

Gathering Our Voice

Interviewee: Fahy McKee, Mike McKee, Dan Jackson

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Interviewer: Nancy Warner

Transcribed by Maria Davis, AmeriCorps Volunteer

Nancy Warner: This is Nancy Warner and its Friday April the 20th 2012 and I'm here again with Fahy McKee, his son Mike McKee, and now his friend, and our friend Dan Jackson who grew up with Mike, was a kid when Fahy was living on Woodward. So what we would like to do then today is kind of pick up on the conversation about Woodward because that's where Dan comes in and then also Marilyn Dold may join us who was also grew up in that neighborhood and then follow up on some topics Mike that you thought of after you listened to last month's interview and go there. But along the way we definitely want to explore the connection between church and Dan, your memories of Fahy. So you were starting to say something before I started the recorder and you wanted to talk first about the relationship with Dan, about when you got to know Dan.

Fahy McKee: Dan I think was a senior in High school and Norwood was the coral director and they produced Li'l Abner and he was Pappy Yokum.

Dan Jackson: I remember that.

FM: The last scene, the last scene- he was a little guy; the last scene he jumped in the air and Mammy Yokum caught him in her arms and carried him off stage.

DJ: (Laughter) that's how they remember me. And the really interesting thing is that some people remember about that- by the way that was my sophomore year not senior year- was that they had to make me, because they needed me an old man, they had to make me a bald wig to cover up my hair and that's the ironic part of all this. Because I had to wear this rubberized bald wig with tufts of hair coming out and so in other words basically I looked like I do now--only, with hair.

NW: *And you were smaller.*

DJ: I was smaller. I was a little tiny guy.

NW: *Because you were only fifteen.*

DJ: Well I was only fifteen probably what only a hundred and ten pounds at the most, little tiny guy. Is that it, is that the best you remember me for Fahy?

FM: I remember you as leading the singing in church too.

NW: *Okay so yeah talk about that a little bit because as I was mentioning I was just finished working on an article about Dan and his early music days and so talk about that a little bit if you would.*

FM: Well, of course I led the singing in Church and Frank Hazen led singing. Dan got a chance once and a while when he was a teenager, didn't have too much opportunity then because us bigger guys, older guys, led singing. We sang A Capella, no instruments, so we needed a song leader to direct the group and he was a good one.

NW: *Starting at age 15 I think.*

DJ: Probably earlier than that.

NW: *-twelve*

DJ: You know I don't remember- I remember being quite, quite young, I think it was probably more like twelve. We went to church together over Grant Road and Iowa, Iowa Street, which is now -I'm not sure, it's a different church.

FM: New Song.

DJ: New Song Church, but in those days it was built for the Church of Christ which had moved from Wenatchee, from Cascade and Lewis Street and so I was there really, I went to church there as a

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youngster and then when they moved over there we moved with them of course, and so the tradition in the Church of Christ is that- no instruments. So this singing therefore, for it to be interesting, you have to provide your own harmonies. So everybody in the Church of Christ learns to sing harmony: soprano, alto, tenor, or bass, and so what Fahy and-

FM: Frank

DJ: What Frank Hazen and Fahy did was to teach us the So-Fa-Do-Re-Me Method and in those days they had books with actual shape notes, so the Fa was a little triangle, you didn't have to know what key we were in you saw the little triangle you knew you were on Fa, if you had a square- if it was a circle note like then it was So and if it was a rectangle it was...

FM: Me

DJ: No, La. Me was a...well, I'm kind of side tracked. Well anyway, they taught us that and they taught me how to conduct and they actually had a little training class for some of us kids. I remember and so I really learned some of my early music, my earliest music I would have learned from Fahy and Frank.

NW: *Well that's so neat.*

MM: Quarter time, four-four time and so on like that, you know.

FM: Oh I could take the shape notes and start a song from the shape notes, Do, So, Me, Do. And middle C, there was a start from middle C; we didn't use a tuning fork or a pitch pipe to find where middle C was.

(5:00) DJ: I can't remember if I – yeah you had pretty good relative pitch. I think I can't remember if I used a pitch pipe or not, I don't know how I did it, I don't think so. I think we just approximated, see the key it was in and we would approximate that key. We'd start singing and everybody would come along with you, that was it. And then you conducted, you actually conducted them. So that, for me that kind of came in handy because later on it became my career as a director and I had done so many- you talked about four-four time especially, most songs are in four-four time. So I can do this in my sleep, so therefore I had a leg up when I started conducting because I don't have to think about it, my hands just do that you know.

MM: A lot of my favorite songs were in three-fourths time.

DJ: Were they?

FM: I like them faster. We also learned about sharps and flats too.

NW: *So what were- you sang too everybody sang in the church.*

MM: Yeah, that's what you did. I didn't know any different.

FM: Back in the forties we, if you-

MM: As we became teenagers of course our voice would often times deepen a little bit so we were encouraged the times that we would have whole sections when we'd just sing for maybe an hour--whole bunch of songs, one right after another. And so we were divided up in the congregation, in the various, the four-part harmony groups. I learned to go sit with the baritones and the basses. We all learned the parts that way, although I didn't ever learn to read music. I learned to memorize the songs by sitting with these guys.

FM: When you were in France I understand you met with a troop there on the base, army base that had a little church group and you lead singing part of the time.

MM: I did but I'm not good at it.

FM: Yeah but you had your chance to lead singing back then, in Nancy, France.

NW: *Nancy, France (laughter)*

DJ: What Mike's talking about, I think, is, I mean we didn't normally sing for an hour stretch on a Sunday morning or a Wednesday but they would have these special once-in-a-while times when they would have these special Sunday afternoon-

MM: Or Sunday night-

DJ: What did we call them--singing services- what were they called?

FM: Third Sunday singing. We had six churches that-

DJ: Yeah we had different churches that would come in and you would fill up the place and when you filled up the room with all these people it really sounded quite good. I mean these were people that would just sing four-part harmony for an hour, or an hour and a half.

NW: *Wow, interesting, do they still have that tradition in that church?*

FM: Not like they used to, not like it should be.

DJ: I don't think so any more

NW: *It sounds like a great way to bring people together, I mean so you know I mean*

MM: Yes, but young people today are put off by that sort of thing. And they're so used to electronic stuff and overheads-

FM: It's boring for the kids now days.

MM: It's just its too much bother and they don't want to be a part of it.

NW: *So let's talk about what else you did, your families together and so on. You would see each other in church every week and then sometimes you'd have these extra services, these singing services which would sound magnificent. Would you get together during the week or, I know you didn't overlap in school but did you have any family connections outside of church?*

FM: Before I knew Dan and the kids, your mother and dad took Helen and I to the Sunny Slope School grounds skating, there was ice on the school grounds and we went skating on that, your mother and dad.

DJ: Wow that's interesting; I'd like to talk to you about my dad sometimes, I don't know much about him.

NW: *Oh.*

DJ: Yeah well there were some, in terms of getting together outside of church, there were--the ways I can remember; first of all, sometimes in special occasions, they'd have potlucks. Many a potluck I've attended. They were normally after church, but not always, some at different times. And then another thing was that sometimes they would have special speakers, well known national speakers, that would come in and they would do special meetings and we actually went to these meetings every night. It might be Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday; you'd have these- those meetings. But then the other thing is that these people were pretty closely knit, so we'd kind of take care of each other. I mean more than once, we didn't have a lot of money in our family and I remember sometimes other people in the church would buy me some overshoes or something. They would take me down to - I'm trying to think of where they would take me down to, where would we have gone to get things like that?

(10:00) FM: People's store.

MM: Stanley's or Sears.

DJ: Yeah maybe.

MM: I don't know if Stanley's was around then.

DJ: Seems like there was kind of a hardware store, it wouldn't have been Stanley's

FM: Wells and Wade

DJ: I think it would have been Wells and Wade. I don't know why Wells and Wade would have been doing that because I remember him being a hardware store but it seems like it was Wells and Wade.

FM: Okay now bring a story you talked about a special speaker coming in

DJ: Yup.

FM: Back probably in I would guess it might've been in the 50's. Franklin T Puckett, from IZARD County Arkansas: They announced he was going to be in town down at the Okanogan Street Church which is normally seats, if it's seats are all full, maybe four hundred, but in standing room only, over five hundred people in that room. Ray, the Preacher, got up to introduce Puckett, and they said, "How many of the crowd are from Arkansas?" Well, ninety percent of the crowd was from Arkansas. Then he said "How many from IZARD County Arkansas?" about three fourths of that crowd was from IZARD County Arkansas. He'd either baptized them back there or taught them in school, he was a schoolteacher and a preacher.

NW: *Wow*

FM: That church is full of people around here from Arkansas

NW: *Right*

MM: Clyde Ballard, Clyde Stuart, the Stuart family, the Helm family, on and on and on, there's lots of--they became well known orchardists in the valley, some of them became very prominent citizens of the valley.

NW: *So of course Dan's from Arkansas right?*

DJ: We're not from Izard County, we're from--my folks are from Sharp County, up North.

NW: *Right, closer to Fayetteville, is that right?*

DJ: Yes, close to Missouri, close to...

NW: *Lots of Arkansas connections. So that's a nice part of growing up in that church then, is the people taking care of each other, and I know you told me about Marilyn's dad, Earl MacPhail, your neighbor picking up the kids and taking everybody to*

MM: Oh that's right I didn't make that connection

DJ: And by the way she has another sister named Mary. So there's a Marilyn but there's also a Mary that lives here.

MM: Mary's older and-

FM: A schoolteacher

MM: We just had a good time visiting here just a couple weeks ago or less with her and dad.

FM: You know this other high school here on 9th street? She taught over there.

NW: *Oh Westside high school?*

FM: Westside high school. She was a third grade teacher over there. Kids loved her.

MM: She retired from there.

DJ: Mary's a good friend of my sister, Cheryl. Cheryl Armstrong. Well, you were- I guess you wanted us to talk a little about vacation bible studies.

NW: *Yeah because that's one thing I heard from Dan.*

DJ: Well, Earl was to us a kind of a big kind of a -- he was a character. One thing was they had a lot of kids. They had about 9 kids.

FM: 8.

DJ: 8 or 9 kids.

FM: Eight girls and one boy

DJ: Eight girls and one boy. Sandy (Bob) was the oldest wasn't he?

FM: No

DJ: Oh he wasn't?

FM: No but second or third.

DJ: And then the rest of them were girls and they lived up on the hill and they had cherry orchards, which I actually worked in and my mother worked in picking cherries. And they had two orchards--one was straight up from Maple Street and then straight up from Springwater, at the end of Springwater to the left. And Marilyn used to live there, that was the family house.

NW: *She still does. She's actually painted it and everything*

DJ: Oh you're talking- now you're talking about Mary or Marilyn?

NW: *Marilyn.*

DJ: Oh I thought it was Mary.

MM: She lived in grandma's old house right.

NW: *Yeah that's where she is right there on Springwater*

FM: Well, on that place down on the ditch--the highline canal--they had a pump house, the roof was about eight feet above the water, that's where we learned to swim. We'd jump off of that.

MM: And it was just down, on the West side of the ditch from Springwater Street, about two hundred yards on the right and it was surrounded of course by apple orchards

FM: And anyway the water was only about so deep and we'd dive off of and sometimes we'd scoop up sand from the bottom in our shorts.

MM: That's where I learned to swim; I'd drive right off of that pump house. First time I jumped in I stuck my nose right in the sand on the bottom.

NW: Yeah you told me about that last time so to go back to the cherry picking and the and also I wanted to ask you were the MacPhail's also members of your church or not?

FM: Yes

MM: -Okanogan Street church building

NW: I see, so...

DJ: There were actually two Church of Christ's, one was on Okanogan Street, one was on Cascade and Lewis that moved to East Wenatchee and so Earl--so do you want to hear about the cherry picking or the vacation bible school?

NW: Well the vacation bible school and then the cherry picking.

DJ: Well, the Okanogan--as Mike said the Okanogan Church of Christ was on Okanogan Street down across from the Deaconess Hospital

MM: 625 is that was it was?

FM: Something like that.

MM: Just two doors southerly of the old Legion Hall, which is gone now.

DJ: So these are Church of Christ's that would have been back there, I guess in the 30's wouldn't they?

FM: Yeah.

DJ: Probably started back in the 30's and

(15:00) FM: - remember was completed in 1930, it had a 1930 sign right on the front of it

MM: The old 1930 building.

DJ: And sometime in the I'm going to guess 70's they moved from the Okanogan to the Orchard Avenue Church of Christ so if you go up Okanogan that used to be the street it was on Okanogan and the Church of Christ that was on Cascade and Lewis is now the New Song Church and then later on they kind of went out of business, that one kind of folded.

MM: It was in 1988

DJ: Oh was it, 1988? Ok I'm way off by ten years. But the Okanogan Church of Christ had the vacation bible school that kids from both churches, and I think maybe some kids that weren't members of Church of Christ as well, would go...

FM: Oh sure...

DJ: to vacation bible church there and it lasted for a week or two--I don't remember--was it a week or was it two weeks? It felt like two weeks. So, if you attended there, Earl would take one of his big old cherry trucks--and this was one of those big old clunky trucks.

MM: A flat bed

DJ: A flat bed and he would put these rickety old side pieces on to it that were probably about I'm going to guess five feet tall maybe, these big side boards and the back end was left completely open and had a chain across it that held the side boards from falling out and he would drive up to your house, every morning of vacation bible school and I don't know if he honked or something, you'd come running out and he had a ramp built right off the thing and you'd come running up the ramp and you would just go and hold on to the side boards. And he would collect kids from all over town to bring them to vacation bible school and afterwards take you home.

NW: Nice guy!

DJ: Yeah, really nice guy. Can you imagine in this day and age a truck full of kids?

NW: I wish we had a picture of that

MM: To give you an idea of what size of truck it was a two-ton flatbed--I don't know if it was a Studebaker or Chevy or what, but something like that.

DJ: We loved that truck though.

MM: And in the winter it carried a lot of us young kids on hay rides around Sunnyslope

DJ: He would sometimes deliberately drive under the cherry trees and the kids would grab the cherries off the trees on the way, I think he deliberately did that.

NW: Oh nice

DJ: You know he would.

NW: So then tell me another--about the orchard then were there connections within the church about who needed help and how would you end up picking cherries at MacPhail's...if you didn't know each other through church would there have been a connection?

FM: That's how Dr. Abbott would get his cherry pickers, people through the church.

DJ: It was kind of word of mouth

FM: The Smith family, or the Snyder family.

MM: People knew each other or they knew somebody else or something and it was just a word of mouth thing.

DJ: I didn't know some of the people so I'm assuming they weren't all members of the church but just he would get people who needed work and church people and he picked late because most cherries are stem picked cherries but Earl didn't for some reason. You could--and that's what you liked about working for Earl was that you could milk the cherries. What they call milking is where you grab them and milk them into the bucket because he sold them to the cannery and therefore they were a later picking. So he would and when I say later I remember picking ending around July 4th and then Earl would have a party up in his orchard that we looked forward to all year because there was everything including lots of pop which my mother wouldn't let us have during the year but that day you could have all you wanted and so.

FM: They probably had a wiener roast

DJ: Well, yeah I just remember lots of food there and pop at the end. And I remember also being so small and the trees were so large that I couldn't move my own ladder. Earl would have to come out and move it around for me. Now these ladders must have been thirty feet tall. I mean they made huge -- these were massively large. They don't make them anymore. Now they have all the trees smaller but in those days huge trees and big wooden ladders, all it was, was a straight ladder without a tongue or anything.

(20:00)

MM: They called them spikes, they were this wide but...

DJ: They were narrow

MM: My granddad had some 20 footers and he had some 24s and I believe they were the tallest ones he had and they were up like this--straight up like this. Right at the top the sides tapered together and were pinned together with a bolt and the sides came straight down to the bottom and then flare out to about this wide. And there was no tongue and you had to stick those ladders right up through the branches.

NW: *Wow no wonder you couldn't move your own ladder.*

MM: And granddad would, or dad, would climb clear to the top--or close to it--and tie it off so it wouldn't...

DJ: Yeah, we'd usually tie it off so it was safe

MM: ...so it wouldn't rotate or anything.

DJ: One day Earl came to me and he said--I think he got tired of moving my ladder for me--and he says, "Look what I found for you" and he had bought an aluminum ladder, probably the first aluminum ladder that was ever made.

(Laughter)

And he said--listen to this--I could actually move it myself.

NW: *What a kind man he was. He sounds like such a kind man.*

DJ: Yeah, he was! He really was. And he would have parties at his house on the fourth of July too--I think it was the fourth of July--and they would shoot off fireworks and he would invite a bunch of people up there. Again, quite an interesting family.

NW: *Very social, very social. So did you go up to their house or did they come down to your house?*

FM: Oh both ways. Yeah, you wanted to talk about interrelating with families. Sunday afternoon for lunch or dinner we would eat with somebody or had somebody in our house, nearly every Sunday was the way. So we would socialize back and forth.

NW: *With the MacPhail's and others?*

FM: Yeah--well, Mrs. MacPhail was from the Fewkes family. That's the house where the MacPhail's lived up there --they are part of the Fewkes family. They're more my age.

NW: *Are there members of the Fewkes family still around?*

MM: Well, yeah all of the MacPhail's that are here are related to the Fewkes family

NW: *Oh right, right*

FM: The Fewkes family is all gone. Except Betty--she's in Ephrata.

MM: But there was quite a large family of Fewkes here that went out of this valley and on to do other things.

DJ: I think that's--you're right--I remember now that frequently people went, and it was invariably on Sunday afternoon, after church people would invite each other over their homes. I had--we had dinner a number of times at Fahy's house and other people's houses--some in East Wenatchee and some here.

They would invite each other over and sometimes another family.

MM: And your sister would play with my sister.

NW: *And you were older than him so you guys- did you play together?*

MM: Well, I had a younger brother--my youngest brother was Bruce

DJ: Bruce and I were classmates.

MM: You were a year apart.

DJ: No, we were classmates I think.

MM: Were you? He was born in '47

DJ: I was born in '47

MM: Well, there you go, so they played together

DJ: Yeah, Bruce and I were pretty close

NW: *So when you would get together for these Sunday afternoon dinners what would you eat?*

DJ: Chicken

MM: Fried chicken

FM: Oh mostly chicken, yeah, you'd raise your own chickens.

MM: In those days no one had very much money at all, and beef was very expensive, very expensive.

And there was chicken. I mean, MacPhail's raised chickens, my granddad, his dad, raised a lot chickens and sold them all over the valley on order. And eggs, and all that, so it was kind of like a cash crop kind of thing to supplement cherries, from his orchard.

DJ: You raised your own chickens. My mother would just take them out there and take a piece of wood and an axe and cut their heads off and then the chicken flopped all over the yard.

FM: My mother took them by the neck, rung their necks. And of course we had a pig once in a while to raise and make our own hams and sausage.

NW: *So sometimes on Sunday's you'd have ham?*

FM: Sometimes.

MM: Once and a while, but that was kind of weird.

FM: Usually chicken, or rabbits. We had rabbits too.

NW: *Really?*

DJ: We had a fair amount of rabbit, but chicken was the most predominant meat, we never got tired of it.

FM: And of course we had big gardens.

NW: *Yeah we talked about that last time so I'm picturing what's on the table besides chicken on a Sunday afternoon.*

MM: There was cabbage and there was--I don't know about broccoli, but there were carrots and potatoes.

FM: Potatoes and gravy

(25:00) MM: radishes, green onions, as we call them, in other places cooks call them shallots,

FM: Tomatoes

MM: lots of onions

FM: Green beans

MM: tomatoes

FM: Corn, lots of corn.

MM: And granddad got to growing these little yellow plum tomatoes, which were really good. There were a number of different berries. We grew some strawberries, lots of raspberries and then later on he experimented with these big boysenberries and then there was another type like a boysenberry, but what was it called...

DJ: Gooseberries

MM: No

DJ: They did have gooseberries

MM: They did have a gooseberry bush, but...

NW: *Marion berries maybe*

MM: Yeah, I think it was.

FM: We'd go towards the coast and pick berries up by the Stevens Pass area

NW: *Yeah you talked about that last time because I asked you about and I'm going to ask you again about hunting and sometimes when you had these Sunday dinners would you have venison or you mentioned rabbit or fish you know from the Columbia.*

MM: People didn't have time to go fishing, rarely. They were working six days a week and there weren't the holidays now that we have now. We rarely ever got out because dad was always working and so was my granddad it seemed. And then on Sundays, of course, was church.

FM: I didn't take my gun and go hunting until after the kids were raised.

(25:00) MM: Only once did I ever go hunting with my dad although he hunted when he was younger for deer, occasionally. Only once did I go with him and he borrowed granddads shot gun which was on that little shelf above the basement stairs. I remember that box of shells--you grabbed three shells or something like that and we hiked up across the ditch and up the hillside past the spring and up over the top and down into that long big wide swale where Sage Hills Trail is now and there was a bunch of old growth sage brush in there and dad--it was probably in November--got some quail. I don't know, about three or four quail and I was his bird dog and would go out and get them. Grandma cooked them that night.

FM: Yeah, that was just after we (Helen) were married and had moved to Nile Street (East Wenatchee) when I got that four point deer.

MM: Right above the mill, the Ardenvoir Mill?

FM: Yeah

MM: You skidded that thing right down to the mill, I remember you telling us.

FM: Back in those days we had what they called an Orchard Hunt right up to the last day of the year. You could hunt either sex deer--buck or doe--anyway, this time was the last day of the year. I'd hunted nearly all day on the west side, across Mad River, and didn't see anything. I came back to just above mill and it was almost dark. I had one shot at this buck--got him right between the shoulders. And we had to be within a quarter mile of an orchard, so I skidded him down to the Mill to make sure it was in the quarter mile of the orchard.

NW: *So it was an orchard hunt to prevent winter depredation in the orchards?*

FM: Yeah, deer loved the new buds on the especially young trees.

MM: They didn't have the fences then.

FM: Yeah, there were too many deer.

MM: This was a big deal for people in the valley because meat was hard to come by so orchard hunting was a really good thing for families to supplement their diet.

NW: *So when did that stop?*

MM: In the--it would have been in the early '60's

NW: *Okay, alright so then once you would get a deer then did people can it?*

FM: Some of them did.

NW: *And did you can chicken in your house?*

FM: A little bit, yeah.

NW: *Oh that's an amazing thing by today's standards*

MM: And venison.

FM: Lots of fruit.

NW: *Yes I know lots of fruits and vegetables*

FM: half-gallon jars; lots of fruit--my dad loved his fruit at every meal. So we had lots of half gallon jars of fruit and vegetables.

NW: *Did you can rhubarb?*

FM: Oh we could have I don't remember that.

MM: Yes, Rhubarb sauce, but not often. I remember it coming out of a can or a jar a few times but it wasn't common

NW: *It wasn't a big deal. So you did do some hunting then in the Sage hills, up in the foothills*

FM: Yeah, oh yeah.

NW: *Okay and I would think you would've spent a fair bit of time out there as a little kid except that you were also working when you were a little kid.*

(30:00) FM: One time I was with out with my granddad's double-barrel shot gun, I didn't shoot anything that time. No, I didn't do much hunting. Like mike said we were too busy--didn't have time to do it.

NW: *Okay*

FM: We had to weed the garden, you know, and spray the orchard and there was always something to do.

NW: *And irrigate you were telling me how you would help with irrigation last time*

FM: Oh yeah

NW: *starting as a pretty young guy out there- so when you were in high school you started to talk about your work outside of the Woodward home last time we talked and you told me about being a milk man and also being a - and I saw that picture of you in the milk truck and you were a milkman for a long time 30 years?*

FM: Twenty-five years.

NW: *Twenty-five years...*

FM: I told you, didn't I, about my dad (Earl McKee) during the depression, that for about ten years his apples didn't pay and they had the five kids. So we had to have something on the table for us. So he bought a dozen cows. And we bottled our own raw milk and sold it on the way to school. Summertime, my dad would be spraying the apple trees--every time the wind didn't blow he was spraying. I was fourteen and we'd load the milk truck, and my kid brother and I would deliver the milk. And during the school year we'd deliver it on the way to school.

NW: *And tell me what school you went to again*

FM: Well, when we had the dairy, of course I was going to high school--Wenatchee high school.

MM: When you started school it was at Lewis and Clark.

FM: Oh yeah, years ago at Lewis and Clark on Springwater.

NW: *Okay so then when did you start working on the rail yard like Mike was referring to where you were loading the rail cars with fruit and all?*

MM: Oh, when he was loading fruit.

FM: Middle forties.

MM: You were- that picture I showed you--you said you were in your...

FM: Thirty-five when I started in the fruit shed--1935.

MM: Yeah, between junior and senior years.

FM: I got my social security card in '35.

NW: *Okay and you did that and later you went on to being a milkman for another company though, not your family*

FM: Yeah.

MM: In '49, when we moved back here--though, dad, didn't you go work making boxes again down on the Columbia Street?

FM: I did for a while, yeah.

MM: You worked long hours down there faster than the dickens

FM: Yeah.

NW: *So could you talk about that a little bit Fahy, that's an interesting?*

FM: I made 800 boxes one day in ten hours.

NW: *That's amazing!*

FM: Twenty-four nails to a box.

NW: *Now how old were you then?*

FM: Oh that was in 1938.

NW: *Okay.*

MM: (But also again in '49)

FM: I would have been twenty years old then.

NW: *In your prime*

DJ: These would have been apple boxes right?

FM: We started when we were kids in the orchard--made our own frame for the boxes. My kid brother and I--we were racing to see who could make the most boxes in an hour and I smashed one of my fingers with a hatchet. We were making 60 boxes an hour then when I was probably 16 years old.

NW: *Gee whiz. So how long did you work for the company where you made boxes for wage?*

FM: Probably a total of two, two and a half years in the fruit grower's service. I was down there twice.

NW: *So when you would go to work down at a place like that would you know a lot of the other people working there already?*

FM: Not too many already, no. Of course I got acquainted with them, but no, I didn't know them very much when I went to work there.

NW: *I just kind of think of Wenatchee as being so small then that with everybody doing kind of the same thing picking fruit seasonally and sometimes working in making boxes, but there were enough new people coming in and it was big enough.*

MM: That was the hub of business of what was happening in Wenatchee down there, not like today. I mean it was the heart and soul of Wenatchee; it was the Apple Capital of the World. Down there along the tracks there were the big packing sheds and the railroad would come in with a siding and there were all these cars backed up and they were other businesses down there--several that made boxes. I remember going down there with my grandparents to get him or take him lunch when he was working down there and they would be all over these platforms banging away making boxes like crazy and at other places they were loading boxes of fruit. I don't recall that there were any forklifts, it was loaded by-

FM: Back then, no.

MM: it was loaded by carts and...

FM: Hand carts--six boxes on a handcart.

MM: they had clamps and you would step on the back and it would come together and grab a whole stack of boxes, big heavy wooden hand trucks and you would wheel them off of the platform into the car.

FM: Packed boxes weighed probably sixty pounds, six of them on a handcart.

NW: *Pretty heavy. So did you interact much with the hobos there in shack town?*

FM: No...no.

(35:00) NW: *No, did they show up around the box making plants or anything?*

FM: Oh I suppose they did but I don't remember them, I don't remember them bothering anybody.

NW: *So that was sort of a separate part of town, I mean it was close to the railroad and all right there but people don't really talk about it other than not going there. Although I did just meet Mike Walker last week at Café Mela and he used to go there and have chicken. They had a family they were friends with and they'd go down there and have chicken dinner I'll have to talk to him again and get the name of that family because it sounded really interesting and so did you--I mean when you were a kid did you ever talk about or think about getting on that train? I mean I would have.*

FM: No.

NW: *You didn't*

MM: I did.

NW: *You did! Okay good talk about that.*

MM: I was always seeing the trains and trying to figure out how to jump a train or ride the rails--I really was.

FM: I didn't know you wanted to leave home that bad.

MM: When I was- well, no it was just that, dad, I was always into exploring. You know me; I was always looking for some adventure and I wanted to do something like that. I always heard from my uncle (S. Hurst McKee), his older brother about riding the rails--comments like that and I was always trying to figure out how did they do that; where did they jump on the train and ride from here to there whatever. But then as I got older, like when I was in high school, I started hearing about the railroad yard" Bulls." You know, with their weighted clubs and so on and that didn't sound like fun at all.

FM: When he was a little guy he used to wander away from home. The cops brought him home twice.

MM: I was exploring.

NW: *Were you going up to the foothills?*

MM: No, this was in Seattle.

FM: No, he was a little guy

MM: It's not like today. Today you wouldn't let a kid out of the house or out of the yard especially, but in those days...

FM: I was working.

MM: Nancy I was...I had the run of this whole territory to the West of us here. I did. As long as we showed up for meals, and we had our chores done, the rest of the time was free time and...I was gone.

NW: *Good for you, yeah*

MM: And everywhere.

NW: *Okay, we'll have to talk about that later then because you have really good memories then of the foot hills*

MM: Yeah, and of the ditch and the whole territory of the neighborhood here—a lot of detail.

NW: *Okay well let's talk about that in a separate interview because that would be really great but what kind of notes did you make that you wanted Fahy to talk about?*

MM: Oh, these were just--I didn't know what you were going to do, so these are my memories that I have of living at grandpa and grandma McKee's house in Wenatchee from the mid-forties on.

NW: *Well memories, I guess it would be good to find memories that overlap between you two and...*

MM: Oh certainly, a lot of these are.

NW: *Oh alright so you left, where did your grandparents live relative to the Woodward house?*

FM: That's where they lived. I was born out there. On the corner of Woodward and Springwater

NW: *Yes but then did they continue to live there when you were growing up?*

MM: Oh yeah.

NW: *Oh I didn't realize you were all living together. Oh okay so then the only time- when you moved to Seattle that's when you left Woodward. There were never separate houses*

FM: The address was Springwater not Woodward

NW: *Right okay, sorry.*

(Laughter)

NW: *Alright, please go on and share some of those memories of your grandparents. We shared some of those last time, but it would be interesting for you to share some of those memories and maybe some would be something that Dan would also be able to add to.*

MM: There – well first off, dad worked from early morning till near dark when he'd get home. So he was gone during the day when I was living there with my grandparents and I'm not sure where you guys lived but it wasn't too far.

DJ: We lived on Maple at Pershing.

(40:00) MM: Yeah, right. But we didn't often go down that direction anytime I had free time so I don't know. We didn't interact that much, Dan and I, except through church and potlucks or when families would get together for a meal.

DJ: Well, it was a different generation, he's six years older. When you're twelve and the other guy is eighteen...

MM: Any way it was mid-June—June 12, 1949, and I'd just finished the second grade in Seattle and dad took us all to Wenatchee to live for a while with his parents--my grandparents--grandpa and grandma McKee in Wenatchee on Springwater just below Woodward. It used to be called Highline Road, I think.

FM: Yeah, Highline.

MM: And then later on--much later on--it was renamed Woodward.

NW: *Why? Who is Woodward?*

MM: I have no idea.

FM: It was named after Jim Woodward. Just north of the canal on the East side of the street was the old Woodward house, a big two story.

NW: *Oh sure of course*

FM: That's Jim Woodward, that's where it got its name

MM: Anyway I was eight years old when we moved there in '49 but we came there during the summer to visit from the time I was a baby on, you know. And so I have earlier memories of interacting with my extended family in Wenatchee, and maybe in the hills, earlier than June of '49. But when we came, I mean going to Grandpa and Grandma McKee's house it was a really big deal to me. I was always very excited to do that because it was a different world than living in Seattle. It was a big wide open valley and it was rural and there were trees to climb and there were hills, there was the ditch, there were chickens, there were cows, you name it--everything little kids were excited about. I liked to be outside and I was. They had, I think by '49, owned all the way down to Western except for the lot, the little lot that my great grandparents, Sam and Louella McKee, lived on at the corner of Western and Springwater. It was a ten-acre strip between what is now Woodward and Western and 660 feet south of Springwater. That was the whole thing and in the middle it was bisected by a lane that didn't have a name then--it does now if forget what it is. But it was a little gravel dirt lane that went South from Springwater in the middle up there to the property line on the South. Just across the property line to the South, there at the end of that lane, was my uncle Hurst and Aunt Bernice, McKee, my dad's oldest brother lived there. And just behind that was a little small house where Aunt Bernice's mother lived. She was known as Mom Work, or Grandma Work. And in the middle of that lane on the West side was a small kind of a small house--brick faced house--and that's where my dad's sister Aunt Letha (McKee) Bunn lived with her daughter, cousin Jackie, who is a year older than I. And so when we moved there in '49, and before, we used to play with my cousins. There weren't a lot of kids around to play with. There were the Eakins at the top of the hill--two kids there--Jim Eakin was the oldest one and then he had a younger brother, which was Dave.

NW: *On top of which hill?*

MM: The top of Springwater hill on the right (north). The older James Eakin, or Jim, Senior, was the manager of the tree fruit experiment station orchards that were between the Ditch on the west and Western Avenue on the east. Other than those two kids, the only other kids close by were cousins. My cousin Jackie and then my cousin Don, but then he was 11 years older, my cousin Marlin was three years older than I, then my siblings. That was it. And we had lots of fun.

FM: Lots of opportunity to get in trouble.

(45:00) MM: But I learned about chores and in learning that, dad--that became very, very important to me. You and granddad McKee taught me over and over again always do your chores first and then you can play. And so we learned responsibility for that sort of thing and we had accountability. We knew if they came back later on and our chores weren't done that was no good.

FM: You're forgetting about the old horse Gypsy that we had. You kids loved to ride on Gypsy

MM: Yeah, I'm just talking in general. But we did have a lot of chores to do. I was the oldest, at eight years old, when we moved there, so myself and my next youngest brother principally were the ones that were given chores. The others were kind of considered too young. There was a middle brother that was bigger than most of us, I mean bigger than most at his age that kind of tagged along, Terry, and yes, later

on he got into doing chores as well. And the chores we had to do were ditching water--there was no pipe irrigation then. It was all done by ditch, gravity ditch. So the water flowed out of a spigot that came from up on the ditch—a kind of a simple distribution system-- a pipe that ran all the way down nearly to Western. Along the pipe were spigots every once in a while, so from that you would get water for various places on the orchard...

FM: Gravity irrigation.

MM: ...that would flow by gravity and it seems to me there was a slight grade between the south edge of the property line back to the north to Springwater Avenue.

FM: There was, had to be.

MM: There was a slight grade, just enough where you could flow water and so it was silty ground, and we watched him and he showed us how to use hoes to ditch water, to build a little damn in the ditch, and turn it in to another ditch. The orchard irrigation ditches were constructed and maintained using hoes, and he'd show us how to maintain them, and when they would get out of--when they would not flow the right way--maybe they'd flow across and take off somewhere else, he'd show us how to go over there and tamp the dirt, pack it in so the water would continue flowing down.

FM: Do you remember the little animal, what do you call them?

NW: *Gophers*

FM: Gophers! Do you remember the gophers?

MM: Oh heck yeah!

FM: ...making a hole in the water?

MM: Oh yeah, we were always on the outlook for those things. And trying to plug those holes and keep the water flowing through these trees. We also hoed the weeds between the rows along the tree row by hand.

NW: *A lot of weeding.*

MM: It was a lot of hand weeding. Then, they didn't have grass growing in the orchards like they do now. Back then it was all plowed clean dirt.

NW: *Lots to weed yeah, so what were the weeds? What were the prominent weeds?*

FM: Alfalfa.

NW: *Alfalfa was a weed?*

MM: There was some other kind of a grass, quack grass; there was also one called milk weed that was prominent. We used to throw them. if they got up this high they were fun to sling them at each other because they had a small little root ball and you could jerk them out of the ground easy, they'd come up from the ground with a ball of roots and dirt clumps

NW: *It sounds like a tuber*

MM: And we would throw these things at each other across the orchard. Dirt clods were prominent then, we learned to throw dirt clods at each other and...

NW: *Did you do that Dan, did you work in the orchards besides picking?*

DJ: I did--did everything.

NW: *And where was this, was it down closer to your house then?*

DJ: The first place I worked was just after sixth grade and it was around--right across the street again on Pershing and Maple. There was a ten-acre orchard there and my sixth grade teacher Bill Pratt owned it, so he hired me. He was my teacher. So as soon as I graduated from his class he put me to work.

NW: *Wow, close.*

DJ: Thirty-five cents an hour.

MM: The Browns worked down there didn't they?

DJ: Brown was my step-father, Percy Brown.

MM: Percy Brown, that's who it was.

DJ: Yeah, that's my step-father. Yeah, we had dirt clod fights; sure we had rock rights too. Our neighbors--we'd throw rocks at each other.

MM: But dirt clods were fair game, that and the little apples that were being thinned in the spring, or late spring.

(50:00) NW: *So do you – you've mentioned the families up on Springwater, the MacPhail's and the neighbors across the street in the last interview, how about- did you know the Woodward's and the people on down the block?*

FM: Sure, sure.

MM: He did, I didn't.

NW: *So what did Woodward do? Were they orchardists too?*

FM: I think he must have been an orchardist. He had – I believe he had an orchard. I really don't remember what Jim Woodward did. I knew his son. He was a little bit younger than me--went to school with him--didn't really play with him that much because they were about half a mile from us. I knew the family.

NW: *And Syster's, how long have they been there?*

FM: Who?

NW: *The Syster's, like Jolly.*

FM: Oh, they lived on the corner of...

MM: 5th and Woodward.

FM: ...Highland or Woodward. Alvin Syster--I can't think of his wife's dad's name--he was an old judge here in town for years. And his son was a judge too. Mrs. Syster...

MM: Geraldine?

FM: ...lived on Okanogan Street almost across from the church in a two-story house near the triangle, Judge--Mrs. Syster's father.

NW: *Well it's okay. So those families were there when you were growing up then, so that gives me just a frame of reference*

MM: There was the Rowe family, which we already talked about right on the top of the hill there going South on Woodward--the house is still there, and he had a packing shed--a small packing shed there.

FM: Okay, here's a name, Cooper. Across from the Woodward's on the other side, they had a cherry orchard. Cooper's lived there, a family--about three or four in their family, we knew pretty well.

MM: I went to school with the Gerald Cooper.

NW: *I wish I knew who the original owners of our house were but I don't. It was built in like 1940 right after World War Two, our house.*

MM: Where do you live?

NW: *911 Woodward, its half way down the block, its right next to Earlene and Dolores Freeburg.*

FM: Ok, just south of the ditch.

MM: On the west.

NW: *On the Westside, so right across from the Largent's*

FM: So, you're right across from Earlene.

NW: *Just South of Earlene and Dolores.*

FM: I thought Earlene and Dolores live on the Eastside of the street.

NW: *Oh Eastside sorry, Eastside, yeah sorry they do, I said West. Yeah East side of the road, right across from the Largent's that used to have a house there which of course.*

FM: Oh, I knew the Largent's too...

NW: *Yeah, I know Chuck Largent*

FM: *to meet them. I know he died of a heart attack in the orchard.*

NW: *What?*

FM: In the Cooper house

NW: *Oh that was the Cooper house? I cried when they tore that thing down. It was terrible.*

FM: North of the ditch

NW: *That was a bad day.*

FM: The ditch is here and it's probably the second door north, Westside of the street is where Largent lived.

NW: *Oh okay, so the Coopers were there then you were a little kid?*

FM: Yes.

NW: *Okay, that's good. Well I don't know maybe you could come visit sometime although our house looks way different than when we bought it but you were going to look for some old photos I don't know if you had time but that would be so fun to see any old photos of the neighborhood. Mike, do you have photos?*

MM: The photos I have are of my grandparent's house.

FM: The one I was born in.

MM: Those are the photos that I mean.

NW: *People pictures you mean?*

MM: People pictures, but also pictures of the house itself from different angles and different times

NW: *Yeah, those would be interesting*

MM: But I don't have any pictures of the Rowe's house or houses to the South.

NW: *The neighborhood*

MM: What's now Woodward? I just have memories.

NW: *Well that's all right, I just thought I'd ask. It'd be useful. Well I think it would be great to hear you guys sing together a little bit because this is fascinating to me how you would learn to sight-read without having to learn music theory and all.*

MM: They learned music, not I.

(Singing Amazing Grace)

NW: *Nice harmony, I can hear the harmony now. But you weren't really singing though, Dan?*

DJ: I don't think I'll remember all those words.

NW: *What were you singing before I got here?*

DJ: Oh, he was singing "I'm A Yankee Doodle Dandy."

(Singing Yankee Doodle)

FM: That London never made sense to me--I always sang..."came to town..."

FM: That's the way they have it written in the song, but I cheated it ..."to town, riding on a pony..."

NW: *Okay, so maybe it was London because they were talking about English, the English, I don't know*

FM: How does that fit with the Yankee Doodle boy...American?

NW: *I don't know, but it sounds pretty good.*

FM: Maybe they had a London in this country. There's a London, Arkansas.

NW: *Yeah there sure is.*

FM: I have family in London, Arkansas.

DJ: That song goes way back though so people would have come from London.

NW: *Yeah that's kind of what I was.*

FM: Makes sense. Oh Dan, what kind of song do you know?

DJ: I know most of them

(Singing)

NW: *Cool there you go*

DJ: A three-part harmony at the end

NW: *Yeah that was nice*

DJ: Fairly low--it's tough to sing bass. He pitches them lower than he used to

FM: I pitch them where I can sing them.

NW: *Good job*

FM: I'm not a tenor--I'm more of a bass. When I was in the...

(break in sound)

...when I was a kid--I remember the third verse--mom talking about a fox stealing a black duck "...the fox started out one starlit night..."

(singing)

...that's the third verse, but there are about four verses through the song. Mom used to sing to us kids.

MM: I have copies of her songs, her old music.

NW: *Oh you do?*

MM: And I remember as a little kid in her house she'd play the piano occasionally her and aunt Letha would sing that song and other ones.

FM: Oh yeah, mom sang all the time.

NW: *That's a fun song. So is that one that they brought with them from Oklahoma*

FM: I suppose, yeah...must be. My mom taught piano and she was good at it.

NW: *But she didn't play in church because you didn't have any instruments.*

FM: No, we sang A Capella.

NW: *Yeah okay. Well thank you for that. Thank you for this*