay, the Crocketts were happy to see me, and Mom and Dad weren't scared about it. You know, you'd -

PIEHLER: Who… were the Crocketts?

DICKEY: They were another fairly prosperous family. I don't remember his particular business, but, you know, they were all friends with each other. Your monetary standing, I guess, didn't make that much difference. Or maybe being a preacher's family had something to do with that to. But people were extremely cordial, open, and friendly. You know, it was a time when people really didn't lock their doors, and you could go visit a neighbor, you could just drop in any time, it was okay. And you'd take things across the street to your neighbor, or somebody was sick, you'd go over and cook for them. My neighbor across the street, Judge Moore, they had a maid, a black maid, and she had her own little bathroom beneath the staircase. And I - they had a waffle iron! (laughter) I loved to go over to Susan's house, because they would feed me waffles, and all we had was pancakes. (laughter) But my recollections of Williamston were just so wonderful because I was so free, and had no responsibility, and everything was just… great for me. One of the big disappointments - this is a common occurrence, but the first time I went back to Williamston after being gone for years and years, that great big huge wide street had somehow narrowed down to just a little bitty street. (laughter) And the houses were really that close. I had some great spacious recollection of it all, and I hear from people all the time that this is a common occurrence, that their childhood memories are grossly exaggerated. In Raleigh, by the way, when we first moved there, our temporary abode was upstairs of a house. The widow of Governor Acock - it was her house.

PIEHLER: Oh yes.

DICKEY: And we lived upstairs -

PIEHLER: Was the widow still alive?

DICKEY: The widow was, the husband had died.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

DICKEY: And we were there for about a year, and then we got a house out on (Morgaconty?) Drive. But that was an experience, living with the Governor's widow. She was an old crone, (laughter) but I had only four blocks to walk to school. Almost the same as down in Williamston. And I made friends real quickly. The thing about the Raleigh school, it was much bigger to me, and they had a cafeteria, and you could eat lunch there. And I remember what good food it was, it was almost like home cooking. As I mentioned earlier, the quality of education was such that when I came to Morristown, I think I quit studying because I wasn't learning anything new. I had already learned that in the grade before at Raleigh. And I don't mean to disparage Morristown, it's

a great little town. They got a good education system, but there were… discrepancies back then, and that effected me in a bad way. I felt that some of my teachers - and they were wonderful people - but some of them simply couldn't use good grammar. They knew their subjects well and they taught them well, but to me they were ignorant people, and what in the world were they doing trying to tell me what to do? You know, I'm better than that. I'm from North Carolina. I'm a Tar Heel. (laughter) And that's just the way I felt. I'm sorry that I felt that way, but that was -

PIEHLER: That was your -

DICKEY: That was my experience. That was literally what I felt. And therefore, I always thought Morristown was somehow less than Raleigh and Williamston, and I doubt that it really is at all.

PIEHLER: What are the differences - I'm curious if you have any recollections as - what - It sounds to me like a very big difference, say, Raleigh today or large parts of North Carolina. Raleigh had a much larger black population than the mountain area - like a town like Morristown, or lots of East Tennessee. Was that striking to you when you came to Tennessee? Because the mountain people were clearly striking.

DICKEY: In Williamston, I suspect, our population was about fifty percent black, and we had several blacks that worked for us at different time. There was one nice young black fellow named Curly, he had two thumbs on each hand. My mother made my Dad pay to have Curly's hand operated on. Dad didn't want to spend that money, but my Mom said, "No, you're going to take care of Curly." (laughs) See, again it's something about the times, and something about how we felt about the blacks. Now, without question, they were lessor than we. They were subservient to us. But there was sort of a mutual acceptance. They were very differential to the white folks, of course, but they were – they had a certain dignity. Mom says that I had a nurse that they brought in, a black nurse – nursemaid, I mean. Mom was so busy with church at night, and she needed somebody to be with me too. We were all in the same house. But mother told me that I became more attached to Marsha, this black woman, than to her – to my Mom, herself. Which was alright, I mean that was – there was this big difference. But we lived with blacks, and because there were those distinctions, we didn't see anything wrong with it. There were never any problems about it. On Saturday, for example, when everybody was out of school and the country folks came to town, everybody congregated downtown, and there were some open alleyways for example, and the kids – black and white – would get out in that alley and shoot marbles. I remember that. They would talk, and there would not be any social occasions were you mixed at all, but there was no feeling – the blacks may have had far more feeling about this than we did. And I'm sure they were not always treated with the respect they were due, but my… experiences as a kid, and the way I remember it, was that everybody got along fine, you know, and some of that could have been hidden from me, I don't know. I remember reading many years later about a lynching not far from Williamston, that was about the time when I was about three years old.

PIEHLER: But you have no recollection of something like that?

DICKEY: None whatsoever. And the sheriff, for example, a white… guy – the sheriff and my Dad would go deer hunting sometimes out in the swamps, and they had a black companion that they took with them. The three of them, and they'd go down to Pamely Cotas Island on fishing

trips together. So there was some kind of social distinction, but you still shared certain events together. I don't know if I'm answering your question –

PIEHER: No, that – I'm curious, in Morristown, I mean –

DICKEY: Well, in Morristown, there was a greater black population than you might assume. It wasn't as great as in Williamston, but in Raleigh, I was not around black people at all. I can't explain that, except I guess our neighborhood was so isolated, whereas in Williamston, the town wasn't that big. You ran into each other. You had separate schools, by the way. I don't even know where the blacks went to school. But in Raleigh, I just don't recall being around blacks at all. Anywhere. In downtown – I… can't explain that, but in Morristown, there was a fairly heavy black population. One of the reasons being, I think, was Morristown was a Negro school, Negro college.

PIEHLER: Which doesn't exist anymore, I don't think.

DICKEY: Not as a black college. I think there's some kind of a facility that's used, maybe it's a county education facility. But it's gone, true. And I remember in Morristown, the founder of that college, was the Hill Family. Pretty prominent people. They called the president, the founder "Nigger Hill." In high school, I worked on weekends at the Little Dutch Restaurant, which is still there by the way. It was sort of the social center of Morristown. But I would wait tables on Friday nights and on Saturdays. The kitchen staff was all blacks, about three of them. I always saw them as friends. Again, there were no social life whatsoever, but they were nice people. We kidded with each other and joked around. Yet, I do remember, we had a… negro barber family that were well educated, gentlemanly, well dressed, cultured people. They approached our Baptist Church in Morristown and asked if they could be allowed to come and sit in the balcony, which otherwise wasn't used, just so they could be in that church, and the church refused them, wouldn't let them. That family, by the way, sent a son to the Air Corp, he was one of the first black pilots.

PIEHLER: So he was with the Tuskeegee Airmen?

DICKEY: Yeah.

PIEHLER: Do you remember the name of the family?

DICKEY: It was Walker. The barber himself was Jean Walker, and I believe the son was Jean, Jr.

PIEHLER: And they wanted to join the church, and – it was in the 1940s?

DICKEY: This would have been right about 1940, and, you know, they didn't ask to mix with the congregation, they just wondered if they could come to the church though.

PIEHLER: They didn't even want to join the congregation, they just wanted to sit in the balcony?

DICKEY: Because they knew that it would not sit well with some people, but they felt they weren't intruding if they did that. That's the only instance I know where any blacks tried to come

into the church. I never saw a black in a church until I graduated from UT, and went to Schenectady, New York, and I went to a Catholic Church with my girlfriend, and there were blacks throughout the congregation. Which seemed to me to be so odd and unusual, and I hadn't experienced it. And a funny thing, up near Morristown College, there were several little honkytonks that the black people had, where they'd go dancing on Saturday night. Sometimes, as high school kids, two or three of us, we'd go up there and sit, and watch them. And they didn't seem to resent us, but can you imagine one of them trying to come to one of our dances? They could come maybe as a waiter. We didn't even think about that distinction much then, we… just accept that's the way it is. We didn't think about the humanitarian side of it or discrimination, we just - in the Army, I don't mean to be making an issue of this, it's just free to -

PIEHLER: Yeah.

DICKEY: In the Army, there were no blacks in our outfit, ever. But while I was in the Philippines - we lived in eight man tents over there - the top sergeant came in one day, and he said, "listen you guys," he said, "I'm going to put a nigger in here with you." He said, "Now you better treat him right," he said, "I don't want any damn -" you know, blah blah blah, you know how sergeants talk. (laughter) We got the message. I don't recall what the reason was, or what the occasion was, but this black guy came in. He was one of the nicest, most personable people that you've ever met, and we won all of us over immediately. We lived with him, oh something like six weeks, and he moved on to somewhere else. I don't know if we even knew why he was put there, but the Army was segregated at the time.

PIEHLER: I mean, this was very unusual - I mean -

DICKEY: That's why I bring it up.

PIEHLER: Yeah. No, I mean -

DICKEY: We actually had a black man living in our tent for about six weeks. Otherwise, I never saw black people in the Army. I don't… I don't remember even seeing them in the mess hall. You know, we did a lot of KP ourselves in basic training. (laughs) We rotated - it was all white guys; it was us. And the white guys, incidentally, in my outfit in basic training, were from everywhere. I don't know how it happened. Maybe it was on purpose, but I was drafted from East Tennessee, and we had guys from Maine, Vermont, from Brooklyn, from Detroit, from Chicago. It was an unbelievable admixture. See, that was something else that changed people. A lot of us were so provincial in those days - we didn't have airplanes to fly around in, and all these places to go, and the money with which to do it. Most people hadn't been very far from home, and suddenly we'd thrown all these outsiders.

PIEHLER: Well, I'm curious, you'd mentioned you'd - growing up is a very big memory to go to Georgia, to… I forget where Berry College is, but -

DICKEY: Rome.

PIEHLER: You'd done a lot of traveling in North Carolina, because of your father.

DICKEY: Yes.

PIEHLER: And obviously East Tennessee. Where else had you traveled before you had joined the Army?

DICKEY: Well, I did a lot of hitchhiking. When I was thirteen, I decided I wanted to go to the Kentucky Derby. I didn't really know what the Kentucky Derby was, but that's what people talked about. (laughter) It was up in Kentucky. And my Mom let me go, I don't know why, but she did. I hitchhiked up to the derby. Wonderful experience. Four guys from South Carolina picked me up, I think in Corbin, and took me under their wing. Took me to the derby with them, and drove me all the way back home, paid all my expenses. (laughter) When we first moved to Morristown, my brother went to Mars Hill College, across the mountains -

[End up Tape One, Side Two]

[Start of Tape Two, Side One]

PIEHLER: This continues an interview with David Dale Dickey on March 6, 2003 at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville with Kurt Piehler and -

BROWN: John Brown

PIEHLER: And you hitchhiked to visit your… brother who was in college in North Carolina, and you mentioned just as the tape had cut off that's there's a good hitchhiking story you were going to tell.

DICKEY: Well, I hitchhiked lots of - you know, we frequently - the high school kids, we'd hitchhike down to Knoxville for the weekend on Saturday, if we had fifty cents, we could come down and buy a Krystal hamburger for about a nickel apiece, literally, for a nickel apiece. And you'd go the Orange Junior's place, and get a big old Orange drink, and then we'd have a quarter left over to go the Tennessee theater, and then hitchhike back home. So there was a lot of that. When I was sixteen, my brother was in the Navy Air Corp at San Diego, and he said, "Dave, why don't you come out and see me?" He said, "I can put you up somewhere, and…it would be a great experience for you to see what the West is like." And it turned out he was serious about it, and he said he would help me financially. I talked to my Momma about it, and I bought a train ticket to San Diego. The trains and buses were so crowded at that time with all the military movement, and all the other people to, and the cars not having gasoline. I was on that train without being able to sit down all the way to Meridian, Mississippi. That was an all night trip. I got off of that train at Meridian, and I cashed in my ticket - at that time you could get a cash refund. And I hitchhiked from there on out to San Diego. Well, I got to San Diego, and I called the air base, and they said they didn't know any Charlie there. (laughter) And basically, I talked to enough people on the telephone and it turned out he had been transferred to El Centro, which was back across the desert about a hundred miles. I had just come through El Centro. (laughter) But I bummed around a couple days in San Diego. I had a little bit of money from that train ticket, and I had never been out West, much less to the West Coast, and it was fascinating. I went up to Lahoa, and, you know,

I didn't know what I was doing, but it was just a… a kid turned loose all of a sudden in fairyland. Fairyland; that's something I shouldn't have said because there were a number of homosexuals who made an effort to pick me up. That was my first understanding of -

PIEHLER: When you were hitchhiking?

DICKEY: Yeah. I never really knew there was such a thing, I thought that was just something ugly people said about somebody. But several times I was approached on that trip, and I guess that was part of my maturing process to learn, I guess, that there were people like this. Anyhow, when I finally did reach my brother over in El Centro, he said, "Well, if you can get over here, sure, I'll take care of you." And he did. You know, I got over to the Naval Base, and we had a war going on. But I lived with him for two weeks on the damn Naval Base. In the officer's - in the back of the officer's quarters. And everybody on the base knew who I was, and the commanding officer said it was alright with him, and he even flew me in the TBF four times. (laughter) He could have got kicked out of the Navy for that. And he… had bought an old car, a French car of all things, called it a Debois. Sort of like a plush A-Model Ford. And they would send me into El Centro to buy liquor for them. (laughter)

PIEHLER: This was probably - this sounds like a great experience for a teenager.

DICKEY: You can't imagine. This was out in the hot desert. For the most part, they were flying at night, and in the daytime, when we weren't sleeping, Charlie and some of his buddies would take me around. We'd go into town, you know, just to see the native habitat, and some of the handy craft things. We stayed busy. But what I liked so much was being able to go into the dining room and they fed these pilots really great, even if it was just sandwich meat, they'd have every kind of cheese and salami and bologna, and all you could possibly eat. And I lived in the dining hall most of the time. But they'd go out and fly at night, and be gone three or four hours, and I'd hang around and wait for them to come back in and see all the military planes come in at night. He was flying a TBF Avenger Torpedo Bomber, which is a fairly large plane. But this was early in the war, and we didn't have a lot of Hellcat Fighters, and their predecessor was a little Drummond Wildcat Fighter. I don’t know if you're familiar with that, but it was a little short stubby green plane. And they were very close together, and they'd come in just wobbling when they landed, and several of them cracked up when I was there. This was a tremendous experience for me. But the way it wound up, after two weeks on the base at El Centro, the squadron got transferred over to Ota Mesa, which is just outside of San Diego again. I went with them over there. (laughs) And after about three days there, they had a weekend leave, and that’s when we decided I would leave. And my brother said, "Dave, as long as you're out here this far, why don't you… hitchhike up the coast and see some of this country? When you run out of money, send me a telegram and I'll send you some money." Well, (laughs) they flew - they wanted to spend a weekend in Los Angeles, so I flew with them in a TBF. (Laughter) We flew to North Island in San Diego and then Terminal Island, I believe it was, in LA. And there I was with them in uniform, and me as a little kid in a city, sixteen years old - I saw little kid, I was, you know, I was grown. But you wonder, what is a…. civilian doing on the base here? And they didn't want to off to the base at the entrance gate. And I - my brother, and his friend, John Dick, who was called "Whiskey Dick" - they drank a lot together - they pulled their rank, you know, and they said "God damn it, you do what I tell you to do," (laughs) so they passed us through, nothing ever happened.

PIEHLER: But you - you got - I mean - most people didn't fly in this era. You had several plane rides.

DICKEY: You know, I rarely tell people this story because I feel like they wouldn't believe me. That sounds like a really wild story. I don't know they got away with it. I told you earlier my brother had this adventurous spirit, he was always that way. When we moved to Morristown, one of the first things he did, he got acquainted with another newcomer to Morristown, Ben Moore, who had come there from Nevada. Within two months they were building a flat bottom boat and decided they were going to float on the Holston River to the Tennessee, and float all the way to New Orleans. And they were gone the whole summer. They didn't make it to New Orleans, but they got to Mississippi. (laughter) Just the two of them built this little old boat, and none of them knew anything about boats or anything else. But that was - that's the way he was.

PIEHLER: So the Tom Sawyer - that was not… just reading the book, I mean that -

DICKEY: And see, that was his attitude about things. Hell, don't worry about it, we'll work it out. He didn't plan or think in advance, he just assumed, you know - and I think this is a prime illustration of how it was on four different Naval Bases with a war going on, and I probably looked like I was old enough to be in the service. And why wasn't I? What was I doing on that base without any credentials whatsoever? Well, my brother was always - he thought I was lazy, and I didn't realize, but he said he would send me money when I got up the coast. (laughs) What happened I got up about as far as - I don't know, I think it was up about Artina, California. And I was running out of money, and I sent him a telegram, like he told me to, and I said, "I'm broke, please send twenty dollars." He sent a telegram right back that said, "I'm broke to, get a job. Good luck." (laughter) So, I did work a little bit. And I hitchhiked eventually all the way up to Vancouver, British Columbia, and crossed Vancouver Island to Victoria. And eventually, back across to Milwaukee where I had an aunt and uncle, stayed with them for a few days, and they took me with them down to Chicago for a weekend, and I hitchhiked back home from Chicago. So I made about a nine thousand mile hitchhiking joint - kind of a circle.

PIEHLER: You saw the country.

DICKEY: I did, and I had some marvelous experiences.

PIEHLER: Just hold this mic -Your memories are - Not only did you go through the desert, I mean through the sort of Southwest, you also went… sort of up, you went up through the North.

DICKEY: Yes.

PIEHLER: What… sticks in your mind in terms of the different parts of the country?

DICKEY: You know, I guess it's the vastness and the emptiness of a lot of it at that time. I got stuck somewhere out in West Texas. Someone gave me a ride twenty or thirty miles out in the country, this is flat plane, and he took off on some side road, and there I was out in the sticks. All I could see was the wind and the grass for miles and miles. It was a good while, I got badly

sunburned before I got a ride. It worked out okay. And then coming back across the northern route, across Montana and South Dakota, it was barren and empty. Just lots and lots of wild open spaces; It was beautiful, but it was empty, and it was lonesome. And many times I found myself on the side of the road, you know, getting cold at night, by myself. I wasn't scared, but it was a sense of how vast everything was, and how little I was. The best ride I got on that whole trip, and there were lots of really good rides, lots of wonderful people. People just treated me nice. A couple of them, as I said, tried to put the make on me, but even they were nice about it. They left me alone after I told them I wasn't interested. But one guy - I had gotten to Three Forks, Montana, heading back home again, and he… came along in an A-Model, you know, Model-A Ford, which even then was out of style for a long time. But I didn't even thumb him, because I thought it was just some farmer going back out to his ranch or something. But he stopped, and he said, "where are you going?" And I said, "Well, I'm going to Chicago." He said, "Get in, I'm going to Minnesota." (Laughter) And he was. He was an older person, and he had been - He had some sort of health problem, it might have been TB, I don't know. Something really long. But he… wasn't suited to military service, he was rejected. But he went out to Seattle and worked in the shipyards out there. But he had gotten so sick that he had to quit. He was going back home to Brainard, Minnesota. And he didn't have much money either, but he had enough for gasoline. He had a blanket roll, and we split those blankets on the side of the road at night and lay down on the shoulder of the road to sleep. And the next night - it was pretty slow going in that A-Model coming across the country - but the next night we came on a jackknifed tractor trailer. The trailer had split wide open. You remember when Kraft Cheese used to come in wooden boxes? Big, round, moon cheeses, and there was some about five pounds in little square wooden boxes. This truck was a refrigerated truck, and it was hauling Kraft cheese and grapes, fresh grapes. And they were just all over the road. The insurance people and the police were already on the scene, and they said, "Boys, help yourselves. This stuff is going to spoil." (laughter) We lived for three days off of cheese and grapes. He filled up every nook and cranny of that old car, and then when we got into Minnesota, he had come through the badlands of Dakota, the road forked. He was going up to Brainerd, and I was going down to Milwaukee. That guy had - I didn't have any money left, and he had two dollars, and he gave me one of them. I said, "I can't take that," and he said, "You will take it." And you know, I wrote him later, and he never replied. I've never seen or heard of him again. But on that dollar I managed to get on down to Milwaukee. I didn't have a cent when I got to Milwaukee, I guess I'd spent it on food. I couldn't even phone my aunt and uncle who lived there, they had no earthly idea I was anywhere near. But I found in the phone book where they lived, with the address, and I was so tired and sleepy I laid down in this city park just on the grass. I don't know for how long, but I woke up. A policeman was beating on my souls of my feet with a billy, and he said, "you can't sleep here buddy, get going, get going." He said, "What are you doing here?" and I told him, and he said "Well, that's a long walk," but he said, "if you follow that street right there so many blocks, and you'll come to it," and that's what I did. I knocked on the door, and my uncle, by marriage, who I'd never seen before, he came to the door, and I said, "hi, I'm your nephew." He was the head of the Associated Press for the State of Wisconsin at that time, and I guess I came in on the weekend, and he was at home. But he had married my Dad's sister, Aunt Helen, and they were a pretty wild and wooly bunch, they were just great people. And they just welcomed me with open arms, just no questions about it. They took me to Chinatown and just… as I said, they took me on down to Chicago, they had planned to go down for a week's vacation anyhow. They had lived in Chicago, they had friends there. So I went down and stayed with them for a couple of days in Chicago. They took me to the Dealer Museum, and all around

those wonderful places. And then I hitchhiked home from there. You can see that the sum total of these experiences when I was sixteen years old was just unbelievable vast, and marvelous, and wonderful. And disenchanting, and disillusioning in many ways. That's when I really began to mature, I think. I look back and I saw, "how lucky can a person be to even survive that?" You know, you look at the risks, inherit risks, and -

PIEHLER: Well, it's also something that would be very difficult to do today, because, I mean, hitchhiking is dangerous.

DICKEY: I won't pick up a hitchhiker, personally, because I did so many -

PIEHLER: Yeah, I mean… you would almost send a… parent… to prison for letting their son or daughter across the country. I mean, that would really be -

DICKEY: Well, I give my Mom credit, she had implicit faith in me, and she had a lot of indulgence for me. But she did not know I would be hitchhiking all that route.

PIEHLER: Yeah, well, I mean, she -

DICKEY: But she had no compunction about me, say, going to Mars Hill, or hitchhiking down to Knoxville, and up to Middlesboro, that was okay, that was what kids did. The… daily - the longest wait I have of all was I got back down to Corbin, Kentucky, and I was stuck there all night. I couldn't get a ride, there was no traffic. And I guess I was there something like eight hours, and that was the longest time I had spent on the side of the road. That intersection, by the way, is 25-E and 25-W. It's where the original Colonel Sanders restaurant was. It was Sander's Restaurant and Motel, and I went in there and had a sandwich. Much later, he franchised and, you know, he's everywhere now.

PIEHLER: But that was the original -

DICKEY: That was where he… He had that restaurant. It was not a fried chicken place, it was just a roadside restaurant, a nice one. And he had one in Asheville. I don't know how the friend chicken franchise finally evolved from that, and I didn't see him. I don't remember him.

PIEHLER: I just - I paused, I just wanted to make sure it's recording correctly. I didn't ask you - we talked a lot about the war, but your memory - one of my standard questions to ask is Pearl Harbor; your memories of Pearl Harbor. Do you remember - you were still a freshman, you were a first year freshman in high school.

DICKEY: Well, my mother and I had been to church with my aunt, and my aunt, who was the store owner, she liked to treat us to Sunday dinner at a big boarding house up on Main Street, which was near the church. And we stopped. You know, you socialized for a while after the church services, and then he went across the street to the boarding house. Ate a big lunch, and socialized some more. But walking back home, and older high school kid that I knew, Fat Graham - I don't know what his real name was - he always fat, he was a huge guy, but he came running across the street, and he said, "hey, did you hear?" I said, "what?" he said, "They bombed Pearl

Harbor." I didn't know what Pearl Harbor was. He said, "the Japanese have bombed Pearl Harbor," he said, "we're going to war." That's what I remember, I don't know anything about the rest of the day. We… listened to the radio a great deal in those days, and I'm sure we must have been glued to the radio to get what reports we could, and we had two newspapers: *The Knoxville Journal* morning, and the *News-Sentinel* in the afternoon, and we took both of them. So we were able to follow pretty closely. But that's all I remember about Pearl Harbor, and then, of course, President Roosevelt was frequently on the radio. He gave what he called "fireside chats." He had a most consoling voice. You know, I grew up in a Republican family, and Roosevelt had initiated all these public works projects, and prolifically spending, and everything, but we liked him. And I looked on him sort of as a father figure, I guess, and I trusted in him, and his ability to lead the country. He was so reassuring. And we knew we had lost our whole - practically the whole fleet, and we knew that we weren't prepared for war. You know, we didn't have a whole lot of guys in uniform, even then. We had started the draft, what, a year and a half before that, something like that. We didn't any massive numbers in uniform. But all of a sudden everybody was mobile, everybody.

PIEHLER: I'm curious - you mentioned you were not the best of high school students. What did you think you would do when you graduated. Did you think you would go to college? And did you think that journalism would be… a possible career?

DICKEY: You know, it was always assumed in my family that we'd go to college. I never really thought about it.

PIEHLER: So that part - that was an assumption?

DICKEY: But I don't know what was in my head when I was in high school. I just - I really went wild. Part of it was my anger over leaving home and losing my dad and things like that. I don't know if any of that anger was justified. You know, a lot of it was just plain old teenage - and, with so many drastic changes, all the older guys gone, I think a lot of us ran pretty wild. And we knew we were going to grow up and go into the Army, and like, well what difference does this school make anyhow? I think maybe even some of our teachers were pretty indulgent with us. I think they let us get away with a lot of stuff. The bunch I ran with, and it was not a bad bunch, by the way, it wasn't hoods or hoodlums at all, it was nice, respectable kids. But we had kind of a clique, and we liked to show off for the girls, and we'd do bad things on purpose to get attention. And some people don't believe this, but at that time, if you got a demerit in high school, you could work it off in one of two ways. You could serve an hour after school, or you could take three licks with the brake lining. Our superintendent had a - you know what a brake lining is? A heavy fabric, about four inches wide, and about twenty-four inches long on a wooden handle, and you reached down and grabbed your ankle - out in the hall, where everybody could see you. And he would come back with that thing and lift you right off the floor. Well, that was just a challenge to us. We'd get demerits on purpose so we could go out in the hall and watch all the pretty girls watch us get our ass busted and not holler, not cry. (laughter) We really did this sort of thing. You show off, and we'd goof off in class and laugh when we shouldn't, and played practical jokes. I remember Bones - we could buy fireworks after the Forth of July, you remember what they called the torpedo, just kind of a round -

PIEHLER: Oh yes.

DICKEY: Burst. Bones got the idea, and we all fell into it. We took some of these torpedoes - the school had three floors on it, and in the stairwell we would take a piece of gum and stick one of those torpedoes to the ceiling, and it would stick there. It might not - the gum might not harden for six weeks, before it fell. (laughter) And the high school would always have these mysterious explosions out in the halls. (laughter) Well, we - that was a lot of innocent fun, a lot of people had fun with it. But it was just a pretty wild time. I'm not at all proud of it, I don't know how I survived it. I… was… I'm embarrassed and ashamed and chagrined by my behavior in high school. What I don't understand is how I didn't lose any friends. I was reasonably popular. As I told you, I don't make close associations even to this day, but I just had lots of friends. We did lots of things together, and - I don't mean that I was a popular kid, that's not the sense I'm talking about, but just - I got along with everybody. I really did. And a part of it was I was such a showoff, and I would do things that they wouldn't that some of them I think actually looked up to me as something that they wish they could do, as dumb as that seems. But I threw away my high school days. The only good thing I did was I did a lot of hunting and fishing, and I worked, as I said, in that restaurant on weekends, and a few other odd jobs. Like one summer, I worked in a furniture factory, and boy that was mean, oh boy.

PIEHLER: Where? In Morristown?

DICKEY: In Morristown, it was Clark Furniture Company at that time.

PIEHLER: It seems like it left an impression. What made it such a mean job?

DICKEY: Well, what I did - I walked to work. It was two miles, and I would walk the railroad to the factory, and I worked in the sort of the front end of it, where the raw lumber came in. It was this huge manufacturing room, and they brought in the logs, and they went through a series of sawing operations, and the noise was just horrendous, and the sawdust just filled the whole place. And you couldn't smoke, and we all smoked at that time. We got a break once in the morning and once in the afternoon, where we would go outside for ten minutes, where we could smoke. A lot of people just chewed tobacco and dipped snuff and spit on the floor. But what I did - the semi-finished pieces came to me, and I stuck them in what they called the loading machine. A great big, huge, mechanical apparatus. All I did all day was pick them up and put them in there, and it did some further shaping. And the guy on the other end, where you are, would take them out and put them on a pallet. My associates there were from a lower educational level, lower socio-economic level. Some of them were pretty raunchy characters. And I got bullied a lot. And the noise and the sawdust and all just - and the long walk, I was just utterly exhausted by the time I got home, because I was on my feet all day. And it's surprising, I've always had trouble with my feet. I have flat feet, and they really hurt me a lot. But I felt I had to do this. It was another way, you see, of showing my macho self. I worked in a furniture factory this summer. (laughter) It was really important to me, it was like I was in great confusion. I had a lot going for me, but I didn't realize it, and I always had to prove myself, which was totally unnecessary. I came from a great family, people liked me, I was pretty smart, although I didn't show it. But that is why the military service, or the fact that my life got interrupted, it could have been something else, but in this instance, going to the Army. I had an opportunity to realize that I had literally thrown my life

away, and I might have thought I was going to college, but how was I going to make it. I hadn't learned anything in high school, and that's almost the literal truth. I never took a book home. I just - I could pick up a lot in class, and I did take some notes, and I had friends, and we would talk, but I… missed out terribly on the geometry, and the physics, and the chemistry, that required a little concentration and memorization. I did fine in English, and debating, and biology, I took to those naturally. But I really believe that in my senior year I should have been flunked out of geometry, which would have meant I wouldn't graduate. And I really think that my professor passed me knowing that I was headed for the Army, and he didn't want to deny - he never said that to me. We didn't get along at all, but I really think he just let me go.

PIEHLER: There was a real - and… it's not inaccurate that you'd all be in the military, because you graduated in May of 1945.

DICKEY: And the draft was still on, and people were still going to serve. You know, somebody had to replace all these guys -

PIEHLER: Well, the war still - I mean, in May of 1945 the war was still very much on in the Pacific.

BROWN: So you went to the Cadet Basic School in Mississippi for the Merchant Marines?

DICKEY: I went - yeah, the Merchant Marines first. That was due to the influence of my brother. I didn't really care much about that, but he… saw it as a way of getting some education and not having it quite as rough as you would in the Army. And he just thought it would be good for me, and easier for me, and he touted all that - He had a Navy buddy whose younger brother had been in the Merchant Marine Cadet Corp, and so he had some firsthand information. They just sort of pushed it on me, and I took all the tests that were required to get in, and again, somehow by the grace of God, I passed six hours of tests on everything, and got in as a Cadet Midshipman. But that only lasted about six months, and I decided this was - Several reasons I decided. I could have probably made it okay, but although we were in the Naval Reserve as Merchant Marine Cadet Corp, it was not active duty. That meant I wasn't getting actual military service that would qualify for the GI Bill and veteran's benefits. And I recognized that, and I said, "Hey, wait a minute. I don't want to go through four years of Merchant Marine Academy and get commissioned as a sea going - that's not what I want to do with my life. So I made up my mind without my big brother's influence that "to hell with this, I'm going… to resign," which I did, and go ahead and get drafted, which is what happened. You know, a curious thing there to, about the influence of my brother, when I came home from the Merchant Marines, he said, "Well, you won't get drafted for a little while, why don't you come over and go to UT?" He had - he was out of the service by them, he had been discharged, and he was at UT. So I did. I talked to the draft board, and they said, "oh, you won't get drafted. Go ahead and get in a quarter, and you won't get drafted right away." So my brother and I lived together in a house over on Cumberland Avenue that's gone now for that one quarter. But about midway through the quarter, I did get a draft call. (laughs) So I didn't get to complete my quarter at UT, but again it was his influence that brought me there. He was right of course, otherwise I would just goofed off and loafed around. Then when I got drafted, it was not easy, it was tough, but some parts of it I liked. And what sustained me was that I was so proud that I was a soldier. It just meant so much that I was one of them. I really looked up to those guys,

and as I said earlier, they're heroes to me. They are to this day. What they brought - for all the rest of us, and I didn't get to fight in the war, unfortunately. I don't say unfortunately now, but that was my attitude then. I was just so proud to go through infantry basic. Being in the Infantry was marvelous for me. I didn't care if I wasn't in the Air Corp, or the Navy Air Corp, I was in the damn Army.

PIEHLER: I just want to back up a little and ask you about - you went to the Merchant Marines Cadet -

DICKEY: It's called the Cadet Corp.

PIEHLER: Cadet Corp for the Merchant Marines.

DICKEY: The Merchant Marines Academy is at King's Point, New York.

PIEHLER: Yes.

DICKEY: But during the war, they had to Cadet Basic schools, one at Pass Christiana, Mississippi, where I went, one at San Palo, California. It was because they were getting so many students, they couldn't accommodate them at King's Point.

PIEHLER: I'm curious, how big was the facility at… Mississippi? How many… were in your, say, class of Cadets? Do you remember?

DICKEY: I got to guess, and I'm really hazy about this. I'm going to say three hundred. And we lived in quarters really much like the backs of the officer's quarters that I had stayed in with my brother out there in California. It was a… nice, new facility, it was like living in a plush dormitory.

PIEHLER: It sounds… more comfy than a basic infantry?

DICKEY: (laughs) Yeah, I suppose it could be compared to the Naval Academy, as far as physical facilities go. It probably wasn't as tough as the Naval Academy, it was pretty severe. We had lots and lots of military drill and… you know, off hours duty. And we - very rigid hours that we had to follow. There were definite study periods, and you sat at your desk and studied. Some monitor was coming around all the time to make sure you were at your desk studying, you weren't talking. And they'd have white glove inspections where they'd pull out a drawer, and reach around with the back end of a white glove, "aha, dust. You get gigged for the weekend." I painted the sea wall, I painted the water tower, I painted every damn fireplug on that base. (laughter) I really wasn't - I didn't screw up badly down there, that was just what everybody had to do. I… took it seriously, and I was so happy to be a part of the military that I really dedicated myself to trying to be a good merchant mariner. It just wasn't really ultimately what I wanted to do.

PIEHLER: You had largely come to this because of your brother. I mean, you had - you didn't know about this… program -

DICKEY: Nothing at all. Never even considered, I just thought when I got out of high school I'd get drafted. I had thought… that rather than getting drafted, I might join the Navy. When I did get drafted, the Army was putting some pressure on people at that time to sign up for an eighteen month hitch, which is not a long hitch. And one of the reasons I had thought I might join the Navy was to - you could join for a given hitch, like eighteen months. Whereas, if you were a draftee, you didn't know when you'd get out. You know, conceivably, you could go for two, or three or four years.

PIEHLER: That painting was still with the war having ended?

DICKEY: Yeah because you see, technically, the war hadn't - hostilities hadn't ceased.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

DICKEY: Legally.

PIEHLER: Legally.

DICKEY: And we knew there were going to be lots and lots of cleanup operations, and occupying forces that could conceivably - well, it has you know, we still have troops in those places.

PIEHLER: Yeah. No, I mean that's not necessarily incorrect. But -

DICKEY: But when I did get drafted and went to the Army, after we were in the Army, they put lots of pressure on us to sign up for an eighteen month hitch. And I figured, "boy, if they're that eager to sign me up, they don't think I'm going to have to stay in here long as a draftee." So I never did join the regular Army, and I did get out a little bit earlier. That's also the reason I didn't try for OCS, Officer Candidates School. I'm confidant I could have made it, despite screwing up so badly in high school, I really believe I could have. But that would have entailed, what, four years in the Army. I didn't want four years. I wanted to get out and go to college.

PIEHLER: You… had mentioned that… the Merchant Marine Cadet training was very military. What about the class work? Because you'd mentioned you'd been something of a, by your own admission, a screw up in high school.

DICKEY: I had a tough time with the class work. I was making it, but things like trigonometry -

PIEHLER: Could it - I mean, Naval Officer, you really - or Merchant Marine Officer, you really to know math.

DICKEY: Absolutely. I think that probably influenced me too, to go ahead and get out. That even though it might have made a nice college training, it was not in those fields that I was competent at. Now we did a good bit of navigation, and somehow I managed to get up with it. And I had so many roommates, one of whom had a couple years of college engineering, and he helped me a great did. But I still didn't comprehend it, so I would not have lasted. I knew that, yeah.

PIEHLER: You've mentioned that the Army - You'd had this sort of realization that you… hadn't made the best of your high school. When did you sort of conclude that? Was it in infantry basic training, was it at the Academy - you know, the Cadet training? But it sounds like this -

DICKEY: Honestly, I don't know. I think even though I'd had that hitchhiking experience, and a lot of other experiences with a broad variety of people from all levels of our culture, in the Army I was with lots of poorly educated, amoral and immoral people. They're mores, and patterns, and habits were different. Many of them obviously were never going to amount to anything. That's a family term. My family always said, "you gotta amount to something." And I realized I sure as hell wasn't going to, that I was just like them, that I was no different. I was right here training with them, living with them, and that meant that I was no different. I wasn't qualified to do anything any better than that. I think this was a gradual realization to say, "boy, if I ever get out of here, I have got to straighten up because if I'm going to college, I don't know how I'm going to make it." And to get ahead a little bit when I did come out and college, I really dedicated myself. I can't tell you how literally and strongly. I gave up any semblance of social life. I way overdid it, frankly, but I had to. I hadn't learned the basics in high school, and I had to learn them somehow in college. I worked my tail off, and I made damn good grades. I got out with a 3.28 average. Back then, you didn't have many 4.0s.

PIEHLER: No, that was a very good average. (laughs) That was -

DICKEY: You know, nobody got a 4.0. Today I read in the paper that fifteen this quarter from Knoxville with 4.0, and I don't understand it. But my point is, it really woke me up. No particular instance, just the total experience of being in a place I didn't really want to be, but I was proud to be because it was serving my country. But I was just so happy to get out, and I had the GI Bill, which was one of the reasons I got drafted, which made it easier for me to go to college. And I knew that it was now or never. And I didn't study journalism, by the way. I think I always knew I was going to be a journalist, but I also thought I was going to be a biologist, and a lot of other things. I didn't know. What I did, I was telling him before, John before you came in, I would up as an English major. I struck - my faculty advisor said that's what you ought to do, so I did. But I wanted to minor in Zoology, but they wouldn't let me, because it wasn't appropriate to my major. (laughter) And there were all kinds of things like that, so I… sort of arbitrarily got out of college with an English major, which I made my worse grades, by the way. I'm good at English, but I was not interested in a lot of the… literature that we had to pursue, and I was not really a fast reader, and I'd be up day and night. I didn't even know what I was doing, trying to go through James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and *Remembers of Things Past*, (laughter) my God it was awful. I made wonderful grades in Spanish, and that was something else I didn't like, but I was telling John, we had to have three years of a foreign language then. What I'm trying to say is I really worked hard. I really did, and it paid off for me. It was grueling, but I did… have to time to join a fraternity, which was something I didn't think I wanted to do. The last thing in the world, because I had the impression that fraternities were snob, affluents, better than thou. And again, my brother came along. He said, "Dave, you need to join because," he said, "if nothing else, it's a good place to eat." And two meals a day, it's true, you know. He said, "what you lack in quality, you gain in quantity." And it happened that number of the returned soldiers from Morristown were in Sigma Ki Fraternity, and they all prevailed upon me. And they said, "you don't have to go through all that freshman nonsense, you can be who you are." So I did join. I've never regretted it. I'm happy

to be a Sigma Ki. To me, it's something that's in the past. I know I've got fraternity brothers that wear a fraternity ring to this day, and that's fine. But what I'm saying is that wasn't what it meant to me. But it did mean a great deal to me from all the people I meant, many of whom were from Knoxville, and in later years it turned out to be valuable friends and acquaintances to me. And sure enough, the food was pretty darn good too. (laughs) The only social life I had, we had an annual formal, Sigma Ki did every year. And I would go to it. I had a special girlfriend that I had met in Morristown, who now lived in Knoxville, and she was extremely popular. You just couldn't get a date with her. But she would go to Sigma Ki formal with me. She'd break whatever date she had. (laughter) That was the one great event of the year for me, each either.

BROWN: I'm just going to ask about the, when you were in the Army, or the Merchant Marines, did you make any close friends among any of your fellow servicemen?

DICKEY: I did, but you know, as is typical in the service, it's just for that period of time. After you're out somehow you go your separate ways. Yeah, in infantry basic there was an old boy from Speedwell, Tennessee, up here in the

BROWN: Campbell County?

DICKEY: Yeah, Powell Valley, which I'd never even heard of. But he was a real old country boy, but we just hit it off together, and we were - we went to the paratroopers together, and I think in my background I probably told you I got hurt in the paratroopers and couldn't continue. And he and I got separated. The happy ending to that story though - I tried to find Lim after I got out of the service and came to UT. I knew where he was from, and after I moved back from - after I left UT, I worked for General Electric in New York for a couple years. But after I came back to Knoxville, I went up in Powell Valley trying to find him, and they had never heard of him. It turns out I knew him as Lim Evans, and his wasn't Lim. It was Jim, but in the service we all called him Lim, and so they didn't know who I was talking about up there. But anyhow, I couldn't find him. And about five years ago now, I got a call one night from a young woman, and she said, "I'm so and so," and she said, "I think you know my daddy." And I said "who's your dad?" and she said, "do you remember Jim Evans?" I said, "who is that?" She said, "maybe you knew him as Lim?" Lim Evans, of course. He had spent his whole time up in Michigan in the automotive industry, and he was on his way to Florida. They had retired to Florida. And he had a heart attack in Knoxville, and he was in Baptist Hospital. He didn’t know I was in Knoxville, but he just looked in the phone book just for the heck of it, and found my name, and his daughter called me. And after all those years, I went up to Baptist Hospital and we hugged each other. And again, I've never heard from him since. (laughter) But we visited together at the hospital for two or three days and reminisced. I met all his family, and it was a wonderful experience.

PIEHLER: And it sounds like you were able to connect with him in a way that, you know -

DICKEY: We had in common, I think, a lot of the outdoors and some experience in the outdoors. A lot of the guys we were in infantry basic with were from cities like Chicago. They'd never been in the country, they where - like if you were out on maneuvers, they were afraid of a cow. (laughter) They didn't know what to expect from a cow. And there'd be some instances like, you know, we… lived in huts or barracks. Pretty primitive, but that's where we all came back to at

night. But occasionally there'd be some need to have a, like say, a range guard. You have a firing range, and you have some equipment out there, and you don't want to leave it there all night. They'd ask for volunteers to go out and be range guards. That meant you went out and slept in a prop tent and cooked your own food. And Lim and I were always first in line. We'd go out there and camp out for a couple days, while the other guys were back in camp doing KP or whatever. So we shared that kind of interest. Another thing we had, we were both pretty darn good marksmen. I don't mean to brag here, but I'm going to. To fire expert with an M-1 rifle was a pretty darn good accomplishment. We both got those expert badges. That's something we had in common. And nobody else in the whole company had for both weapons except Lim and me, so we sort of distinguished ourselves that way, and that gave us some, you know, rapport with each other. And let me tell you about Lim. He didn't want to fire expert. You see, expert is top, and next down is sharpshooter, and then it's marksman. Lim liked the name sharpshooter. He wanted to go home with a sharpshooter badge, and he tried not to fire expert, but he did anyhow. (laughter) And you know what? He went to the TH before he got his leave to go home and bought a sharpshooter badge instead of the expert badge and wore it home. (laughter)

PIEHLER: He wanted sharpshooter because people wouldn't know what expert is?

DICKEY: But you see, he was just a lovable kind of guy. Just a good old country boy. And he talked funny, you know, he was from back in the sticks, and I'd just glory to hear Lim talk in some of the colloquial expression that I hadn't heard, even in Morristown. We just - I don't think Lim looked up to me at all, but we knew somehow there was a different class distinction, and that it didn't matter, and we just learned from each other and taught each other. This was all unspoken, just kind of understood.

PIEHLER: Well Lim also left the area, I mean - from the way you described him, he didn't -

DICKEY: He went to Ishpeming, Michigan. I don't know when. It may have been after he got out of the Army, I don't know. But he did not go to college. But he apparently distinguished himself and he was something of an inventor. And I don't know what he did, but he made some innovations that won him some awards, and a good salary and job.

PIEHLER: You… enlisted in regular draft, and reported to Fort Oglethorpe on February 21, 1946. You wanted to be in infantry?

DICKEY: Not necessarily in the infantry.

PIEHLER: But that's where they assigned you?

DICKEY: Let me explain that to. The infantry would be to my liking except, as I mentioned somewhere earlier, I've always had trouble with my feet. Like I told you in the furniture factory standing all day just nearly killed me. And when we were going through the medical exam at Fort Oglethorpe, one of the doctors looked at my feet, [they were] very flat, and he said, "well I'll tell you one thing son. You'll never go to the infantry." (laughs) Well, we went to Fort McPherson in Atlanta for assignment and three days later I was in infantry basic in Fort McClellan, Alabama. And I didn't try to challenge it at all. You know, I would have preferred - I wanted the active

Army life, and I wanted the outdoors, but there might have been another branch, say, the Signal Corp and the Artillery, where it wouldn't require all that constant marching and drilling. It really was hard on me. But it didn't matter, you know, I was one of the boys and I was going to make it, and I did. And I don't mean to exaggerate that, it's just that I had a lot of pain and difficulties.

PIEHLER: But it's also interesting, because some of it, because you'd had all this outdoor experience, some of it sounds like you took to very easily, particularly the -

DICKEY: Handling a rifle was just everyday stuff with me. See, it was natural. A lot of guys had real trouble with it, and yeah, I fit into an infantry mold pretty well.

PIEHLER: What do you remember about your… sergeants at Fort McClellan?

DICKEY: At Fort McClellan I had a… just a hell of a nice sergeant. He was a combat veteran who had come back, I think he was career sergeant - I mean a career enlisted man. He was harsh, but he was gentle. Now that's inconsistent, but you respected him. He didn't make you do anything that he didn't do himself, and some of them did. They would send you out on all kinds of detail, but they wouldn't accompany you. If he had us to exercises, he did every single one of them like he was leading us. He wasn't having someone else lead us. He would mix with us a little bit. In other words, we could… walk over to his hut and say, "hey serge, I don't understand that damn firing pin that won't fit back in my rifle," and he'd sit down and say, "well, here's how you do it." Now that's as friendly as you ever got, you didn't go out and drink beer with him or anything like that.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

DICKEY: But he -

PIEHLER: He was very approachable, it sounds.

DICKEY: And not all of them were. You see, Fort McClellan was just filled with infantry companies, one after another after another. Our battalion had four companies in it, I guess. We were Company C. And we fired better than all the rest of the three companies, and that gave us a lot of corp, and the sergeant encouraged that. He would call us by name, he knew each one of us. He wouldn't come up to me and say, "Hey Dave," he'd say, "Hey Dickey, can you do this or that? Your turn in the belay." But the tough were right after I went to Fort Benning in the paratroopers.

PIEHLER: Well, yeah I was getting ready to get to the paratroopers in just a second because you left - you had sent us a great article about your… experience in the paratroopers.

DICKEY: I can't add much to that. (laughs)

PIEHLER: How did you - I guess - How did you get the opportunity to go to paratroopers? How did that - ?

DICKEY: At that time, it was strictly a voluntary unit. I think during the war they put a few draftees in the paratroopers, because they were so short on men, but it did become strictly a volunteer outfit by the time I went. And all that happened was Lim and four or five of us were down at the (?) Saturday night -

[End of Tape Two, Side One]

[Start of Tape Two, Side Two]

PIEHLER: You had made the comment that you were sitting around one night drinking and saying let's - well, you were still in basic, you hadn't finished basic training yet.

DICKEY: We were right at the end of basic-

PIEHLER: Toward the end?

DICKEY: Yeah.

PIEHLER: And that's when you all decided you're going to be even braver, that you would volunteer for the paratroopers, and then no one wanted to say, "ah, I had a bit too much to drink."

DICKEY: And you know, the funny thing is I don't think anybody had ever considered it before.

PIEHLER: It was not something you had talked about doing?

DICKEY: No, it was a first - I told you my brother was the adventurous one. I really don't have that kind of adventurous spirit. I'll take chances, and I've taken plenty of them, but I just - I've never been one to go out and run great risks. I'm more of a conservative and considerate type person. But I think the other guys were pretty much like I was, two or three of them were kind of tough guys, and would probably done it anyhow, but none of us had ever discussed it before. And the interesting thing again, those who did sign for regular Army for an eighteen month hitch, they got sent home for a two week leave before being going to Fort Benning. We did not, the draftees who did not sign over. We simply were put in a holding tank, and they came back from leave, and we all went to the same outfit in the paratroopers. But they -

PIEHLER: You just got to clear your heels for two weeks while they got leave.

DICKEY: (laughs) Yeah. And again paratroopers were really tough, you were just made such nothing in it, and yet at the same time, I've physically never been in better shape in my life, and I felt good. Except my feet hurt all the time. Probably the best health I'd ever enjoyed, and I was down to 165 pounds, which I maintained for quite a few years after that. But it was all pretty solid muscle and there was a lot to be learned from these - there was some pretty mean guys there. And, you know, you want you to have to remember that they're training you to kill people. We weren't looking at it like that, but that's what every day was like. You had bayonet drill, and you'd get out there, and you'd get in those dummies and you'd hold those positions, and you'd think your back was going to break, and you'd sweat and holler. And in retrospect, it was right much fun, but you

know, they were training us to kill people, and we - In infantry basic, we were in a heavy weapons company. That meant we had to know how to use the rifle and the carbine, but our main weapon was the A-1 Millimeter Mortar. We also go to fire as a, just for training, a fifty caliber Watercol Machine Gun, a thirty caliber Machine gun, and a forty-five Automatic Pistol, with which I couldn't hit the broad side of a barn, curiously. I was great with a rifle, but not with a pistol. So, in the… paratroopers, once you're through the training, you get assigned. You might still be in an infantry company, you might be in a heavy weapons company, but you could artillery or whatever. You all go through the same paratrooper training, but that doesn't mean you are just a paratrooper. You could be an engineer or a signal corp. And what my outcome would have been was like Lim, I would have been a paratroop infantry. The part I liked about the paratroopers, and I didn't like jumping, I admit it, I didn't like it at all, I liked riding in the gliders, troop gliders. That's what scared the hell out of most of the guys. They'd rather jump out of an airplane and parachute than to ride the gliders, because the gliders aren't powered. But, you know, it's not something that scared me. But that was an experience, you see, that otherwise I might not have ever had anywhere. The training prior to jumping really had all kinds of simulated jumps, one of which was from a thirty-four foot tower, in which we had a parachute harness, not an actual chute. But it's on a pulley, and when you jump it catches - your foot catches on a cable, and you just ride it down. But I can't explain it to you, but that was far scarier to all of us than jumping out of an airplane. There's just something about jumping off thirty-four feet - and it looks like you're two hundred feet off the ground, and you know there's a pulley up there, but you just jump into space, and you don't have a parachute, and it's just traumatic. When you out with a parachute, you know, it's just so automatic, quick click, and boom it's open, and you're drifting down, and you don't have time to worry about it. It's kind of exhilarating; it's fun.

PIEHLER: One of the things I… was struck in reading your account was, not that I want you to repeat the language, this is why I tape, but it struck me in reading this that "meathead" was one of the kinder things they actually said to you. That there was a lot of vulgarity aimed at… you know, by your… instructors.

DICKEY: Unbelievable. Everything was vulgar. I mean, you couldn't say two words that there wasn't some ugly word into it, or some swear word. Now it was bad in the Army in general.

PIEHLER: Yes.

DICKEY: Among all of us, we just learned to talk that way because it isn't that we liked it, but you were instantly understood. And it - you know, it gave you that common language, common ground, you could communicate. Now a lot of us really lowered what we would call our standards in order to do that. And it wasn't that we liked it, but boy, in paratroopers, I'm not kidding you, not a single sentence could be said without ugly, vile words in it. They using (laughs) - oh boy. But see that too was a part of toughing you up, making angry, making you mad, making you determined to get through, and "one of these days, I'll get that son of a -"

PIEHLER: You would be injured on your first jump, your first -

DICKEY: Second jump.

PIEHLER: Second jump. So the first jump went smoothly?

DICKEY: It was so quick I hardly knew what was happening.

PIEHLER: But the second jump - What happened on the second jump?

DICKEY: Let me go back to the first jump. The way you line up for the jump in a C-47 Dakota, DC-3 in civilian, you line up along the wall, and you hook up your static cord to a cable over here. Then you shuffle up to the door, the line - when you get the signal to jump, you just jump out the door. Well, the first man on the stick, and that's what I was on the first jump, he swings into the door before the jump, and he's holding that position. It's an open door. And you're standing there with one foot over the floor, and holding your hands on the fuse log, and you're sticking out of the plane so that when he taps your leg, you'll just be gone. Well, we got the signal to stand up and hook up, and stand in the door, and the plane just kept running and running and running and running, and what I found out later they had overshot the drop zone. And we to fly completely around and get in behind the other formation. And there I was stuck in that door and I knew better than to look down. You're always taught don't look down, look straight at the horizon. But I thought of looking at the horizon for five hours, but when we got the signal to jump, he just touched my leg, and I don't even know what happened. I was out of there. I was just so relieved. I didn’t know if I was going to get blown out of that plane or what was going to happen, and the tension and the anxiety were just terrible. And when the chute opened, it was the most exhilarating thing that had happened to me in my life, bar none, to this day. It was just sensational. And it didn't last very long, you know, you're dropping fourteen feet a second, and you've got to pay some attention to whether you're coming down straight, and the guy just shoot to hit the drop zone, and to avoid others. But the feeling was you just - I don't know, I guess skydivers get the same feeling.

PIEHLER: My wife has once skydived.

DICKEY: No kidding?

PIEHLER: She has explained it and -

DICKEY: You see, it's not the same thing, but at least I experienced some of that. All I could do was guide the shoot to keep going down, down. I couldn't do any acrobatics.

PIEHLER: No, she also just came down, straight down. She's only done it once, but she enjoyed it immensely.

DICKEY: I was kind of like George Bush, the original George Bush, I though I'd like to go back and try it again. But I have a continuing back problem, and my better judgement finally told me no, you don't want to do that. That's where my back problem, I presume, started. I don't know that for an absolute fact, but I hurt my back on the second jump, and although I was, you know, in pretty good shape after that, in later years I began to have bad back problems, so I -

PIEHLER: There's a chance it could have come from that.

DICKEY: But what… they told me, they said, "ah, you're not hurt." "The hell I'm not hurt." I could hardly walk, you know, I was all bent over. They tried to talk me into going back and jumping again, and I didn't. They ridiculed me for it. They're not easy on you about it. But I just knew I didn't want to do that again. See, what happened, I didn't break any bones, I didn't have - What was serious about it was I hit not on my feet, but I came in sideways. I don't know how I hit, but it knocked me out. See, what you're trained to do, I'll be brief about this, when your chutes open, you reach on the risers, and you can pull down and it'll guide in that direction, or you can pull. I was not the first man on the stick on that second jump, and when they got the signal to go, we were all shuffling the door and trying to get out of there. You know, you're just so uptight that - The way it happened, about half of us just fell out the door. We were pushed out the door, and that meant we were not in proper jump position, and when my chute opened I think I was upside down, and all by gear came up and slapped me in the face, and I was oscillating like this. I was about half conscious, I didn't know what I was doing. And I started pulling on my risers, trying to get straightened out, and before I knew it, I just blacked out. I had hit the ground. Lim told me, he said he thought he saw me hit, and he though I'd killed myself, because he said, "I realized you weren't getting straightened up from that oscillation." See, what you were supposed to do - I guess it's still the same today, you're coming down, and you're… erect. And as soon as the balls of your feet hit, then you immediately start falling sideways to your calf, your thigh, your butt, and your shoulder, to absorb that shock, you kind of roll it. Fourteen feet a second is kind of like jumping off the top of an Army truck doing fifteen miles an hour, so when I hit I just - I hit hard. Like I say, I didn't break anything, except I broke my spirit, I think. But I knew - I could hardly get into bed that night, and when I fell out the next morning, and I was going to try to go, but I told the sergeant, I said, "I can't go." He ridiculed me for that, he said, "you're chicken, aren't you?" I said, "I may be chicken, but I can't jump serge," and he said, "well, by God you go," and he sent me over to some officer, and I told him the same, and he said, "well you can't stay in the paratroopers if you don't go jump." I said, "I know that sir, but I can't jump," he said, "okay." You know, there was no good luck soldier, goodbye, nothing. It was just you didn't make it.

PIEHLER: How long did you stay when you told him you couldn't make it?

DICKEY: They immediately assigned me to a replacement company there on the base.

PIEHLER: At Fort Benning.

DICKEY: And I was there about a week before I - they did give me a leave home then, but I was sent from there to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

PIEHLER: Oh yes.

DICKEY: You know where that is.

PIEHLER: Oh yes, I know it very well.

DICKEY: But I got to go home first, and I could at least wear the airborne uniform, I could wear the boots and the glider wings, I just couldn't wear the parachute wings. You had to make five

jumps to qualify as a paratrooper, so I didn't - I wasn't a paratrooper literally. I made tower jumps and I made the two-hundred-fifty foot falls in a parachute from a tower, and all that, and the two plane jumps, but I'm not a paratrooper. But I could enjoy some of the glory of it, going home with the glider wings on at least.

PIEHLER: Because how many glider - was there a minimum for that?

DICKEY: There was, and I don't know how many it was.

PIEHLER: But you had had the minimum of -

DICKEY: Yeah. They took us up on a number - there were two different kinds of gliders. And one of the things we got to contribute in, and most of the troops did not, they had an airborne glider pickup where you had two gliders on the ground with a nylon cable and the plane would come with a tail hook. And [claps hands] grab that cable and lift you off the ground instead of taking off with your - So I got to do that in a C-5 - C-5, I don't know. The eight man glider and then the big fifteen man glider, I did several of those. Which was not the normal training. So I got some, you know, some unique experience there. And then at Camp Kilmer I think I just got assigned to where they needed troops. I didn't know where I was going. We were at Kilmer for a couple of weeks, and I ran into a guy who I knew from Morristown. He was at Fort Monmouth, and he was stationed up there. So on the weekend we went to New York together one weekend, then the next weekend we went down to Washington, DC, and he'd been around to all the places. I'd never been to either place. So I had a nice little break there. And then we thought we were probably going to Germany. We were shipping out from New York, and they issued us wool and overcoats and arctic boots. I woke up the next morning and somebody on the horn said "We're just off of Cape Hatteras." Cape Hatteras, what in the hell are we doing down there? And then, before you knew it, we went down by the Virgin Islands and Cuba and right into the canal, and straight on to the Philippines. Turned in all that winter gear and got issued khakis. Typical Army. (laughter) And they didn't us everywhere we were going.

PIEHLER: You didn’t know until you -

DICKEY: When we went into Manila Bay, they said we're at your destination. We were on that ship for thirty days, literally thirty days. Except for the canal, they let us off for a little while The Red Cross had a… canteen there, and we spent about a half a day in Christoble. And we didn't - we saw the island of Hawaii in the distance, nowhere near it. And that was the only land we saw for the rest of the crossing the Pacific Ocean.

BROWN: What was your impression of the Philippines?

DICKEY: You know, at that time, the Filipinos were so happy to have been liberated by the Americans. They thought every last one of us was a hero. They couldn't do enough for us. They were just so grateful, and they just couldn't do enough for you. And most of them were destitute. Manila was absolutely leveled, it was just destroyed. I read later that the most devastated city in World War II was Warsaw, and that the second was Manila. Boy, you could see it. And the sad thing is that the Americans had done it, that's the only way they could get the Japanese out. They

had to shoot them out, they wouldn't give up. Imagine going to a city like, say, Washington, DC, and all those buildings leveled. Some of them still standing lopsided and shot all to pieces. And the Filipinos, some of them were back in business. They could cobble together scrap metal, you'd be amazed how many warm clothes were made out of parachutes. You could see that camouflage parachute silk. They made dresses out of it, and they took surplus jeeps and make chimneys out of them, like our city buses. They were entrepreneurs and very dedicated people. But they didn't have anything, and we could give them a bar of soap, you know, or a pack of cigarettes, and they just thought it was a gift from Heaven. That too was a kind of a maturing experience, as you can imagine, to see what we took for granted in this country, most of the world saw it as great luxury, and I just never appreciated that before. The Philippines that I saw was pretty - oh, the heat was oppressive, and you just sweat all the time, and it was tropic heat, and it rained a lot. We didn't even wear raincoats, we'd just go ahead and get rained on and in the hot sun would dry you out in fifteen minutes anyhow. And we lived in tents, and that wasn't bad, and we… the experience in the Philippines was not unpleasant. It was difficult at times, but we didn't have any real hardship. Just it was nice to get back home again and sleep in a real bed, instead of a little old folding cot. And there was a lot of snakes and lizards, but we rarely were bothered with them because we were on the outskirts of Manila, so we weren't in the jungle most of the time. And all I did in the Philippines, when I got there, soon as we got off the ship, they picked out, I think it was eight of us, based on some test we had taken. They said, "you all are going to radio repair school because you're specially suited for that," and I said, "What?!" But that's where they sent me, and that was about the last thing in the world I could do, and I told them that. They said, "well that's tough, Dickey." But after about six weeks there, they realized I was telling the truth. I asked them please transfer me out of here, I'm not learning this stuff. Shortly, they transferred me to the Army Forces Western Pacific headquarters, and what I did there was a number of clerical jobs, at the same time I was chauffeur for two colonels. When I didn't have anything else to do, I worked as a mail clerk to help out the other people at headquarters. And driving the colonels, they occasionally go to places like (Kaveetie?) Naval Base or out to Paranack, or some other place. And that enabled me to get out a little bit into the boondocks sometimes and some of my colleagues didn't get to go to. I always liked to go to Kavete Naval Base because although we ate pretty well, boy on the Naval Base you got milk and ice cream and stuff like that. I think the colonels liked it too. (laughter) They scheduled a visit over there on purpose at lunchtime. But you see what I did in the Philippines was pretty nondescript. I also had - I was in the hospital over there for a while with my feet and my back. Again, not directly attributable to my Army service, but I was having obvious problems. They hospitalized me and nothing came of that either.

BROWN: Where you able to communicate with the Filipinos?

DICKEY: Surprisingly, in Manila in particular, the kids there, in the public schools they learned three languages: Daguala, which is their native tongue, Spanish, there's a real strong Spanish heritage there, and English. Just about all of them could speak very good English. Now of course we would, the troops would pick up some of the dirty words in Daguala. We knew how to tell a woman we loved her, and things like that. But… there were a few Japanese prisoners there, and initially we couldn't tell a Japanese from a Filipino. They both look dark skinned, and short, and kind of slant eyed. But pretty soon, you pick up the differences. But even the Japanese, by that time, they knew they were in safe hands. We would try to converse sometimes, but not very effectively.

PIEHLER: With the Japanese?

DICKEY: Yeah. They weren't afraid of us, but they were prisoners. You know, while we were there, there were still a lot of Japanese on some of the islands, and that's - really, they refused to believe the war was over. And the 86th Division got sent down to, I think Medinido to flush them out. And I read years later that two Japanese came out the jungles - this would be like in the 1960s, I think - finally gave up. They had survived on their own back in the jungle all that time, still thinking the war was not over.

PIEHLER: I've read those accounts of those last Japanese holdouts. As late as the early seventies, there were a few that still -

DICKEY: On this same line, let me tell you when… it was time for me to come home from the Philippines, there were a whole bunch of us in the same outfit that were going to be assigned to troop ship. Well I had one colleague in the mayo room over there, and he said, "Dave you don't have to go on that troop ship," "the hell I don't. How am I going to go home, on a bicycle?" He said, "you have to know the right people." (laughter) Well he had a friend down at the shipping unit and he said, "I guarantee if you take that shipping sergeant a fifth of DO, which is his favorite," and you could get in the Philippines at that time. He said, "you won't have to go on that ship, he'll get you on a flight." Well I didn't really believe this but sure enough, I took him a fifth of DO, and I said, "Courtney sent me, and he said you could help me out if I helped you out," and I showed him that bottle, and he said, "Sure, what do you want?" (laughs) And I don't know what kind of strings were pulled, but they had regular flights coming back to the states, and he said they got me transferred. Well I had to sit in the replacement depot for two weeks while the others shipped out, but I still beat them home by a long shot.

PIEHLER: Oh, I -

DICKEY: So left out on a DC-4, a Douglas for engine, Piston engine plane. You know, we didn't have jets then. And we flew to Guam, and we over nighted at Guam. The reason I mention that is there to you could see so much devastation. We didn't have any chance to get out on the island, but coming into it from the airbase you could just see it. You know, palm trees just blown all to hell like a hurricane had come through, and so many landing vessels out in the shallows. Tanks rusting up on the hillside. And then from there, we flew to Quadguline, where the plane broke down, and we were there for two days. And Quadguline is just a little old corral island, there's not much there except for an air strip. But man it was just littered with the material of war. I mean, it looked like you were in a World War II junkyard. That impressed me. Incidentally, on Quadguline, I told you that earlier I was interested in insects and butterflies as kid. I couldn't find any butterflies on Quadguline, which puzzled me because that neo-tropical climate and all. And after I got home, I found out that there were no butterflies on Quadgulene. There had never been any. That's strange, but there simply wasn't enough to support them.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

DICKEY: Some of them might have gotten blown in, you know, but there was not enough for them to reproduce and have the proper food for their larva. From Quadgulene - the plane caught on fire at Quadgulene, but they got it fixed - we flew to Johnston Island, which is a Navy facility - not anymore, it was. I think they turned it over as a wildlife management area now. Or a world wildlife refuge. But we had engine trouble there. And then we flew to Hawaii, to Wheeler Field. And they were going to give us shore leave that night, and boy we were so happy to be back in - it wasn't the states, but almost the states. We were going to get to see downtown Hawaii. Incidentally, we flew in over Diamond Head - it was all the romantic beautiful island that you had seen in the movies. So we were all preparing to get dressed and go into town and as they got on the bullhorn they said, "all leave is cancelled." And we said, "oh, whatever." But the good part of it was they decided to go on to continue the flight that night. So we flew all night, and we flew over the Golden Gate Bridge the next morning, and landed at Fairfield Sussen Airbase, which is near Sacramento. So I was discharged on an Air Force base. (laughs) So my services, you know, had varied all over the lot. I didn't hitchhike home, by the way. We all had these great notions boy we get into the state, we're going to buy a surplus jeep and drive home, and get back home in a jeep. Well none of us did that. You know, we were all going to get together next year. I had one buddy from Long Island, and he was talking about how in the fall we could ferry the yachts down the waterway, take them down to Florida for the winter. That people were always hiring hands. And we were all going to get together and do that, then of course we never got in touch again. (laughs) Like I was saying earlier, we had some pretty close friendships, but once you were out of the service, you no longer had anything in common, and those were just dreams. You really intended that when you were in the service, but you can talk to almost any serviceman, and they'll say, "well yeah, I lost track of old John, I don't know what happened to him." And you think, "well John saved your life in a foxhole," but somehow it changes. You go back to your normal life again. I'm speaking now of something I don't know directly, I'm talking about combat.

PIEHLER: If you - I mean even…your group, you know, were really close. You had notions of staying in touch -

DICKEY: I had one buddy who lived in Portland, Oregon, and we did exchange letters for about a year, but that was it. He stopped writing to me, I would have continued, but he stopped. And I got letters from the guy in Missouri that I didn't particularly care to correspond with, so I sort of let my letters to him drop off. That's just the way it goes.

PIEHLER: I'm curious - you were in the Army in the Philippines, you know, a lot of the guys who are over there want to come home. Did you get a sense from… the old timers and the veterans that they wanted to go home? Do you have any sense of that?

DICKEY: I think we did too. Everybody wanted to go home. It just - you know, you have the realization that you're nine thousand miles from home and there's a whole big ocean out there and you're among people who are not like you at all. While they were accommodating and all, and you're living conditions were not all that primitive, you missed the familiarity of the Great Smoky Mountains, for God's sake. You know, it wasn't a particular place in the woods that you were going to go hike Mount LaConte, it's just that the mountains were sitting there, and they're not there anymore. Well, the Philippines had some lovely mountains too, but you know, you have a sense of belonging. And I missed the Little Dutch Restaurant in Morristown, and I missed some

of the girls. Not that I was that closely attached with them, but they were just cute girls, and I liked having them around. I missed my Mom, and I missed going home and having that home cooking scents coming out of the house. You know, just the familiarity. When you're deprived of them, even though you're not suffering, you really realize what a wonderful life and luxury you had and never knew it, and never appreciated it, and that's like my coming back to UT. I knew that I wanted to do that, but it wasn't going to be easy, and I realized boy how indulged I had been. Now it was time for me to pay the piper.

PIEHLER: You had… mentioned that you really had…you'd worked very hard, but overall UT was a really positive experience. When did you have a sense that journalism was the career for you?

DICKEY: You know, I can't tell that. When I was in UT I knew that I wanted to write, and I wrote a lot of short stories, and I couldn't get any of them published. But I wrote a lot of them. And from time to time I had contributed little pieces to the Morristown weekly paper, you know, about, something about the Boy Scouts or just whatever. I'd find an excuse to write something, and they'd always publish it. Although I majored in English, I went over and talked to the head of the journalism department and told him that I just didn't have room to take all the prerequisites for journalism, but there were a couple of courses I'd like to take. One of them was editorial writing, and one of them was feature article writing. That was Willis Tucker, and he died recently. And he allowed me to come and take those upper division courses without the prerequisites because of my writing and photography background. So while I took the feature writing course, and I guess this was my senior year, I wrote and had published my first magazine article. I also wrote several feature articles for what was then the *Nashville Tennessee Magazine* or *Sunday Supplement*. So I had some good success right away, before I got out of college with journalism. I still didn't know what I wanted to do, and I knew I didn't want to live in Knoxville. That was the last place in the world I wanted to be. I hated Knoxville, I really did. Just despised this place. What I knew about Knoxville then, it was a dirty old city, it was back during the days of steam locomotives and… coal furnaces, and it was dirty and sooty and dreary. And all I knew about Knoxville was the kind of the Fort Sanders area and downtown, I didn't know about all the nicer environments that were available, so I wanted to get the hell out of here. But even in my final quarter, which was December of 1950, and I got out a little bit earlier because I went to summer school. I was so dedicated to school that I wanted to do it, but I wanted to get out. And I came out with an English degree which didn't mean a thing, but I saw or noticed on some bulletin board that said General Electric was going to be interviewing for advertising trainees. And I didn't go to the interview with any notion of actually becoming an advertising copyright, I just wanted to see what's this all about and what do they offer? And the interviewer and I got off to such a good start and had such a good rapport that he told me right there, he said, "we'd like to hire you. We'll hire you right away." "Wait, wait, I have some other interviews I want to do," and he said, "well, that's alright." I guess that was in November, and by mid-December he was on the phone, he said "we want you to come up here." And I said, "okay, I will." And I knew that I would enjoy being an advertising copyright, and I knew I would learn a lot. And I did. But I also knew at that time that I was not cut out for the corporate life. I'm not much of a conformist or a yes man. I'm not a rabble rouser, but I'm independent. Well, General Electric was one of the highlights of my life. This was in Schenectady, which, at that time, was their world headquarters. There were forty thousand GE employees in Schenectady. But I learned more practical information in my two years at GE than I

had in all my prior educational experience. I learned a lot about marketing and psychology and GE never stopped sending you to school. They sponsored one class after another. They taught us accounting and they taught us printing and publishing, they taught us a little about electrical engineering, so that we were familiar with all the vast number of products they handle. They didn't expect us to be experts in all, but to have some talking acquaintance so that when we went to the plant to interview the engineers, we could get the essential information about their product and know how to present it in advertising. My advertising experience there included radio spots, television, which was brand new then, magazine advertising, in house publications, speech making, the whole gamlet. And I just worked with wonderful, creative people. General Electric was a wonderful company, at that time at least, unless you really screwed up bad, you were assured of a lifetime job. However, it was unspoken, but there were certain expectations that you would dress a certain way. That wouldn't stop you from working for them, but it would certainly hinder your advancement. One of the policies at that time was to move you around a lot. They wanted you to serve in different plant locations with different people, different products, even in a different line of work. Ultimately, you'd come back to marketing and advertising promotion, but I didn't want to move to Cleveland one year and then to Phoenix the next. And I didn't want to be caught up in the corporate life. I grew up a small town boy, and I still am. While I could enjoy associating with those people immensely and get along extremely well with them, I knew it wasn't something I could continue with. So I began to think I needed to go back down South. I hated those winters up there. You can't imagine -

PIEHLER: Well, no, I mean I've stayed in New York. It's very cold.

DICKEY: Honestly, I loved New York State, upstate New York is wonderful. You've got all those magnificent lakes and mountains and I used to go hiking in the Anarondacks, we'd go up to Lake George on weekends, go over to the Berkshires and go Tanglewood -all those wonderful things. But God Almighty, it was no warmer through April and the rivers were frozen this thick. I never knew ice could get - you could drive a truck from New York to Vermont across Lake Champlain.

PIEHLER: Oh, I know. I've stayed in New York. It's so much colder than, say, New York City, Long Island, New Jersey.

DICKEY: Yeah.

PIEHLER: But you had also really hated Knoxville. I mean, you had said you really did not want to -

DICKEY: It was somehow still associated in my mind with leaving North Carolina. It was like Morristown. I can't really explain that, that's unreasonable, but that's the way I felt. And I began to think, well what I can do is I can go get a job as a newspaper man. At that time, a lot of newspapers did not require a journalism degree.

PIEHLER: Well, I got the sense that even in that era it's still very common for a lot of people to not to have gone to college.

DICKEY: Well, both General Electric, in the advertising department, and many newspapers. If you have a facility for words and little experience, and they don't care what your background is, the more varying it is, the better suited you are, from their point of view. So that what I had - I told John earlier when I came to the *News-Sentinel* they wouldn't hire me because I didn't have a journalism degree. But that changed, they said. But eventually I decided yeah, I do want to go journalism, and I wanted to go back down South. And the thing that triggered it was I was madly in love with a Catholic girl in Schenectady. I mean I loved that woman, God Almighty I loved her, and she loved me. But our religious background and other differences were so strong that I knew there was no way I could make it work. That was the most heart rending thing for me, God I could cry over it today. But it was the right thing to do. I was getting so seriously involved, we were, that I knew it was now or never. So I went in and told my boss that I was going to resign. And he said, "well, I guess I should try to talk you out of it," but he said, "I know you've got your mind made up." He said "David, you can stay here," but he said, "if you want to be a journalist you better go on." Well he sent me up to the big boss, the division boss, just as an exit interview, and I told Raleigh Reid the same thing. He kind of scratched his head and he said, "you know, I almost did that myself one time, and I wonder if I shouldn't really have done it." (laughter) So I left, you know, with great, good favor, and those were really wonderful friends there, and it was just a tremendous experience.

PIEHLER: One of the things, if you could just - you had mentioned before that it was quite a surprise when you, for example, went into Mass and to see the church integrated. That struck you as a real difference. You also mentioned that the winters were much colder.

DICKEY: Well I first became aware that there was some kind of racial problem. It is something that I just never had any occasion to consider it as anything but normal, and I didn't know of any problems. That was just my blindness and my ignorance, I just didn't chose to see it. But you know, we didn't have the actual confrontations all the time. Another thing I saw is I took my girlfriend, Jo, J - O, to Albany one night and we went to a little club, a little night club after going to a movie. We were sitting at the bar, and three executive type black people dressed extremely nicely, better than I was, came in and they were refused admission to the bar. And I said, "wait a minute, these damn yankees up here are always criticizing me about the way we treat the blacks down South," and I said, "what am I seeing right here?" And I don't know how typical that was, but, you know, if they were integrated, there was one instance where if anybody had credentials those three gentlemen did. But they were refused. And I guess that's the first time I actually became concerned about racial differences. I didn't make any big issue of it then, but I realized there was something going on. And boy in that Cathedral, I don't think there was any heat in it. Everybody stood in there, you know, in their overcoats, and all, and that was a new experience for me. Church had always been an intimate, close, warm, friendly sort of thing, and here were all these people going through all these motions that I didn't know anything about.

PIEHLER: Yeah, I can imagine. It was a very -

DICKEY: But for Jo's sake, I took a correspondence course from the Knights of Columbus in Catholicism, and I learned a great deal about Catholicism. And I respect the religion to this day, it just something that I personally couldn't accept to that extent. Some of the principals I actually practice myself, but I cannot be a Catholic. I can't be a Baptist, there's all kinds of - But it was that

love involvement that actually triggered my leaving. I might otherwise have stayed three or four years, I don't know for sure.

PIEHLER: Yeah.

DICKEY: But, and I'll stop this in a moment, what I decided to do was to go to Asheville. I had always had a warm place for Asheville. On the way down, I took the Blue Ridge Parkway, on purpose, to drive the whole length of it. It wasn't fully complete at that time, but most of it was. Well I pulled off at Roanoke and I went around knocking on doors at advertising agencies in Roanoke, to seek any job openings. I had some interesting interviews, didn't find anything I liked. And I went to Charlotte where I had been invited to interview with (Monsano?), a big chemical company. And I knew the minute I hit Charlotte, the traffic, I didn't want to go there. I took the interview, but, you know, I wasn't interested in - it was an advertising job that I could have filled really well, but I wasn't suited for it. And eventually I got to Asheville, and the reason I'm elaborating on this is it explains how I got to Knoxville. In Asheville, I got a room at the YMCA, and I went straight to the *Citizen Times* office. I told them I would like to go to work as a reporter. And they interviewed me, and they went into my background and everything. They did not have any openings, but the managing editor told me, he said, "if you… want to hang around, if you can some other work." He said, "I will have openings in six months, and I guarantee you that I will hire you in six months, if you want to do that." So I went around and knocked on some more doors, and I came to a little radio station, and on impulse, I walked in. Just a little hole in the wall. It was WLOS which today is a big TV station. (laughter) But it was just a little old one room, and the guy I talked to was the manager, disc jockey, owner, he was everything. And I told him exactly what I was up to, I wanted to work for the newspaper, and I said, "I've got this advertising and marketing background, I know nothing about radio, but is there some way that we could help each other?" "Oh God yes," he said, "I'll put you on the air tomorrow." I said, "no, I don't want to be on the air," he said, "ah, you'll be great." Anyhow, we decided yeah, that I could help him in a lot of ways, and it was a good job, and it paid enough to sustain me until I got on the *Citizen Times*. Well I had my - I had a big old '50 Mercury Convertible, it was just jam packed with all my belongings and stuff I brought from Schenectady. So I drove across the mountain to Morristown to leave all that junk at my Mom's house and to visit my Mom and my aunt, and go back to Asheville the following week to work for the radio station. My aunt had that dress shop, and there was a buyer - two buyers in Knoxville at Farragut showing off their fall/winter merchandise. So my aunt said, "Dave, can you take me down to Knoxville so I won't have to ride the bus?" So I said sure, and I took my aunt and my Mom, and while they were going through all their salesman stuff at the Farragut just in impulse I went over to the *News-Sentinel*. Just out of curiosity to see what they might offer. I still had no intention of coming to Knoxville. I talked to the managing editor, and he said, "we wouldn't hire you because you don't have a journalism degree." But he said, "you might want to talk to the city editor just to see what he thinks." And so I saw the city editor, he told me just the opposite. He said, "I'd like to have anything but a journalism degree." (laughter) And he said, "I think you could do really well as a reporter," he said, "I don’t have any openings either, but you might try us again in the future if you feel like it." So I went on back to Morristown and I believe that was on a Saturday, and on Sunday, when the *News-Sentinel* wasn't even operating, Joe Levy, the city editor, called me in Morristown. He said, "can you come to work Monday morning?" and I said, "are you serious?" and he said "yeah, we just lost two reporters that we didn't know we were losing." He said, "I think you can fill the gap

real nicely," and he told me the salary he'd give me. You know, since that was immediate, and the income was a little better than working at the radio station, and I guess I though, "well, what the hell. I can go ahead and do this and still go to Asheville." I don't know what I thought, but I told him yeah. So I went to work for the *News-Sentinel*, and I've been here ever since. By the way, I called the guy in Asheville, and I told him what had happened, and I said, "look, I'm not about to abandon you. I got a commitment to you, and I'll come back to Asheville next week." He said, "God no," he said, "you found something you want," he said, "you found something you want," he said, "I'm not about to make you come." He said, "you go on, and good luck to you," and he was really sincere about it, so I felt, you know, absolved. And still not thinking I'd ever stay in Knoxville.

PIEHLER: That wasn't the - it sounds like this was a temporary, "I'll do this for a little while" -

DICKEY: I don't know exactly what I thought, my Mom, living by herself, wanted me close by. I didn't really want to be that close to Morristown, Asheville, you know, was across the mountain, and I could come home. But it wasn't a day to day thing. So that was another influence about it. But once I got established on the *News-Sentinel*, then I got married, and then I had two kids. That pretty much firmed up my career here. I had to leave the newspaper largely for salary reasons. I didn't want to leave. I'd still be a journalist if I could.

PIEHLER: What was covering Knoxville like? You know, you were at the *News-Sentinel* from 52-57.

DICKEY: I covered every beat the newspaper had. I was a general assignment reporter. Parts of it I deplored, I didn't like covering murders, where you actually went out to the murder scene, and all kinds of gory stuff like that. But I did such things as exposing undercover nightclubs that were having illegal gambling and serving illegal drinks. I'd go in incognito and come back and write anonymous stories about them. Any airplane crash there was, I got sent because of my familiarity with the woods and the mountains. I got to interview all kinds of people from government officials, state, local, national. I became acquainted with every politician and agency head in Knoxville and East Tennessee, and Nashville, and many further out than that. I had such a good record in the sciences at UT, in the biological and geological sciences, that I had a lot good contacts. And I'd come over here on my own time and interview them, and get feature articles about them. The paper didn't assign me to them, but they were happy to get them, and I got all kinds of stories that the other reporters could not get. I had - they assigned me to a weekly column, "Trip of the Week," where each Sunday, I guess, we published a full page of some local trip, like going up to Rugby, or up on the Cumberland Plateau somewhere that people just didn't know much about. And I got to travel and go to those places, and come back and write about them. My first week on the job they assigned me to do the farmer's column. (laughter) They really did. I didn't know anything about farming and still don't, but what that amounted to was interviewing a county agent, and we got stuff on the Associated Press wire. I could consolidate all that into some kind of gardening and farm column. I handled that for about a year, in addition to the other stuff. I substituted on the outdoors column when Chambliss Pierce was away on vacation or something. I didn't do much sports. I didn't want to do much sports, and there was a separate department for that, but every once in while, when they got caught short, I might get assigned to a football game or something, which I didn't know really how to handle, but I

managed to get away with. I got sent out on a lot of police stories. Robberies, and chases, and murders, and husbands beating up their ex-wives, and I covered lots of courts. Federal courts which cleared the moonshiners, and city court. Sometimes criminal court, that wasn't a regular beat. But I mean, I got exposed to all those things, which made it, despite some of the distastefulness of a lot of it, made it really broadening, and wonderful, and introduced me and acquainted me with so many people. That has really been significant all the rest of my life. Many of them are dead now, but for the longest time I had access to information that other people just didn't know where in the world you could get such. All I had to do was pick up a phone, somebody I knew that was his specialty, happy to share the information. So in many volunteer organizations or work of that type, I could… pull together big full research reports just simply. And I learned that in the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber and city paid something like sixty thousand dollars to a consulting firm in New York to come down to Knoxville and do a base economics survey. You know, tell you what your community is all about. Your manufacturing, employment, and all. The report came back, and I said, "this is stuff I've been doing every day with the Chamber and industrial development, and I've already got all these facts. I could do that." And it -

[End of Tape Two, Side Two]

[Start of Tape Three, Side One]

PIEHLER: Testing, testing, testing. This continues after a nice lunch break an interview with David Dale Dickey on March 6, 2003 at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, with Kurt Piehler and -

BROWN: John Brown

PIEHLER: And let me give John a chance to sort of pick up the questioning after lunch.

BROWN: Okay. You have served - you were a journalist, and then you were a in the Home Builder's Association of Greater Knoxville, you were executive for the Greater Knoxville Chamber of Commerce, and the Blount County Industrial Development Board. Which of these - did you enjoy these other occupations outside of journalism?

DICKEY: The Chamber of Commerce was… the most satisfying to me. And in all those jobs I used a lot of journalistic skills, I did a lot of press relations, and marketing, and public relations, which involved some of the same kinds of word uses.

BROWN: Yeah.

DICKEY: It's not the same as being a newspaper person, but I didn't feel completely left of field.

BROWN: So it was kind of like an outlet for - you had like an outlet to the journalism?

DICKEY: Yeah, and as I may have mentioned earlier, I did a little freelance writing during all this period. I wrote some for the outdoors magazines, hunting, fishing, camping, nature studies, that sort of thing, but on a freelance basis.

BROWN: You had mentioned earlier to that you met Sergeant York.

DICKEY: Oh yeah. When I got that leave, right after Fort Benning to go to Camp Kilmer, my brother at that time had finished UT, and was a geologist with the state geological division. And I went up to Crossville and met him when he was doing field work, and spent, oh, about four or five days with him going around chopping on rocks. And Sergeant York's farm and home place was right there in Fentress County. And he had met Sergeant York, and he took me by, and we had lunch with him there in his home. And he sure didn't look like Gary Cooper. (laughter) But he was very hospitable, very nice. He was a big, heavyset fellow, a typical maybe farmer look. He had on a big straw hat, as a matter of fact. And just very down to earth, I didn't have any expectations, but it still was, you know, when you meet a celebrity like that, and find out he's just a normal human being, it's always a little bit of a shock somehow.

BROWN: Do you think the movie - like, his personality, was that what he was like when you met him?

DICKEY: I doubt that. No, the personality he showed to me as an older person, you know. Different circumstances. I didn't get the sense that Gary Cooper's portrayal was at all accurate, for that period at least.

PIEHLER: Since we're on movies, a point you made over lunch, I think you were mentioning about smoking and how - One of the influences you said the movies would glamorize - adults, it was very glamorous to smoke.

DICKEY: Yes.

PIEHLER: That was a real impression you got from movies.

DICKEY: Yeah, it was not really a very subtle message. It was just - it was always a part of those glamorous, wonderful people that we saw on the screen. It was so smart and sophisticated and we wanted to be like them. And they usually had a martini glass sitting by them, too.

PIEHLER: You also mentioned just… before we leave smoking, you eventually quit.

DICKEY: Much later.

PIEHLER: Yeah. You said it was twenty-nine years ago?

DICKEY: Yeah. I didn't really enjoy smoking that much ever. But it was extremely, for me, addictive. I simply had to have it, I can't explain that, but it was a real addiction for me. And when I decided that it was just killing me, I just made the decision, the commitment that I was going to quit, and I did. I set a date, and when that date came. And then I suffered all the agonies of hell

for weeks, and weeks, and weeks, which some people do and some don't. But I'm awfully glad I did quit. But we all smoked in the Army, by the way. And in high school most of the boys smoked. That may sound a little strange, but we did. It was sixteen year olds, fifteen year olds. And then the war years, when certain cigarette brands were hard to come by, like foods, and other commodities, we would roll our own, you know. Bugler Sack Tobacco, Bull Durham, all those things. Prior to that, of course, like all red blooded young Americans, we smoked corn silks, and sometimes smoked coffee in a corncob pipe, rabbit tobacco.

BROWN: Okay, switching gears here a little bit, in the early 1960s, when they constructed Tellico Dam, I've read that you were an opponent of that.

DICKEY: I sure was.

BROWN: Why - I mean, can you explain, tell us a little about that?

DICKEY: That was one of the few missions I've ever had in my life. I felt, and still feel very strongly that a vast resource was destroyed unnecessarily. That dam was never actually justified, economically, or any other way, as far as I'm concerned. And I sort of made it my mission to try to stop that dam, and I did a lot of public relations and publications work behind the scenes. And my real contribution turned out to be a - at that time, I was still with the Chamber of Commerce, which frowned on my activities, by the way. That really threatened my job, because the Chamber of Commerce normally is for development, whatever it might be. And I didn't see it that way, because, although I was involved in industrial development, I saw that role as a role of responsibility, where you didn't just indiscriminately go out and bring in new industry. You selected industries that were compatible and that were non-polluting, that could fit into your community, provide high level jobs. And that was the approach I took. But, as a Chamber employee, any industrial development, for three years I attended each summer a one week course at the University of Oklahoma at Norman. The industrial development institute, which was set up to establish professional credentials for those of us in the profession. And a part of that was a thesis program, and I wrote my thesis for that program on the value of the Little Tennessee River as it existed, and how it was, an all the factors that mitigate against building a dam on it. And that thesis got published by the Tennessee Game and Fish Commission, and it was widely circulated, and my efforts were far more than that, but that's what I'm remembered for is the thesis, because so many people saw it. It went to every Congressman and Senator, and I don't know where all it was disseminated. You don't think of a thesis as being much of a readable piece of writing, but there was a lot of emotion attached to that dam, and the opposition to it. But my main reason was from the point of view of a conservationist, I think. TVA at that time was justifying it on the basis of industrial development, and here they are, they had twenty-six dams and the industrial development was yet to be seen. The dam would contribute almost nothing to hydroelectric power, very little to flood control, and destroying a great scenic resource, and really a treasure trove of Indian artifacts. That was the site of the Cherokee's old cities, and their sacred cities. And all of that, every bit, is gone, you see. The prime farm country, as an industrial resource it already had a unique aspect in that it was a cold water source, which pharmaceutical companies need, and other similar chemical companies. Whereas, if you dam it up, it becomes a warm water lake, and you've lost a unique resource that is very hard to come by anywhere else. Many, many factors like that, that some of us just totally unjustified and foolish to build a dam unless there was some, you

know, for example, during World War II they built Cherokee Dam, Douglas Dam, Fontana Dam. Nobody really opposed that, lots of people got hurt by it, and they got moved out, as you mentioned some of your folks got moved, and they resented it. But they had to do it, there was a good reason for it. But Tellico Dam, and you know, but it was a travesty, and I'm sorry they ever built it. Nobody ever said that the dam wouldn't enhance the countryside, that it would be a beautiful lake, and lead to some beautiful residential development. We knew that would happen, but that was not basis on which they were justifying it. The definitions they had for justifying it, none of it ever proved out, and it never will. But I know that's water over the dam, so to speak (laughter) but it was just - it was not a good thing to do. And I did almost lose my job over it more than once, but I tried to be discreet and not make a public spectacle of myself. I did a lot of work behind the scenes.

PIEHLER: I'm curious, you would ultimately work at the Chamber of Commerce, and one of the things I've read in the 1950s is that Knoxville - and this is actually a continuing criticism, I get a sense from reading the papers - is that Knoxville was not very good at recruiting businesses, particularly new industries.

DICKEY: It had a deplorable record when I went in there. I was the first fulltime industrial development director, because they had decided - this was in 1960 - that it was time to make some changes. The first report I wrote that Knoxville didn't have a single developed industrial site that we could show anybody. Not a one. You know, take them out and show them some country field, but it didn't have any utilities, well you can't get new industry that way. And the prime part of my effort during that period of time was to get some industrial parks established. And we did, we got Forks to the River, and Middlebrook, which had unfortunately developed in a haphazard fashion, but we places restrictions on them when we first started them, and, you know, politics and money entered in, and people don't care once they get started. And Middlebrook Pike is just unbelievable to me now. But… what we tried to do was break out. There was a lot of resistance to new industry in this town. If you've heard that, it's true. I think the Chamber, during my time, was unjustly accused of keeping new industry out. I can, you know, I can absolutely assure you that's not true. There may have been some of the old time business people that still would have preferred that, but the staff that I worked with and the officers we had were not oriented that way at all. A lot of them devoted their own time at their own expense to make industrial recruitment trips with us, for example. So we know that they were sincerely behind us. Because the new industry would help them too, it helps the whole community, it helps the tax base, everybody knew that. But that's when Knoxville was first undergoing this transition from an old, sleepy, isolated country town, as I said, we got the interstate, we got legal whiskey, we got an auditorium/coliseum for the first time. These are admitities you just expect any city to have, well we didn't have them. It was a backward place. A pretty place, you know, you got the Smokies nearby, and all those wonderful lakes and woods, but it was just a backward community. And I think that we changed a great bit of that.

PIEHLER: It's sort of - you'd mentioned, and I had just writing - you mentioned - You said I'm going to leave Knoxville, it was a very dirty city, even though it was surrounded by some beautiful - with the coal and the… the coal engines.

DICKEY: Yes.

PIEHLER: Coal was used, and it got trapped in the valley.

DICKEY: When I was going to school in the forties, and anybody can tell you think who lived here at that time, at the end of the day, if you had on a white shirt, your collar top would just be black. There was that much soot drifting around. You raised the window, and soot would fall out of it because practically all the heat at that time was by coal fired furnaces, and… railroading was… still pretty substantial here in Knoxville. But when you have sixty train engines coming back and forth through here, and switching engines beside - they were blowing out a lot of black smoke. And it just accumulated over the years, and Knoxville just looked ugly. The buildings got stained with all that black stuff. And also at that time, when I saw Knoxville was ugly there was - it was sort of a sitter of - I don't know how to put this - afflicted people. If you walked down Gay Street, which is the principal downtown center of everything, there would be beggars, there'd be leggless people sitting in the sidewalk holding out a tin cup. And I'm not disparaging those people, but it was so commonplace that it was like you were in a poor house. Or you were in a war zone, and there were - sanitation was not good, people, as I mentioned early, spit on the street, right on the sidewalk, and didn't think anything of it. That sort of thing, your whole impression was just this was dingy, dirty, backward place.

PIEHLER: I mean, what - how did you take - because I've read that… Knoxvillians were not pleased with John Gunther wrote those lines.

DICKEY: Oh boy.

PIEHLER: Discarding Knoxville, and you'd sort of had some of those same - I mean initially you left Knoxville, and now working as a reporter and in the Chamber of Commerce -

DICKEY: You know, I resented it simply because I'm a Tennesean, and had gone to school here and things like that, but I think essentially he was correct. I wouldn't say it was the ugliest in the country, but you know -

PIEHLER: Yeah, I thought that was overstated, but…

DICKEY: I could take you to Schenectady and say that's uglier than Knoxville is, but, you know, he made a valid point. Also the approaches to Knoxville then, like the main… access to Maryville and Townsend was this old highway that runs through Vestel now, on the river, you know, all through the -

PIEHLER: I don't even know it,

DICKEY: The slum area, but that's the way you saw Knoxville. And Southerland Avenue at that time, oh, it was just… a jumble of shacks and bootleggers. And no West High School, no UT apartments or anything like that. And then these were principal views - that's what people saw. And the old marketplace downtown that people rant and rave about, it was filthy nasty old ugly building where it had open fish markets, produce carts, which were a good thing. But it was just

dirty; there were flies around, and horses were there with their droppings. This in a sophisticated city - you know, you don't expect that.

PIEHLER: Because it's interesting. People - I've heard some romantic accounts of the market, and -

DICKEY: There's some justification to that, of course. But you had -

PIEHLER: But… they don't usual recount the flies and the horse dung, I mean that… and the dirt -

DICKEY: I think it was a blessing when we got rid of the market, I really do. It was a unique facility, and a lot of people liked it, and it - you know, if you happened to work downtown on Gay Street, you could - before you went home, you could go and buy some fresh vegetables that somebody had just brought in. Things like that. But it was not sanitary, and it was ugly, and it was filthy, and it was - the whole surroundings were dingy and ugly. There was no incentive for people to have a bright storefront. You know, all the people were there anyhow, so they just didn't do anything. Now we're making all this hurrah about the marketplace, and maybe we'll do something like Asheville has done, you know, maybe there's a lot of potential for downtown. I hope so.

PIEHLER: Well no, I mean, I…can remember the fact that Asheville a few years ago had no downtown, and now it's sort of bursting at the seams.

DICKEY: Knoxville is historically about twenty years behind everybody else, you know, we say "look what Chattanooga's done," so then we start a copy of them.

PIEHLER: So my sense of that is not necessarily inaccurate. That's… what my sense that Asheville - I've often said, for example, if Bristol gets train service to Washington, we'll get it because Bristol has it, so therefore we must.

DICKEY: I don't mean to put down Knoxville, which is my home, and I love it, but it has… been a backward place. Which has been one of the exciting things to me about living here, being able to bring about some change, and watching it improve.

PIEHLER: Well, one of the things I can't resist asking you because you were a journalist, there was some colorful people - Cass Walker. Your recollections both as covering him as a reporter and then, you know, particularly when you were in the Chambers of Commerce, I mean -

DICKEY: Cass Walker was a personal nemesis to me after I went in the Chamber of Commerce. Cass Walker must have been a very smart person, but he was a tyrant and he was a… fraud. He appealed to the… ignorance of the unwise out there, and he promulgated lots of lies, and he was basically against anything that was progressive. I'm not one who just automatically favors progress, in fact I don't favor progress in the current sense at all, but Cass Walker was against everything. He just - the man turned out to be the mayor one time.

PIEHLER: No, I mean he was quite a -

DICKEY: And I can imagine bring a prospect - an industrial prospect to Knoxville, and you take him back to the hotel that night, and the next day he says, "who was that guy I saw on the television named Cass Walker?" "Oh, that's our mayor." (laughs) Now he really - you find people who look upon Cass Walker as a hero, he did ostensibly champion the little man, whatever that means. I don't think he really did at all, he knew how to sell groceries, boy he sold groceries, and that’s how he did it. And he stayed in politics, but he was always the no, the nay sayer, never, never, never, and I'm glad that he didn't have any control enough. He had huge control in this town.

PIEHLER: I -

DICKEY: Let me interject something too that just occurred to me. We mentioned race earlier. A part of my coverage at the *News-Sentinel* was - I don't know if you all are aware of when John Casper came in here, and stirred up some racial unrest. They blew up the school over in Clinton.

PIEHLER: I've heard of that. People have mentioned that.

DICKEY: And that was one of my early experiences on the *News-Sentinel* was covering that, and that was - I guess that's when I really began to understand the big racial differences. I had never, as I said earlier, never had much reason to consider it, but then I saw what was going on, and it was scary. And that's all I wanted to say about it, just to bring that up, because you had asked me what all I did as a newspaper - and it just covered everything.

PIEHLER: It's so interesting, I guess the other person I got a sense from Bruce Wheeler's *History of Knoxville* that John Duncan, Senior, father of the current Congressman, he… was actually somewhat progressive, particularly in terms of economic development. Do you have any recollections of -

DICKEY: Yeah, John and I knocked heads with each other on the Tellico Dam, but I considered him a friend, and he was very strongly in favor of the dam, he was the one who actually snuck it through Congress and got it passed sort of, you know, clandestine. But he was mayor when I was Industrial Director at the Chamber of Commerce, and my only criticism of John, if I have any at all, it's not severe criticism. He was so eager to get some new industry that he tended to go off on a tangent sometimes, independent of everybody else. We didn't have the coordinated effort that we were trying to put together, and he wasn't successful at this. But I take nothing away from him, he really was for Knoxville, he worked really hard, and any number of times he went with me and with other volunteers to solicit new industry. We went to Detroit together, I think maybe Cleveland. We went to Buffalo, New York, went across to Niagra Falls that night. But he was a very, very busy person, but he would take the time to hear you out about industrial needs. He helped us to put together those three industrial parks that I mentioned, without the cooperation of the city and the county, we could never have done it. They both put money into it. It wasn't easy to do that, at the same time, the city and the county were extremely jealous of each other. They would not work with each other, we were kind of the middleman at the Chamber trying to bring it all together. (laughs)

DICKEY: It's interesting, because I hear a lot about the conflict, you know, I'm a newcomer, but I read a lot about the sort of county/city split. Now I didn't realize until recently how deep this is, particularly who is trying kill consolidation. Back… in the late fifties, early sixties.

DICKEY: It's really complex, and you know, I wish Bruce Wheeler would write a book about that. Bruce is a good author, and he wrote *TVA and the Tellico Dam*, if you want to see my role in it, read his book. (laughter) He did a pretty good job of putting together the facts as I knew them. I could argue with him on some things, but I was happy that he wrote the book. It needed to be said.

PIEHLER: I forgot where I was -

DICKEY: Cass Walker?

PIEHLER: Well, just the consolidation, that it was. I was surprised that it was, like for example, the city union, the teacher's union, the teachers were opposed to it, and the fears over the pensions. But the city workers became such a barrier. Did you get a sense that it made - in some ways, and some of this could be hindsight, they would have benefited from a larger tax base. Ultimately, I get a sense that that was what drove the city - the city/county schools merging.

DICKEY: I can fully appreciate that a relative newcomer like you - If you'd been here for ten years, you would not have this intimate background, and you'd wonder about - Because those dissentions, to some extent, still come out from time to time.

PIEHLER: Oh yeah. No, that's why I'm -

DICKEY: For the same reasons. But it was intense, back in the sixties in particular, that's when some change was beginning to happen in this town. We were beginning to produce some things, you know, and bring some change. The county and the city were just like enemies. Anytime we got a new industry, each side would be claiming they got it. It might be something that the Chamber brought in, but the county said, "oh yeah, we… talked to those people, we got them in…" and John Duncan would say "no you didn't, I called them back in Detroit with Dave Dickey." This kind of thing, and they wanted to consolidate the library. No, no, we can't do that. The county was always saying, "you're taking our money and the city people using it." Well, the city people live in the county too. (laughs) And they're paying city taxes besides, but that kind of thing is still going on, I think, as an undercurrent. But it was intense and open war, practically speaking, in the newspapers everyday back in the era we're talking about. It was pitiful. Again, that's why I say Knoxville was ugly. You see, I didn't mean just physically, but the whole complex and attitude. We used to say it was the Cass Walker mentality. I don't know what that might mean to you, but -

PIEHLER: The one image I've seen, and I think it's a fairly - I think it did make *Life Magazine*, is the famous fight, the fist fight in the City Council chambers. So that, you know, I think we made the *News-Sentinel* did sort of the top stories. That was even one of the images they used. That was a top story.

DICKEY: There was a - I don't remember the specific case, but prior to my being a reporter, there was a famous picture of a - I don't know if it's a Union man or a coal miner. But somebody standing right out on the street corner with pistol right at the photographer, like that. And that made all the national news. And that had something to do, I think, with the coal mining dissention we used to have. That wasn't right here in Knoxville, but the headquarters for a lot of those coal companies were right here. This was the big coal Southern shipping center, you know. But you remember, well you wouldn't, but Buddy Holland?

PIEHLER: Oh yeah, I've heard of - that's very well known.

DICKEY: Fifty-two murders in one year's time, that's an average of one a week. And that was our region to, you see, and it all kind of caused me and the moonshining. That was Knoxville too. Well, you're trying to say something. Go ahead.

BROWN: No, I was going to say the most obvious city/county division right now is the Knoxville Police Department, and their feuds with the County Police Department.

DICKEY: Yeah. That's really minor compared to what - there's politics involved there, of course.

PIEHLER: I guess - because - I mean, I get a sense - could you be more specific - I mean, how - it sounded like it got - how much of this was petty, how much of it was personality, how much of it was you got two units of government that overlap in so many ways?

DICKEY: I just don't know how to answer that, except I think you have entrenched families that have been here since the frontier days and they're all loyal to their home district, which is logical and reasonable. But intense jealousies, a lot of distrust. They didn't trust each other. That seems to me to be the outstanding characteristic. "What's he up too? He's playing politics." Well, they all were, you know. And I don't think that explains a darn thing, but… I think rural people - that is the representatives of the rural people, really resented the downtown people. It was - you see, the people who ran the town was Cherokee Country Club, or the big industrialists. Which was, in their mind, is the same thing. And they're no good in that bunch of people. And I think they felt they were left out, they were underprivileged, they were ignored, they didn't have any of these nice things that they deserved. Now I'm speculating a bit here, but that's the only way I can put it together, and that attitude just simply never disappeared. The reasons for it were no longer valid, maybe, but they still, you know, my daddy felt this way, and by God, that's right. You still see some of that now, but that's the only explanation I can give.

PIEHLER: I was reading some of it, and you would think that they were talking about a foreign country. And it's… reasonably large county, but it's not that big. I mean, it's not a -

DICKEY: True. Well, you know, those people today, even those who live here don't appreciate that Knoxville was the western frontier at one time. This was the jumping off point. People had gotten this far, and then you got in a boat that rolled down the river, and you took your chances with the Indians and everything. And it was a rough river town, and I'm not trying to attribute a lot of our behavior to that, but that is our historical precedent, and, you know, a lot of attitudes go

for generations. It's almost like it's in your genes, and I think many people behave that way not realizing what they're doing. It's just what we've always done.

PIEHLER: Another person I wanted to ask about - when you talked a little bit about - I didn't realize that the Dumpster was actually invented in Knoxville. The Dempster Dumpster. George Dempster, you heard anything - I mean, he was mayor for a while.

DICKEY: He was a - I can't speak a lot about him, but… he was always an important politician in Knoxville. From my association with the Great Smoky Mountains Conservation Association, which was originally the group which was responsible for raising the funds to found the national park, he frequently was at odds with those people. I don't know why that was. Ultimately though, the City of Knoxville gave a lot of money to that effort, you know. But he was in politics at that time, which would have been the early twenties, and by the time I came on the scene, he was mayor of Knoxville, and a good mayor. He was very outspoken, and he was opinionated, and he was a strong, strong Democrat. I'm not condemning him for that, but I mean he was pretty openly a Democrat. I think he was good for Knoxville, but he had a lot of political enemies. I don't have any personal experience with him except one, and it was a good one. As a reporter, I was driving home one night. It was on a weekend, I wasn't at work. It was about eleven o'clock at night, and what used to Tyson Junior High School up here on West Cumberland, Kingston Pike was a school at that time, was a junior high. And it was on fire. And the fire trucks were all over the streets, and the hoses, and the police were stopping all the traffic. And I called my city editor at home and told him what was going on, and asked him if he wanted me to cover it. He said, "yeah, you stay right there," so I did. And we were there all night ,climbing up on the roof, you know, and pulling the hoses, and I was trying to take pictures, and talking to firemen, and it was a rough job. It was a bad fire. But about two o'clock in the morning, I was up there on the roof with those firemen, and here came the mayor, George Dempster. He came up there with big jugs of coffee, and bunch of sandwiches, from Sam and Andy's, by the way. They donated them, and the mayor brought them it there, and he was up there on that roof directing the firemen. That's the kind of personality he was. I think I would have disagreed a lot with his politics, because he evidently a pretty dirty politician, underhanded or whatever you - I don't know what you call it. But as a person, and as a contributor to this community, I think that the Dempster Manufacturing Facilities brought a lot of wealth to this town.

PIEHLER: One of things I've read is that the mills were very important to Knoxville through the fifties. That this was also very much - a lot of the industrial things were mills, or textile mills.

DICKEY: I think… about, let's say about 1950 they were all beginning to faze out.

PIEHLER: Yeah, I've read that in a number -

DICKEY: But Standard Knitting Mill, which was the great big one, it stayed in business for quite a while. It's over in East Knoxville, and they made hosiery and underwear, I think. And it employed something like 3,500 people. But it was a low wage industry, that's one of the things that hurt us badly in our trying to develop new industry is Standard is one of those that had such a good pool of labor, and low wage rates. They didn't want new industry to come in. Now I'm not accusing them, or any particular individual, but there were those big mills. There was one mill or

two, and Standard was about the only one when I came on the scene in the fifties, but had been Brookshire Mills, I remember. It was a great big - it was a textile town, and earlier than that it had been a big mining and machinery company. It was a steel mill in Knoxville at one time. And there was a lot of machinery factories that primarily made equipment for coal mining. And then there was two huge railroad shops here, where they did car repair and car dealing, and things like that. So those basic kinds of industry at one time were very important in Knoxville. They've all pretty much phased out now.

PIEHLER: Another figure: Jim Cooper. Any recollections of him?

DICKEY: No, not specifically. I just remember he was a City Councilman, and he stirred up some kind of - I think he must have bumped against the old ingrained politicians, I do not recall specifically, there was just some kind of dissention. He was an outsider as far as City Council was concerned.

PIEHLER: Another Knox figure is Max Friedman. Any recollections of him?

DICKEY: Yeah, I didn't know Mr. Max personally, but he was really important in the Jewish community. But I think he had come to Knoxville way back, like in World War I times. And although he was an outsider, he spoke with a heavy accent, I guess a German accent. He became involved in politics, and he was a longtime City Councilman. The best I recall, he also was the focus of the - he was a target of people didn't want much change, and he was always, I think, pushing for improvements. What we would call good progress, and I think he was behind a lot that ultimately happened here. But a good bit of that was really prior to my personal time here. Although he was a revered figure in Knoxville, right up to the time of his death. He was in his eighties, I guess. I think in the Jewish community today he is probably still held to very high standards, otherwise I guess he's sort of not remembered too much.

PIEHLER: Well a number of these figures I think are not… remembered well. I'm curious in terms of national politicians, you mentioned to me a number of figures as a reporter. What about Estes Kefauver? Who was quite a politician, had a reputation in the 1950s. Did you ever have a chance to interview him or meet him as a reporter?

DICKEY: No, I met him, but not as a reporter. All I know is he was a master politician, and you know, when I got married, we got a personal letter. "Dear David and Missy," and he didn't know either one of us, but he had read the paper, and he knew we were constituents, and he wrote us the nicest letter. Said, "Congratulations on your marriage. If ever I could be of assistance to you," that sort of thing. And you know, he wore that damn raccoon cap, and he was kind of a laughing stock of Tennesseans, but he… was pretty impressive nationally, made a pretty good run at the presidency.

PIEHLER: Oh no, he was quite a figure to be reckoned with.

DICKEY: And you know, he broke up with (?). I think he was an effective politician, but he was a politician in the sense that Lyndon Johnson was: he got things done. But you notice, his

practices were maybe open to a lot of questioning. Maybe that's just the way the system works, I don't know.

BROWN: Here's an infamous figure: Jake Butcher.

DICKEY: Yeah.

BROWN: Did you ever meet him or anything?

DICKEY: Well Jake really came along later than the period I've been talking about.

BROWN: About the late seventies, early eighties.

DICKEY: Yeah, it was in the eighties, I guess. By that time, I had pretty much phased out of my personal contacts from journalism and industrial development, and I was sort of moving on to other things. And I didn't have any particular contact with the World's Fair people, and I was out of the Chamber of Commerce by that time, took not active interest in it. I knew some of the people who were the promoters of the fair. Bo Roberts had been an acquaintance in earlier times. Bo was managing - do you know who Bo Roberts is?

PIEHLER: No.

DICKEY: Well, he was the executive director of the World's Fair. He lives in Nashville now, has a consulting company, but I first knew him when he graduated from UT. He was the managing editor of a little old piddling weekly paper called *The West Knoxville News*, that another UT colleague had established, and I wrote the outdoor column for them once a week. And, you know, I just thought of Bo as another fellow student, he did really - he's climbed in the ranks of politics and money.

PIEHLER: Conservation - I mean the outdoors has been very important to you, not only with the Tellico Dam, but you'd mentioned once you were involved in the Great Smoky Mountain - the organization to help the Smoky Mountain Park. Friends of the Smoky Mountains.

DICKEY: My organization is Great Smoky Mountains Conservationist Association.

PIEHLER: Okay.

DICKEY: Which our roll today is not so much active in the park, but we provide the scholarships, and we provide some financial support for the park when they need it. Sort of like Friends of the Smokies, except were not that large of an organization, and we're more narrowly focused. But it was originally the group that was formed to see that we got a park in the Smokies, and this is just the extension.

PIEHLER: I was continuing, that was from the twenties on.

DICKEY: Yeah. So you can see the roll has changed substantially.

PIEHLER: Yes.

DICKEY: But we still are - sort of act as advisors to the park, I don't mean we have that much influence, but we consult with each other. And lot of times we can go to bat for the park when they - when the staff themselves can't propose - like they do things we can't, you know.

PIEHLER: But conservation has been very important to you as a cause.

DICKEY: To me?

PIEHLER: Yes.

DICKEY: Yeah. That goes back, I think, to my days in Morristown growing up out in the woods, and on the river, and exploring caves, and wildlife, and collecting insects, and going frog hunting, and fishing. The outdoors has just always been important, and it's been a place of rest, and harmony, and it's disappeared so rapidly. And so many people have a misunderstanding of conservation. I talk to lots of people who call themselves environmentalists. Their intentions are quite good, but a lot of times, they don't really know what they're talking about, and they think it's something they discovered in the past ten years that never existed before. They have been people - I want to give credit to the hunters and fisherman. Sometimes they carry a bad name. They're the ones that go out and shoot the bears, you know, and they catch all the fish. But it's largely due to their efforts that we have as much wildlife restoration that we have today, as you may already know.

PIEHLER: Oh no, I mean that - the people who started the Bronx Zoo were all people who were hunters.

DICKEY: But I think hunters in particular have this great affinity for the outdoors, they'd go out and camp for a week in the mountains, and gone out and hunted ducks in the snow. They just have a feel for something - I guess it's like our forefathers lived this way, and we just barely sampling it, but it's just so meaningful, I don't - it's just like a part of your life that's more important than a big building out here. And, you know, I live in the city by choice, I don't want to live out in the country. But one of the wonderful things about Knoxville in previous years was the ready access to a lot of open country. But you -

PIEHLER: I think it's all relative, but you mention over lunch, and you're - I once did an interview last year when someone who - he was describing the Bearden he grew up, and, you know, he didn't have running water. And I think… at one point, the electric lines hadn't run out to his house. And this is not that long ago. Even today Knoxville, I mean, once you get past Farragut, there's not - it's country, it's rural.

DICKEY: Yeah, you're pretty rural. And incidentally, when we first came to Tennessee when we moved to Morristown, immediately outside the city, most of the country roads were not paved. Just the U.S. highways were paved. But if you if you go out in the country, it was on a gravel or a mud road, and most people did not have running water, and they didn't have bathrooms, of course.

They didn't have electricity. TVA had come here in '33 with the building of Norris Dam, so by the time my family got here, it was beginning to be electrofied. Now the cities were already electrofied, but the countries were not. And you went out in the country a mile out of town, and people had a coal oil lantern, you know, and they drew up a bucket from their well for their water. And it was a, you know, it was a nostalgic kind of a life. It was romanticized highly. It was hard work, it was a difficult life, but we sort of missed seeing that. But people grew their own crops, and they'd have a little garden, and most of them would have a cow, or maybe a couple of pigs. They were pretty much self-sufficient, I guess they have much choice. They had to be. There were no other kinds of jobs available.

PIEHLER: I think that's lost, because I think current - even my students who grew up in this area, this is not a world you encounter anymore. That kind of self - I mean, I think it's hard to find a part of Tennessee that does not have access to electricity.

DICKEY: That really seems remote to me now, but since it came up in our conversation, it was pretty obvious

PIEHLER: Yeah, yeah.

DICKEY: If you get up and go to the things I held against Morristown, as contrasted to Raleigh. Raleigh was the capital city, and pretty modern and new. And in Morristown, people were, you know, primitive out there in the country. Kids came to school kind of unkept and dirty sometimes, wearing overalls. It wasn't like us.

PIEHLER: I wanted to see if John has a chance to ask any more - some questions.

BROWN: Well, I guess I could - as somebody who lived through Pearl Harbor, do you see any parallels between that and September 11 [2001]?

DICKEY: No, the magnitude is different, but the response of the people is very similar. I just - I don't compare the two of them as being alike, and yet there's a lot of similar elements, yeah. You know, at least initially, everybody in New York and throughout the country, for that matter, they all just came together, just instantly. You never saw such an outpouring of gifts, and efforts. You know, Knoxville bought a fire engine.

PIEHLER: I know.

DICKEY: I just thought that was wonderful. I gave substantially to that, and I don't give to a lot, but I thought that was really - But I don't know if that will last. I think it will have a permanent impact, but you know, now that it's gone, people are pretty much settling back into their own routine.

BROWN: People kind of have shorter attention spans I think now, too.

DICKEY: Yeah, and you we're not in the same kind of shooting war as we were after Pearl Harbor. It's quite a different magnitude. That was a horrible tragedy, and I think more people were

killed in the Twin Towers than at Pearl Harbor. But at least I don't think of them as being like each other except for the terrible loss of life, unprovoked and unannounced. So it has that similarity.

BROWN: Is there anything else that we haven't discussed that you'd like to talk about?

DICKEY: I think if you all have covered those aspects that you want to know about, you know, I could probably go on and talk a lot, but I don't know how significant all this is. (laughs) I've certainly given you an era from my life that I haven't thought a whole lot about, it's the first time I've sat down and just sort of pulled it together. I left out a lot, for sure, but I think we covered the essentials.

PIEHLER: I'm curious, is there any novel or movie that sort of reflects your sort of growing up, and the military service? You served in the military after the war is over, but still very much, the war is present. I mean, there are veterans who tried to come home who were still in the service.

DICKEY: Well, I was much impressed with Bill Maldrin's cartoons "Up Front," and there was also a cartoon called "The Sad Sack." That was the humorous side, of course.

PIEHLER: So you could identify with those?

DICKEY: Very strongly. Now Maldrin's were more combat people out in the mud, you know. But these were my friends who were out there, I could identify from that point of view. Now "Sad Sack" was just about military life. I thought that was the funniest thing I had ever seen. I used to have a "Sad Sack" book, but somebody stole it. I still do have Bill Maldrin's cartoon book. But as far as novels, or war stories -

PIEHLER: What war movies? Nothing -

DICKEY: When I came home, I got interested in Irsting Caldwell, and John Steinbeck , and Thomas Wolfe, Philip Wiley, Vance Packard, kind of an eclectic mix of fiction and ne'er do wells. Oddly enough, to think that I was an English major, I was not much of a literary person at that time. I've become reader more in later years. I particularly like to this day John Steinbeck, for many, many reasons, and I do - I continue to read him. I don't reread many authors, but I like him -

PIEHLER: But Steinbeck is one of those authors?

DICKEY: Yeah.

PIEHLER: And what - it's sort of an out of order question, but you had a really nice story. You though very highly of Andy Holt, even as a student, you had a wonderful story about Andy Holt when you were still a student here. You told us over lunch.

DICKEY: Yeah. He was preceded by C.E. Brim. And, you know, I told you when I first got out of the Merchant Marine, I spent half a quarter in Knoxville. Brim was president then, but when I

came back from the Army, it was Andy Holt. Andy had been a - on the governor's staff as an - in education, and initially, we thought of him as sort of a buffoon, because he was such an outgoing person, he was always telling jokes. Marvelous speaker. But we thought maybe he might be pretty shallow. We were wrong about that. But, it was like, you know, he spoke with a pronounced Southern accent, which was kind of a slow drawl, and sometimes you associate that with slow wits. (laughter) But it turns out I think Andy was probably the best president we've had in modern times. He was - he had the university and Knoxville very much at heart. When we were working in the industrial development, we count on Andy Holt to help us in dealing with industrial prospects. We could call Andy and say, "we'd like for you to talk to these people down in Detroit," and whatever he was doing, we would drop it. He was that kind of a person. He believed in this community, and this university.

PIEHLER: It also struck me that you had such a great anecdote. He was a genuinely nice guy, because he - I would just like to put it on tape, apparently you were walking one day on campus in the rain.

DICKEY: Yeah, I was walking on what was then Temple Ave -

PIEHLER: Which is now Volunteer.

DICKEY: Yeah, I was walking from the Hill back to my apartment over on White Avenue, and it was beginning to rain. This car pulled up and the guy opened the door, and he said, "get in here," and I looked, and it was Doctor Holt. He didn't know me, of course, but he just - there was one of his students, going home in the rain. And he said, "where are you going?" and I said, "well, I'm just going home," and he said "well, I'll take you." And he did, he dropped me off at my house on White Avenue and drove off, and I never talked to him again until many years later. (laughter) And he didn't remember that when I told him about it. I think it was just his way, and it was nothing to him. But that's the kind of human person that he was.

PIEHLER: Well, it's a wonderful story.

DICKEY: Well, I'm glad -

PIEHLER: It's a wonderful - Well I unfortunately have to go to a meeting, which I regret. But we really, really I think - you're the first interview of this class. In John's class.

BROWN: And I'd never done anything like this before either.

DICKEY: It's been a great experience for me, I just really feel gratified that I could contribute to a big project like this, and maybe some of my experiences will -

PIEHLER: No you did - it's really a wonderful interview.

DICKEY: Thank you so much.

[End of Tape Three, Side One]