

Gary Gaffner

Interviewed by: Sherry Boswell

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1st Oral Interview

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Sherry: This is an interview with Mr. Gary Gaffner recorded on April 24th, 2001. The interviewer is Sherry Boswell and the site of the interview is Mr. Gaffner's home in Queen Anne Hill. So, I thought maybe we'd get started by just telling me a little bit about how you sort of got interested in family history.

Gary Gaffner: It happened just like some kids like to play sports and some like to do carpentry or something. From the very beginning, it would always be interesting to know what it'd be like when my family sort of entrusted to me all the old photos. And as each generation was getting older they realized that if we don't have somebody in the family who really cherishes these things and keeps track of where they are and as they move over the generations they'll identifies it, and did they pick me or did I pick them? I don't know. But from a very, way before the age of ten, I was sort of a repository of photographs. And my grandparents would tell me who the people were and then on the back of them, I would write, I remember so clearly, writing in pencil, as if some day I would want to erase it. But, I don't know why I would want to erase it, but in the mid of a ten year old, you didn't deface a photograph by putting ink on it. And so I would, 'cause then a person known so well to my grandmother, who died before I was cognizant of anything, you'd

have no way, you'd leave me all kinds of stories about George, but you really didn't know he looked like. So it was important that you get those. And years later I would see photos of the same person or a photo of a person who was in the family, and a part of the trunk that had family photographs. And you'd look at them and the eyes would sort of come out. He was standing there where my grandfather was playing the mandolin or something. So then you'd go back and you look and "Oh sure, this is *absolutely* him, 40 years later." But you know it's just him. You look at the ears that protrude or whatever it was.

And so very early my sister and my brother didn't pay any heed to it. And so then I started, they started giving me the family trunk from each side of the family, so all parts of the family had lived here except one half of my wife's family still sort of from Butte, Montana. All of them had all their belongings and things and it sort of became known that, Gary keep the trunks. And so, gradually I was sort of entrusted. And when you're younger, they trust you with something, you rise to the occasion. Or I was just exhibiting to them an interest by questions that made them think, that it was very, very early that I would be fascinated sitting down with great grandmother, and grandmother and talking about things.

And I'd go home and I'd tell my brother, "Did you know that there used to be a cable car that went right down, right by the bungalow down there, and it used to turn around."

And he'd say, "Well, who cares, you know." (Laughs) Or something. And then I'd want to go down there and see it and then you'd see a big concrete thing, where there was a big round thing and you, this must be where they took out the street car turnaround. Then they'd ask mom and your mom would tell you about a friend of yours, and the two of them got on the street car and went downtown, all kinds

of these kinds of stories become part of your lore. And it's just grown with the years. And even though you're away at, you know, Army and the college, and things, you coming back here, you just picked up. The trunks were still all, were there, trunks, they number up to twenty-two now. At one time I painted a lot of red paint, way back when I still lived in West Seattle, up to trunk number twenty-two and I had these lists and I'd go through and list all the things in the different trunks and got locks made on them as if somebody was going to break in, I don't know who. And it's become really a major inconvenience every time you'd move. We had all these, you know, trunks to take with you. But if I didn't, who would?

And maybe, I've tried to encourage my son, who seems to be inclined to stay here. He's building his business here in a way, it can't be moved. And hopefully he, and he seems to, will realize there's this special heritage in those trunks of things. That they're just things, they're not full of valuable things, but they're things that represent different sides of the family.

And it's just, you know fascinating. About two or three times in their life to open the trunks and go through them and look at, this was the bonnet that, you're not sure, must have been your dad's, did little boys wear bonnets or not? The questions, they're always there, but to be in that trunk had to be somebody. So it was very early and it stuck with me. And I think when, I'm retired now, I will more and more and more get into it. I have backed up piles of, my wife's very active in it now. And she's assembling things off of the Internet for me to look at. So, about a year from now, I hope to get several things behind me before I'll start really working on it. And I expect I'll do it the rest of my life. It's fun.

Sherry: Since we're doing this interview for Southwest Seattle Historical Society, I guess maybe the best place to start is talking about the William Bell family and some of their antecedents. But I'd also like ultimately to get to some of the other sides of your family as well who also lived over in the West Seattle area. But tell me a little bit about the Bells and how, ultimately, they got to Southwest Seattle.

Gary Gaffner: Well, of course the frequently published version of the arrival of the settlers is when William Bell first came. And there appears to be no real connection I can find other than sort of a propinquity, the family always identified with Alki, but pretty much the early forty or so years was over on the Seattle side. And then around the Turn of the Century they just all gravitated to Alki Point. And I've asked my mother since the time you and I last talked, and she said, "Well, we just all were from Alki." And then I realized, well, yes, she was born in Alki and so was my dad. So it was really the generation before them. Why did her father move to Alki, because for a while he lived out on Rainier Beach? And why didn't my grandfather on the other side move out there? And she said, "Well, there just was never any question that they would live at Alki." And I asked, "But *why*? Was it because the settlers came there?" And she said, "Well, sort of indirectly." But that's just where their friends were. But the friends weren't the friends of William Bell, because you know they were mostly downtown. And she said, "Gee you know, you're asking me things that there really isn't any answer to except we were just all from Alki, so we were from Alki. And, 'cause that's the way I grew up. I mean we had all kinds of stories about Alki and Alberts (?) at Alki and I mean, I was very proud of to go around the city and meet people and say, "I'm from Alki." And I later realized about the time I got in high

census, where it had the various columns that showed the indentured slaves and the free slaves, or the free blacks, and the women all lumped together, which has been a fascination to me ever since then that it seemed like the men were the tracking point of history. And the fact that young boys were identified much more clearly than the wife. And, you know, our society, for good reason has changed. But to go, and I'm happy to say that Nathaniel Bell did not have slaves, but he lived in a household that did have, and yet you, you wonder, that's two hundred years old information. What constituted a household? Maybe it was a farm with five outbuildings, or something like that, of which there happened to be. And then, before then, the furthest we've, but not yet connected the Bells back to what probably was English roots. But they were in New England before North Carolina. And no real attempt has been made to go back that direction. We have on the Hanes (?) side of the family actually found a book that had been written early on, you'd mentioned earlier about books, *The Life and Times of Descendants of Deacon Samuel Hanes* (?), and found an old church sketched in there of where they had been married before they came over, probably ten or fifteen generations ago. And I made copies of all those.

My brother, who was just like about twenty miles from Stonehenge, and he was going, "Oh."

And I said, "Well go down into this little town and see if you can find any of the Hanes and here there church might still be there."

He went over there and he was just fascinated because everybody looked at the church and said, "Oh, it's out that way," you know.

And he went out and found there was the absolute likeness of the sketch of the, then way back the Turn of the Century they'd published this book, and was now a National Heritage structure in

England, not used for service any longer. Except once a year they would have a service in there in order to consecrate it and keep it on what would be like our National Register.

And he asked if there were any Hanes around and nobody. He was just in pubs and places like that. And nobody knew any Hanes or something like that. But as he was going out he remembered one of the wife of the Hanes that married and came over to the new World. And he mentioned her and the guy pointed to the next fellow on the bench and said, "Well, he's an Egly" or whatever it was. And apparently the wife's family stayed there for two hundred years. The Hanes had been on their way.

But anyway, the Bells we've traced back and you know, come see me in about three years and we will have followed that one at least to New England, where we do have some clues. My wife, fortunately, has been very active in doing that and using the Internet to great advantage and chasing back some of these ties. And then you find you have to get down and just do the research and ultimately visit places.

Sherry: So, are there family stories or ideas about why Nathaniel went to Illinois and what he did there?

Gary Gaffner: Apparently he went to Illinois because there was good crop areas there, which is probably what drove people. But I don't know that North Carolina doesn't have good crop areas, too. I believe the father of William, when I speak of William Bell is the one who first came to Seattle, versus Nathaniel Bell and before him, his father came to St. Claire County and then the grandfather later came. And as I trace back those dates where they left North Carolina, it seems to confirm that the father came for whatever reason, the

grandfather came in order to join the father. And then went on and lived there and both of them, I think the grandfather had sixteen children. It was a natural progression. The father had, like, twelve and William Bell had eight, nine, eight, ten, well, he lost so many. He lost three of the girls before he even left Illinois. So, you know, these were big families.

And when I asked my grandmother why would he come out here and undergo such deprivation and hardship to get out here. And she said, everything had to do with opportunity back then. Well, wasn't there opportunity in Illinois? So the people were staking claims there and land was getting used up? I said, "Well, but there's South Dakota, North Dakota, and Wyoming, there's a lot of places near." And she said, "No, that she understood this was the promised land." You were going out where there great natural resources, great beauty. And they would undergo a year's hardship to get out here in a way that we wouldn't think of doing nowadays. It was mostly lack of opportunity to have and own your own things, back there. And that was a very powerful reason, and it still is in suppressed societies that want to, you know, people wanted to come to America, because they could have something off their own, a work on something of their own.

So, those were every powerful forces back then. And that the ability to have three hundred and twenty acres was a lot of land and to do your thing on and work it on for your whole life and have something to live off and raise your cows and chickens on and maybe produce leather goods or whatever it was. And, so, that was pretty much what she said. Most of the motivation were not from the people who had been successful back in Illinois, but from the people who were looking for success. And it always struck me interesting that on her side of the family, she had both the Gaffners and the Bells, and that

the Gaffners were shoemakers. Now, you can't convince me you had to go all the way out to Seattle to find people who needed shoes. She said, "No, what they did, they all were hearty people. And they could do a lot of things. He just happened to be a shoemaker, because all the way down from his Swiss roots, they were shoemakers, and that was a legitimate trade." But I guess your coming across the Plains, you better have two or three good pair of shoes. But that they were coming out here for the opportunity to do whatever arose. A hearty energetic person could do and usually because they hadn't yet achieved it where they came from. And so she said, "They weren't losers, they just weren't yet winners." And that phrase was sort of her defending that her parents weren't losers, they just hadn't made it yet.

Sherry: What had William Bell's career path been up until the time in Illinois when he—

Gary Gaffner: He worked, just in agriculture in his father's land. They had quite a bit of land, but he was one of eight children, and wasn't the oldest son and he wasn't going to receive the land. And she always mentioned that. That the system used to be less fair to ensuing siblings in a family. And there was very definitely the feeling, like I'm not going to spend my life working for my older brother and even though he may be willing to take care of me and some feel that's good enough. And that was their fate in life, to be the second or third child. But then in the case of her own family, that's all she really knew is he came from an agricultural, essentially, a jack-of-all-trades on the farm, to come out here and ply the same things. You know, you knew how to use a hammer, you knew how to use a

hatchet, you knew how to drive horses and keep them up. And, you know, that they were to find their way when they got out here.

Sherry: Where was the Bell family farm in Illinois?

Gary Gaffner: It was called Edwardsville. It was definitely rural, because there were two counties. St. Claire County and another county that, as I would do research on them, you would have, for instance they would say, "Nathaniel Bell, of the adjoining county, and then William Bell, son of Nathaniel Bell of St. Claire county." And in most of the early history of Seattle, it always identified him with Edwardsville, but they would say, "Outside Edwardsville." And so, he was out by the second bend in the river or something and maybe it wasn't even clear which county that was in. But I think the counties were all well established. The lines in the counties. But it was all right in that general area. There was an Alton (?) or there were four or five different towns that I mentioned earlier that were all right together, but Edwardsville seems to be, and I think there's even, I think the county is Edwardsville County, or Edwards county, one or the other. But it's all like ten miles over, and fifteen miles up from St. Louis. But, yeah, they were all agriculture. I never hear doff any that were in, for instance, industry, or something like that.

Sherry: Now, he had already built a family before he came west. Tell me a little bit about his marriage and his children.

Gary Gaffner: Well, he married a girl the name off Sarah Peter. And there were three daughters that had become deceased by the time they left back there. And they've always been carried in the family history, though they lasted anywhere from, you know, a month to two years

or something like that while the normal childhood diseases, I imagine of the time. He did have four daughters by the time he left and one of them was just a teeny, teeny baby. And often, within the family, they've used his wife as sort of an example of a woman who was just child birthed to death, She just, you know had baby, after baby, after baby at the same time she was crossing the plains and then out here trying to do you know, a man's work all day long and be a mother at the same time. And her health was fragile for reasons that we probably never know if there were other physical maladies other than just over work and over childbirth. But she seemed to just keep birthing children until she died. And that, so you know, if you, nowadays say a woman is a housewife, she certainly qualified for being that, plus a whole lot more. But again, once they got out here, they set about time to figure out ways to get milk and get you know, and improve their land. There was a requirement to do certain things on your land in order to hold the land grant. So, they had to start making improvements. Unfortunately, the first log cabin that he built was burned down by the Indians, and he had to start over again later. But it wasn't exclusive to him. The stories I've read, which are dependent, on the accuracy of more the Denny family, that seemed to be quite able in writing stories, tell how virtually everything except David Denny's cabin were burned down. I think one other one. Isn't that what you read? And that David Denny purportedly was quite friendly and was a benefit to the Indians and they rewarded him by allowing him to keep his home. It's a nice spot.

Sherry: Do you have any idea how they first came into contact with the people that they ended up coming west with?

Gary Gaffner: Yes, they really didn't know them until they got to Portland, and where the Schooner *Exact* left from Portland and came up here, the Dennys and the Borens had come across the Plains together. The Bells didn't even know the Lowes (?) of that time, though they were quite friendly with the Lowes in the early years here. But the Bells, are just, other people come out with them, but didn't have any inclination to go further hardships, by going way up into an unknown, Indian infested territory. And they felt some real fear about the residents of the area at the time. Which proved to be ill founded, even though there was, there were repercussions here and there. But generally, they had a happy relationship with the Indians, and my understanding is that most of what you know, they called the Indian War were Indians from elsewhere, even east of the Cascades. Why they came over here and chose to war, I don't know enough about it. David Bergy (?) or somebody would know a lot more about that. They weren't really the local Indians who were causing the troubles. And they always got along with them quite well. But that didn't reduce the tension that they felt. Like it might be their demise if they stayed here. Any more than that just comes from reading histories of the area.

Sherry: Did they ever talk about how they determined first of all to go to Portland and how they chose they train they came on, the wagon train or how that all came about?

Gary Gaffner: Well, the wagon train they assembled. You know, there was a lot going out of St. Louis, and that was a center for great deal of westward movement. And there was, you know, large industry there producing spokes and hubs and wheel rims and all the things that you'd have to take out with you. So assembling the resources

to buy the things and make whatever you had to make was not difficult. There was a great, you know, they used to, like electricity in the air, you know moving West was a big exciting adventure when you looked back on it. The hardships that some of them endured you wonder, were they unrealistic? 'Cause they were really heading into some terrible situations. But that was a different kind of people then. They didn't have the certainties and comforts that we have that, you know, just stand put and keeping your job for thirty years, and you'll be okay. They had to provide for the future and a lot of children. But departing with, you know, four girls and one you know, baby, is tremendous, you know, courage it took to do that.

But in any event, back to your question. They met the Lowes just approaching Portland and didn't know the Dennys or the Borens until then. Hey all got on the boat and they would just be speculation on my part whether they met in the last hour as the Captain was saying, "Anybody want to go to Seattle, you'll step up." Or they had met in a bar or rooming house and all, you know, traded stories and then got, you know, on board and headed north. But it was a put together group at that point and they seemed to get along really quite fine once they got here. Any stories I've read have not indicated, you know, great sort of hostilities between them or who worked harder or who. They all worked hard. They all seemed to be very pioneering, hardworking people, to the extent of their abilities. And some were less able it seemed, to be quite a cohesive group and they were lucky they all got together. There were other people that came out with the Bells who went elsewhere. And I don't know anything about them.

Sherry: No diaries or letters from Bells telling—

Gary Gaffner: Unfortunately, I don't even know that they knew how to write or read, I mean, I really don't know. I can presume that they, well, no, I can't really presume. I really don't have anything in handwritten by William Bell. There certainly was no doubt that his son Austin was in the printing business and was certainly verbal and able to do. And you now, and all the children since then. Then had good schooling here from quite and early time. And they seemed to have done fine. But they didn't write, or, we're really thankful to the Dennys particularly that spawned, you know, a group of writers that chronicled things and even though they focused more on the Denny family, that's fine, whoever did the work, got (laughs) to focus on their family. I wish there was an author on the second generation of the Bells who would have taken up pen and started writing things down, but unfortunately I've never found anything of it and I expect it doesn't exist.

Sherry: No other Bells came out with William at least on that first trip?

Gary Gaffner: That's correct. Other than his daughters and his wife, were named Bell at that point. But there were no other members of the family. As in the Borens and the Dennys, they were already related by one marriage. And you can see how there was comfort in a larger group of them coming out. There was a natural affinity for the Lowes, because the Lowes had four children and the Bells had four children. So it was like, today, you know you'd swap stories about diaper services or something, you know, they had a common problem of feeding four young people. Unfortunately, the Lowes left the area and went down, I believe, to Olympia in that area and later went more up in the Bothell area and we're currently working on

getting the remains in the Lowe tombstone from up in Bothell and bringing it down. And Bell had three different plots up in Mount Pleasant Cemetery and so we're gonna try to get some kind of a memorial there. Long term friend of mine, Ruth Moore, is one of the descendants of the Lowes and before she gets too old to worry about those things, I was sort of hoping they'd give us some appropriate accommodation to the Lowes that seem to have, you know, gotten the short end of the stick up in, it's not Bothell, it's more out near Monroe, or out in that area somewhere. I'd like to, before I'm gone and she's gone, just give the city at least a memorial to the Lowes who did as much work as anybody else. But they did leave early, but you know, nobody really knew the city was going to develop here. The Bells included. I don't think when he left because of his wife's sickness. I mean she was really, after the Indian war, she was very, very near death here and he left as soon as he could get a boat out and went down into the Napa Valley area, where they stayed for quite some time. And I've never heard anything other than it was for her health. She just didn't have the ability to withstand the hardships up there. But their house had been burned down during the Indian wars, so they were going to have to start all over again and build another place to live and he didn't know that there wasn't, right around the corner, another attack, and another attack and another attack. And he didn't, and he had a wife that wasn't going to make it if he didn't. And, you know, 'cause she'd borne another child when she was here, it was Austin. And so they left the area and were gone for quite some time and missed a lot of the early development. They did a lot of things down there that were similar, but it was more of a society down there, it was a safer place to be. And I think you have to give a lot of credit to the Dennys and Borens and you know, all kinds of other

people, that, we all know the histories of you know, Yeslers and, you know, Doc Maynard and other. They came just within the next year or two and did a lot of things to help develop the area here that were the benefit of our family. But Bell was not here participating in it. You know, just the first five years or so.

Sherry: Are there family stories at all about those first couple of years. I mean, they went to Alki, with the rest of the party and not too long thereafter ended up coming over more to the Seattle side.

Gary Gaffner: Oh, it was really the following spring that they came over here, I understand. But no, most of these are because of things, that fortunately the Dennys have written and different histories of the area. I presume them to be accurate. Then several Denny family members, in fact Denny Watt (?) is one of my very best friends in college. And Robert Watt (?) his dad was always, you know, we were combining stories. But then, you were still three generations away. And I always wanted to verify things. And I always looked to the Dennys as being more of the local history recipients or benefactors or they'd had more people locally to you know, chronicle things. But I found that they seemed, that generation of Denny and Bob Watt were proud of their family's participation but that hadn't really spent a lifetime focusing on those things, maybe because of so much of what was around them. And I never, I always felt like I was telling them things I had heard, but they didn't have really anything other than the books that had been written by--

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Gary Gaffner: -- they had settled up in Marysville area or something like that, would anybody have taken the trouble to write about things and I've always felt particularly blessed that they happened upon an area that had you know, the attributes that made for a fine city. They had the history, says, you know, they could readily identify the deep-water port and all the things that would make a grand city by and by. Did they or didn't they? I assume they wanted I mean, sure anybody rather have a deep-water port than a shallow one. And then, growing up on Alki, I know there certainly, that's not a port. And, you know, that they were over on the Seattle side for good reason. But I think they all were pretty much focusing, but you know, I learned a lot from my grandfather on my mother's side, who also had come out here in the 1890's, who we spent, many, many hours discussing things and then I would write them down and then I'd go home and type them up and take them back to him, you know, producing sort of a manuscript of a life that's not overwhelmingly interesting, but it was so telling to me how they all had to provide food to put on the table for the next week. And whatever they did, in his case he sold Encyclopedia Britannicas. You know, you just had to make a living. And somehow you weren't worried too much about how history recorded your life, until you were in your eighties or nineties if you made it, then you started thinking about it. But they all just aimed forward and worked hard to produce something. And you know, I'm always just sort of feeling thank goodness for those hearty generations. Several generations, back that made America the fine leading country in the world. Why didn't it happen in other areas, you know? And I guess you have to get very nationalistic or something and, was it the Constitution? You know, what was it in our founding fathers that made a society

that benefited from hard work and protected people who did it and created a system of, you know, friendly police states that made sure you were protected and your land and property were protected. What a lucky stroke that we ended up living in this country.

No, unfortunately, no real written histories from the family until it got up about to my grandmother's, really great grandaunt did a lot writing things. But my grandmother wrote poems and so there was so much of the family and sort of her life captured in poems, a whole little pamphlet of them, which were published, I think after her death. And it's fascinating to read back and see, again, that they'd made light of the happy little things that happened between all of the hard work that they went through. And you know, two of my grandpas had their legs cut off just as if another, that happened yesterday, I'll get a wooden leg tomorrow and get on with life, you know. It would set people back nowadays, you know, they'd start looking for some sort of social service agency to take care of them for life. Well, they, they just strapped on a wooden leg and went on with their life and it was, it was that kind of a spirit that made you realize that they had a lot of hardship. In the case of George Bell, was injured in a--

Sherry: Now, George Bell is your—

Gary Gaffner: --great, great grandfather, William Bell's son. And my grandmother's father. And he was in, his life was cut short by being involved in a railroad accident that, it actually went off the tracks and he was all crumpled up. And he was bringing several cows, as I recall, cows and again, I would never understand, why was it worth it to somebody by the time they could get them on the rail

road and bring them across Canada and then all these little hokey railroads would come down through the mining areas to get cows to Seattle. I guess milk was very, very important at the time. And he went all the way back there to bring the family cows out here. And in the course of it, the train went off the tracks and he was crumpled up and within about a year he died from the injuries, just in his thirties, somewhere. But, those are, the other life family carried on. And in that case, it was really his sister-in-law, the lady Jessie Hanes (?) later Jessie Elliot, who happened to be an artist, and she could make, quite good at painting pictures and selling, whereas Indian artifacts and any of it, she sort of took over the care of that side of the family, of her sister and her sister's daughter, which was my grandmother. Sad events, but I never heard any real complaining by my grandmother about, you know, if it hadn't been for the railroad accident, this would have happened or that would have happened. They seemed to be an indomitable spirit of, you're gonna work hard all your life and some will get rewarded more and some won't, but you still work hard at what you do. And they, and I think this was common of all kinds of other families who didn't just happen to be the first family in the area. They might have been the third or the fourth, or the ninety-ninth or something, they still had a hard undertaking to turn a city into what it's become. And of course many, many very enterprising people, even ten, twenty thirty years later they came out and left their mark on the city. As you know, it wasn't just the first founding families. It was sort of fun to think about it, but you know.

Sherry: Tell me a little bit about William Bell sort of landscape, though, that he took. How would you identify approximately today, you know.

Gary Gaffner: Well, I know exactly where it was. It was very erratic. I went back through all the land records and every time he would make a claim for another piece of land. I drew a map of it at one time and it was very interesting to me. When it bordered on Denny Way, David Denny was to north and they were bordering Denny Way for only about two or three blocks, but then it had this funny line that went way up to, up to almost about Yale and then went over and it came down to Pike Street, up high on Pike and then cut back around and came down where Olive and Stewart, were two of his children, so came down there and then cut over and then went down to the waterfront from about, it looked like Stewart by Virginia, it had gone down to the water and then it went back over then up the hill and then back over to Denny Way. So it was very erratic piece. And they were assembled over a period of about oh, two or three years. As I understand, the title to land had to be established by Congress and Territory wasn't real quick to say, you people just go out and put down stakes and you have the land. They could put in their claims, but they weren't certified until quite some time later. Had to be surveyed. But the question was treaty rights. Did the Indians really give up any claim to that land in exchange for some kind of reservation agreements? And each tribe was a little bit different. So there were land claims that were made subject to confirmation of Indian consent or something like that. And I think some of his land really didn't come into his true possession until after he had left here. But there, and then some of them, he may have purchased. It's not real clear. I didn't think of the, what generally known as the Belltown area going as far up as Terry and Yale and up in that area. Or as far over as Pike. But it branches over that way and then comes down. Those might have been later acquisitions that were. But when I went through the land records, they were like in the first

oh, the first maybe two hundred land entries in the city. So they were fairly early on. There might have been others later, that he acquired. But those are ones, and he had, then he also acquired several with Denny. Why I don't know. Arthur Denny. Unless I don't know how, what the official act of designating land grants to two different people, or two different families, but there they are. They're in there in their names. They must have had partnerships or something. And then they did a lot of assemblage of land in two areas in Kitsap County. One is where the Silverdale area is now, which really was, hadn't really grown at all when I was a young kid. We'd go over there and they had a little Silverdale Historical Society, in an old bank building down by the water. And there really was pretty much not developed. Now, it just seemed to have the right kind of geographical location for the Bangor Navy Base and then it grew very rapidly. But they had several claims over there that were mostly William Tell Gaffner, was my grandfather's brother and it was, he, Charles Gaffner was the one that married Riva Bell. And he did a lot of assembly of land over then and then down in the Port Orchard area. And was in partnership with William Bremer who, of course, named the Bremerton area after himself. And my grandfather had the Port Orchard side of the bay and Bremer had the Bremerton side of the bay. And that was pretty inexpensive land over there at the time. And they would run steamships back and forth and my grandfather got into the steamship business. That was a natural direction to go. It's like now, assembling land, well, later assembling land and having the trolley cars go out to it. Back then you'd assemble land and then run a little steam boat over there to take settlers over there, 'cause settlers were coming into the area and the land in the Seattle area was expensive and well chosen. So they could just go out on these little steam ships and set up camp in

an area and buy land, at so cheap a price. I mean, we're talking like, two dollars an acre, or something like that. Some of the prices I've seen on them are just incredible. I don't know how much work you had to do to make a dollar, but a lot of the pieces of land sold for under ten dollars an acre. And it might have been lousy land, but still, you know, for an acre, I guess you could grow something on any acre. Maybe if it wasn't vertical, or something. So people'd come out and for very little money could buy their little stake and some of them you know, got on their three hundred and twenty acres and the area was burgeoning only because people kept made this a destination and came out here.

Sherry: Do you have a sense, did William Bell, pretty much from the time he got his land here, that his focus was really more on development than it was on you know, any kind of farming. I mean.

Gary Gaffner: He didn't do anything to the land here until up into the '70's, though he was down in California, his wife had since passed away. And my grandmother, as I told you before had come out with us, his wife's twin sister came out. And stayed with him and they didn't get married until 1872, you know, quite some time later. And she accompanied him through life and they came back to Seattle area and everybody assumed that she was, some assumed that it was still his former wife and some thought another. Because she was identical looking, you know, twenty years older, though. And I don't think my grandmother knew, and I was a little careful in asking her, you know about the whys. In the time I grew up in, people felt inclined to want to give your illegitimate child a name, but it seemed like, you know, was that the motivation or was it because they were coming back to the city were they owned a lot of land that hadn't

really been developed and the city was developing around it and the value was increasing. And maybe there were reasons at having married whoever they had thought was his wife. I thought it was very, very sort of cute that they went all the way back to Illinois, to her homeland, where you know, where he had left, in order to marry her in the church of the family. That's simple now, but it wasn't simple back then. But they really hadn't done much. And so they came back and it was more at the prodding of the Dennys that they actually platted the land in the Belltown area.

And whether he still had the pieces that were up on the north Pike area, I don't know. There actually was a man named Pike, I don't remember much about him, but he was on a couple of the deeds with William Bell and I you know, it wouldn't take much prodding, I imagine, to find out who Pike was. That wasn't named after somebody on Lewis and Clark expedition. There as a man named Pike.

And somehow he came back to town. And I've heard derogatory and applaudatory whatever, stories either way and I'd have no way to know without studying the economy of the time. The derogatory say that William Bell sold off parcels, you know, like platted a block into ten parcels and then sell them off one at a time just for income to live off of and to maintain a comfortable life. And that it was because of that that the whole Belltown area was really quite low in its development cycle because the ownership was so wide. And therefore residents who were to build on, there wasn't any zoning at the time. People could build whatever they feel. And so a lot of homes were built and then the whole lifecycle of the home had to go through and in order for somebody to build even a nice hotel or commercial building, you'd have to assemble four or five pieces of land. Whereas the Dennys were much smarter the way they would

hold thing together in quarter block areas downtown and sell them off and keep them or hold them within the family and lease them out and probably a better entrepreneurial spirit in the Dennys. The Bells were more subsistence, I think, and so some, it depends what generation are. Now, you look down in the Belltown area and it's going through a resurgence of building now that you know, comes fifty years after the city started building out of their big buildings and its becoming largely a residential area now. It was held out. But it's really the third time around. A lot of the buildings are the third buildings down there. They had the early homes and then because of the re-grade a lot of homes went. And the second phase had second homes and then there were some small little nondescript commercial ones. And now, you know, some of the more middle or high rise residential or even the fourth round in only a hundred and fifty years of replacing the area. But each area is different. Down in the Pioneer Square area the fire knocked down about the second round. You know the first round were all the huts and things like that, and the second round were the early commercial buildings, and then the third round some of which were trying hard still to preserve. And then the fourth round will be ones like the Olympic Building that fell down at First and Yesler, so they'll build a new building there and that'd be the fourth building on the site. And other areas up in Capitol Hill area are really only the second go around. You know, they went right from residential to hospital or other uses. The residences stayed for a hundred years up there. So as you got closer to the city it got more intense use. But I don't think Bell is known as an intelligent developer. He probably had too much, you know. He had a lot of land in a city in which the land was going up in value for no particular reason. It's not like he built roads and brought sewers in or electricity in, you know, like a developer

would try to enhance land. All he had to do was sit and you know, and not do very much and made it. Years later, there was a fellow by the name of Harry Whitney Treat (?) whose home over at One West Highland (?) Drive, I purchased and did a lot of restoration on it for many years. I remember an account of the home where it said, the day he stepped off the train, he was the wealthiest man in the territory. Well, that didn't take very much doing, did it? You know, somehow these people had spent their years developing then one guy, a big Eastern guy with a lot of money who was, you know, West Coast secretary for Rockefeller and you know, he just came out on a train and stepped on the ground and there he was the wealthiest man around. And proceeded to have a life of teams of eight white horses and all the things that went with it. But you still have the feeling, but it's not the same as you know, Arthur Denny or somebody who really, you know, step by step by step created things of value. And those are much more thrilling stories to me to read to about than somebody who's just told, you know, we have to divest of Standard Oil Trust. Go out West and buy, in fact the company he was, Pacific Exploitation Company was to go out and buy timber, buy mining, buy anything of value that you can exploit. And that was an appropriate Eastern mentality for the time. But it wasn't what Seattle was really made from. And it's really fun to think back now, still it's been an awful lot of really home grown industry here that wasn't just East Coast money coming in and exploiting the area. It was more, you know, home grown ideas, that developed right up to our current generation. And then the city is sort of known for that. It's interesting worldwide how you hear about you know, there's an entrepreneurial spirit in Seattle that is unlike Silicon Valley or other places where there was more East Coast money going in there, and you know, assembling land there near to

universities and things. Up here it developed because people were here and wanted to be here. It makes for an interesting city. But anyway.

Sherry: You were talking about Belltown and being essentially a residential area and slow to develop. Where in the Belltown area you mentioned, William Bell's first cabin and then getting burned down. Where was that? And tell me a little bit about his own personal.

Gary Gaffner: It was right at First and Bell. First and Bell is where he had and the log cabin that was burned down is exactly where he built sort of a clapboard house when he came back up and lived there for many, many years. And I've seen several pictures of it from different angles and the house remained pretty much the same. There was a wing that was sort of built onto the back end of it. If you go down now and look where the Austin Bell building is, it was just to the south. That's the part of the city, then go due south toward the city, on the next corner over, is where he lived right up until he died and then my great, great grandmother stayed there and I've never known of another residence. I don't know, you know, like this treat I was mentioning. When he died his wife moved to the top floor of what was then the Olympic Hotel. And that was some years later. Never that I know did the Bell family live high. You know, they didn't, like the Denny family, the kids did go out and build big houses. Orian (?) Denny built a big house up on Boren and oh, I can't remember his name, built about the third largest house in the city out at the end of the Windermere, you've got Windermere right to the end of the great big white house with a big roof on it and there was, those are the only two, thirty or so years ago that were still remaining that were of the children who actually

arrived here with the Denny family. They were two remaining children. Orian (?) and I know the other one so well. But the rest of them were too close into the city and got and were victims of just forward progress. But then the Orian (?) Denny one, the Sunset club has a parking lot on the site now and I went and bought it from the family the day before the demolition, in order to get all the old carved stones off of it. And they still have a little fence around it. But it was still the same stones that were there, so that when it taken down, then the only one remaining was the Denny one out in Windermere. How can I not remember his name? But anyway, it's still out there.

Many years later I went out there, the Moonies, if you remember the period when the Reverend Moon was active locally and I went out to the home and it had been purchased by the Moon family. Because it was very, very big, still is. And they would bring enclaves of people and so they bough big houses. And it was an interesting afternoon. They were really sort of peculiar, but very pleasant. And the very fact that I just enjoyed the history of the house they were, they wanted to know more about it. They were certainly not you know, you know, some of those sects, there was the Love family on Queen Anne hill that I got to know many, many, many of them very well. They all went by the, you know, Serious Israel, and Logic Israel and Love Israel and they all had the Israel name. I did a lot of work for them, because I was very active in the community council and they were joining in. And they all had religious beliefs that transcended every, you know, known thing of life. They all just had different cuts on where they came down on their religious lore. You know, they're energetic people that worked hard and did things and you know, they had their little, you know, portion of the history of things. A lot of them sort of disappeared.

But the Dennys built the big houses and lived well and the Bells sort of scattered.

Sherry: Why did William Bell stay? I mean his wife died very soon after he got to California. He stayed a fair amount longer.

Gary Gaffner: Life was more comfortable down there. I'm guessing. It was fifty years further developed down there. The Napa Valley isn't too far from San Francisco. San Francisco was humming along, was a metropolis. One can only guess. Maybe he was ashamed that he had begot a son by, you know, his wife's sister and didn't want to. I'm guessing. But why do people do sometimes it's based on something like that. Or sometimes it's just that life is good and until the land that he had had in Seattle was seen to be increasing in value, life was better down there. That sort of was not a very, it's not a life built on energy, maybe it was built on. He was getting along in years by then, you know, he was not a young man with the energies he had when he came across the Plains and when he came back here. And also his mental stability was in question in the '80's. That was before, did he know at that time, I guess not, I think it wasn't until more in the '80's but he had probably what was Alzheimer's, but people didn't know it at the time. He might have stayed down there were it not for the Dennys encouraging him to come back and then once he came back he realized that, you know, this is a big asset here and I can go mortgage it or I can sell it or I can do whatever I want to do with it. And because his children had all gone down to California, they didn't follow him back. One or two of them came back for period s and then left. But they weren't Seattle children. They were children who remembered up until about age ten or twelve the Seattle experience, for the older among

them, and almost no recollection the younger among them. And they grew up down in California and married down there. I've tracked most of them; at least three of them married right in the Napa Valley. And married gentleman whose history was down there and settled down there and so without the family, he had just George and Austin when he was up here. And I can't say he didn't know what good living was like. We've all seen the tuxedoed picture of him in the Bagley books. That isn't what the family thought of, you know, he thought that was sort of like Chief Seattle's picture. You know, you've seen it with a hundred different hats on him, or something. That, you know, he went in and sat and there probably was an event and maybe even bought a tuxedo for a certain event, you know, they would put on the dog a little bit here and there but he never built a, yet he certainly could have sold a block of land down there and built a grand home but it just wasn't part of him, nor was it part of any of his subsequent heirs. It was always more seen as a fortunate holding right up until today. I mean, we built the building that we're sitting in from proceeds from selling one of the parcels down there and pretty much got out of the Belltown area but have always been invested in real estate. But more in my father's period, we'd more build, you'd get land and then build on it. But we'd buy up things too. And it was more a matter of, I mean, even my father's spent his whole career other than the navy, in the insurance business, but he would invest in real estate rather than the stocks and things, just because that somehow became known to him. But not from his father. His father was just a pure outdoors person. Every picture I have of him, he's got a gun and he's hiding in a barrel from the ducks, or something. He was just totally outdoors. And I inherited his trunk, too, and it's all outdoor gear and I probably have a thousand rounds of seventy

five year old shotgun shells, things, and all kinds of fishing rods and lures and I used to go fishing with him. And he was just into fishing and hunting. And he had a foundry and he would make, you know, beautiful things in the foundry but for recreation he was outdoor, and my father wasn't that way. And so each generation, it's funny how they come down. None of them really seemed to take after William Bell, because his direct son, George, was cut short in his life and so his daughter was born in about '82 and her father died in about '89 so at seven, her brother died about four years old. So there was no, she only knew her father as a seven-year-old girl who lost a father. And then, at the time that my grandfather was Charles Gaffner, he came out here very early and his family was all still back in Illinois, so he didn't really grow up around his family. He had a brother, so three brothers came out here. And so they didn't take off after their parents because they weren't around. And so they just became their own thing. But it is interesting to see how my grandfather Gaffner and my father did grow up right on Alki and my dad wasn't at all like his dad, so even the, proximity to something doesn't make you be that way. But my dad got to be very handy on cars and things like that and my grandfather wouldn't, [inaudible] there weren't any when he arrived out here. At the time you're young and you sort of establish things, just as my son today is very big in computers because that was big around the time you're forming, you know, your life's plan. So each generation, ekes out their plan. In a way they're sort of interesting. And must make for better people than old English family that for generations settle on the same big estate up in the moors or someplace and are expected to carry on the estate.

Sherry: Did people, relatives, describe to you what William Bell was like and what his personality might have been like or his—?

Gary Gaffner: Yes, but it was usually in terms of the hard work that he did. That he was a hard working person and the thing that always strikes me is that really isn't consistent with his latter years where he was back in town, you know, part of the gentry, he just didn't build a big home, but he owned a lot of downtown Seattle. I mean, he wasn't down there logging it off, he was really able to do whatever he was inclined to do and so it wasn't from their direct association with him that they knew. So, I wondered do they only conclude, well he must have been hard working because he came across the Plains with an ox team. That had to be hard work. I do tend to be a sort of a questioner about these things that you hear and wondering where have embellishments come in or people simply wanting to think that everybody in their family was a saint. And I guess I start from the fact that saints didn't leave where they deemed a saint and hop on a cart and run out and play footsies with Indians. So none of them started out as saints and they weren't really highly educated, though a lot of the later generations in Seattle. Like the Bagleys, were highly educated people and many others came out here. What's amazing to me is to read histories, how many of them were lawyers that were out here. Now why in a the world would a person leave new England and come out here to practice law, when at least for fifty years or so, the gun was the law

[End of Tape One, Side Two]

Sherry: Could you talk a little bit about William Bell and his personality? You told me a great story though about some remains of William Bell's wheelbarrow. Will you tell me a little bit about that story?

Gary Gaffner: Sure. The wheelbarrow story is almost my private story because nobody else is alive who passed it on to me and even though my kids have heard it a thousand times it is not a thing of which great lore comes. I'd hate to think that a hundred years from now somebody reciting one afternoon's little hokey adventure is the story of a person's life or even what was important about them. But it was very fun because it very recent. The story that my grandmother had told me and she told me that my dad didn't care about it, so almost like here I'm entrusting you with the story about the wheelbarrow. But that the, William Bell did do, and there's a tie back to, was he a workingman or wasn't he? He was working very hard on building a home. It was down just about a block south of Denny Way, right where Broad crosses Western Avenue. And he, you know, enjoyed building these homes, he must have had some carpentry skills. And built the home up and then, you know, I think that George lived in it for, well, I mean he didn't live in it after 1889, 'cause that's when he perished. And he lived elsewhere. But, you know, lived in it for a short, they built it for him. But then a whole, you know, ensuing series of people lived there. And I'd go down there with my father when I was a young man and we'd collect rents. And you know, there are a hundred stories that aren't really West Seattle oriented stories, but they're very instrumental of my understanding of the seafaring people, they were mostly who lived in the old house. But in about 1953 or 4, 'cause I remember I came down and took a lot of timber from it for an event that happened one of those two years. The house had become really decrepit and Fat Mary who had been the manager of it for many years had perished. And I think I told you the last time, she died and she was so, her girth was such that when she died, she didn't even fall over.

And so she just sort of squatted down. And when somebody, we went over to collect the rent, she'd been dead for about a week or two. And she was in the kitchen and she was just, you know, frumped down. She was very big. And that, I'll never the rest of my life forget what a two week old dead body smells like. It didn't even smell good when it was alive and just sitting there looking at you and people coming and going as if, life is short and hers came to an end. But I sort of had the feeling like, you know, rejoice, rejoice, she's the one that collects the rent and now we live here for free, you know. No one was going to let us know. Not even one phone call, what would have been free, there were no phones. But in any event, we got to the place where we decided to take the house down and in the course of it, my grandmother was still alive and she told me how William Bell had, that was the last house he did physical labor on. And when he got to the end and they were ready to concrete up the front stairs and had everything else done, he took his wheelbarrow, which, you know, she implied, I don't think any one wheelbarrow necessarily, you know he didn't bring a wheelbarrow out on the ox wagon. So, some wheelbarrow that meant something to him or more of a gesture, he put at the top of the stairs and they poured the concrete over and it was sort of like, you know, a time capsule or something like that. But there were no bronze plaques on it and I quite frankly question the story, seriously. But it stayed in my mind. And in back of, oh, almost less than a year ago, I was down coming north on Western Avenue, and, see we'd sold the land long before, way back in the '50's. But for many, many years, I would show my children these stairs that came down there and tell them how the wheelbarrow was underneath the stairs. And then in the wintertime the, sort of the vines would die off, they were like black berry, berry vines. You

could see the stairs in winter, couldn't see them in the summer where all the things would flourish. And year after year, I'd point out to my kids and they'd yawn as we drove by there, that there were Dad's old stairs. Because these were concrete stairs that went up to nothing. There was sort of a bank building at the back side of the property behind it just a big vine encrusted piece of land. And when I was coming up there less than a year ago, there was the big construction thing that was starting to excavate on the south end of the block. And you know, it immediately fired up this idea, I wonder if the wheelbarrow is really under there. So, to make a very long story, you know, not as short as you would like, but shorter. I would go down there every day and watch the transgressions, or whatever, of this big, big, big Hitachi land, it made a steam shovel look like a little toy. It was a great big thing that would reach way out and bust anything in sight and scoop it up backwards like a backhoe and then dump it in these big trucks. And it worked its way up and I'd go down every day with my camera and finally by the end of this, about a week, they were getting close. And I talked to the fellow who operated it and I had the feeling he didn't even really hear nor care what I said. But when he finally got to the stairs, and my idea at that point was I want at least a piece of the concrete of the stairs. For what reason, it was worth a week of my life, I don't know, only people know why those stairs were important in my life and I wanted it. But I'd told him about the wheelbarrow and said, if there's anything that looks like a wheelbarrow underneath it. And he sort of gruffly said, "How am I supposed to know," you know. He's way up in the air looking down on these stairs. The final moment came when he'd take a big bucket and he'd just raise it up about ten feet and drop it down and just break, you know, break the stairs into about three pieces. I'm sure he could pick up ten tons.

And he'd go down and he'd pick up this big chunk of staircase and swing around and set it down and it'd go boom, boom, boom with the bucket to bust it into pieces, which he then sort of pushed aside into a pile of rubble there. And I was very pleased to see him being very gentle on the upper part of the stairs. And he would sort of go down and go boom, boom, boom, boom, from about a foot up, like he was very gently trying to break them into pieces to pick them up. And then lifted them up and with just the daintiness of a little child with a scoop in a sand box, he sort of was raking through this thing. And I was just utterly flabbergasted when he raked through and came up with the wheel. Which was obviously the wheelbarrow. I didn't believe my grandmother, I didn't believe much of anything she said at the age she was when she told me. Her memory was really fuzzy. The improbability of the story. But this was William Bell's last working implement and then he became this, you know, the landed gentry from. And there was the darned wheelbarrow wheel and I just, you couldn't have taken it away from me for ten thousand dollars at that point. I'd waited a week for a piece of concrete and I got the actual wheelbarrow. I did take several pieces of concrete too, which I have no idea what I'm gonna do with. I mean, they're just sitting down in the basement. But the wheel is just beautiful. It's sort of rumped up and the wooden hub in the center is, you know, just disintegrated, with the earthworms long, long, long ago with the wheels. Obviously the spokes and the rim of the wheel. Will I clean it or am I more impressed with the rust and the just the entrustment on it? If I went and buffed it all up with a wire wheel, it wouldn't be the same. But what'll I do? Just hang it from the ceiling or something? It's only meaning to me, but it's the closest tie I have to, you know, William Bell, four generations back put it in the land and I dug it up. I say, that's like my King Tut tomb

and three generations in between didn't get to see his wheelbarrow and I have it, and I own it. It's my wheel! (Laughs) Useless as it may be. It almost makes me want to, you know, cry when I think, do you have anything that was directly his? Well, I have his tuxedo, but you know that's nowhere near as resplendent to me as the last working implement. You can just sort of see him throwing the wheelbarrow and saying, "I'm never gonna push another wheelbarrow the rest of my life" you know, "Austin you go do it or George you go do it." And I just have to do something with it. You can't frame it, it's too crumpled up. But there it is and I will never go by that building, which is well under construction now, without thinking about it. And if my kids are with me, they're gonna, "Gee I suppose you're gonna tell us about the stairs that used to be there." I think they thought their dad was going batty. It's just an old flight of stairs to nowhere, why is it so important to him? But you know, they were generous enough to let me go on and on time after time about it. You know, fun story but it does. And I really don't have much else from him. Well, there are several things in his trunk that I assumed were his. But were they his or were they my great great grandmother's that she squired after he was no longer there? Austin was still in the area at the time for two more years and he might have taken some of the things and I have no, I don't know where Austin Bell's things went to. He had a wife who was named Eva, the same as George's wife, imagine two brothers both married to Evas? You know, that his wife carried on after he took his life and I don't know where she wandered or whatever became of her. That's another day's chase. I expect I'll chase it at some point. It'd be sort of fun.

Sherry: Well now, tell me when did William Bell die and what happened to his wife Lucy and then his—

Gary Gaffner: He died in 1887 and it was in that period, he died in 1887, Austin died in 1889, George died in 1889, and Hanes Bell died in 1889. So my grandmother lost a lot of people then see, in 1887, my grandmother was only five years old. So she didn't you know, she always said, you know, Grandpa Bell, but I don't know how much she remembered. You know, I think we all remember some things at five, but they lost a lot of people in the family right during that time and you know, it was one of those things that I have come since, I don't think my grandmother realized it, but the, see there was a Sarah Bell was his first wife and Lucy Bell their second wife. And the descendents of Sarah Bell didn't really receive anything because Lucy was his wife at the time he died and you know, he died by going slightly demented or to some degree demented and so there really wasn't any ability to, you know, some lawyer sit down with him and said, "Let's take whatever you have and redistribute it. Now you tell me, out of shares of a hundred, how many you want to go to whomever." And because the rest of the family weren't here. Except Austin and Austin and his dad didn't get along real well. And so, it would be natural that the other daughters, living elsewhere, knowing there were holdings here, would sort of not have a whole lot of feeling for their dad then, but they grew up with him. And who knows, was it happy or not so happy time? But you know their mother was their loving wife for many years. And they'd naturally expect maybe there'd be something in the estate for them, but it didn't turn out to be so. And so, but then Lucy was not one to, you know she didn't do like lot of widows, who go and build a big building in her honor or something like that or live

grandly. She carried on, living in the same house for some number of years and the daughters would come back. And you know, I would hear from my grandmother that the daughters of her sister, who'd come back to town and come and meet with her and have supper. You know, it all seemed cordial up until I was in my teens and I started talking to other people. And one of the most revealing ones to me was really when I buried my grandfather Charles Gaffner in 1952 and talked to the family who owned the Mount Pleasant Cemetery where everybody had been buried in one of these three Bell plots up there. And they talked about hostilities between the, you know, William Bell's family by his first wife and his second wife. And I'd never heard about any such thing. But they would apparently, would get, and those two people who owned it now, their son owns a cemetery, the Edwards family. But the older Edwards, say the people would come back. They'd be in town for a convention or something, want to come up and see where William was buried and they'd say, "Well, which plot? Do you want to see where your dad, or your grandfather or Grandfather William, or you know, George?" And they'd say, "Oh, George," they'd shrug like, we don't acknowledge him or something like that. That's why I began to realize that there was maybe some unhappiness that his second family inherited. You know, money has a way of doing those things to people. It's just it's really too bad, 'Cause nothing I'd love more than to get a call some day, "My name, is, you know, Lucy Smith and I'm named after, you know, something and I'm in town and I understand you're a relative and let's get together." Never had anything like that. Never heard my father never had any contact with anybody. And it's just like they all moved away. Austin didn't have any children, so there was nobody living here that had children. But I know that of the other daughters, and I'll find out. I

know who they married and where they married and so it's not going to be a very hard thing to find, the next layer of siblings. Now, they may not have a whole lot of recollection because, you know, William Bell would be one of four or five grandparents or more, of modern families, often you'll have sixteen grandparents, you know, combine several families. But do they care or are they interested? My wife's done a lot of genealogy. I'd be happy to give it to them if they'd like it. But they're names on a chart now, along with, you know, hundreds and hundreds. I think there are five hundred or so people. When you list all the people that are direct descendants, up, you know, each of the sides of the family. You're up in the five hundreds. So my wife can just press a button on the computer and lists them all alphabetically by first name or last name or whatever. And they're just, you know. See, they're all four generations back. And then I really, I have, only in the case of Laura Bell, do I have a second, do I have down two generations. And that's because she did come back here for a while and died. And one of her children is buried up in one of the Bell plots.

Sherry: And Laura was one of William's children?

Gary Gaffner: Laura was one of his direct children. Laura came out with him from Illinois. And died in the '90s or some place in there and had a husband who's not buried up there. But then, they're also two unmarked markers up there that, what I don't know and the cemetery had a fire, as these cemeteries seem to, they don't know. The names are on the tomb of the daughters who had expired back in Illinois. I've never heard of them bringing the remains out from there. But one daughter did expire in California and as I understand it, I think from the Bagley book, or someplace, that he brought the

remains of that daughter and his wife back up here to be buried there. So the two unmarked stones where they actually buried the remains and then put the names on the pylon or are they children of a later generation? Don't know. And I haven't been able to find out. Too bad. Because I think it was in the 1890's or 1910, the Edwards said, well, that most of their records were lost and they had to go back and go to each tomb and write down what they could. There's such a loss, you know. Today, those things you'd digitize them and put them away in some storage forever. But once they were gone, they were gone.

Sherry: Just for the tape, because I don't know that we did it on the tape. Your family's direct relation to William Bell was through his two children by one of his sons by Lucy, right?

Gary Gaffner: Correct, correct. The only child Lucy had, as far as I know, and I'm sure I would have known, you know. William Bell had his first wife was Sarah and they had, I think, eight total children. And probably five of them survived, depending on your definition of survival. Austin killed himself at like about 1954 to '89, thirty-five or something like that. Is that survival? Survive their teen years. No mostly little girls didn't survive even out past like kindergarten age or something.

Sherry: While we're talking about Austin, tell me a little bit about Austin.

Gary Gaffner: Austin was, you know, see he was only here for like a year or two but he was here during the Indian War and then left with the three girls and their quite sick mother by then and went down and grew up in the Napa Valley area. And came back when his father came

back, you know, ten, fifteen years later. I don't know much about what he did down there. I was always led to believe that Austin was sort of a free spirited, not un-well meaning, but just sort of bounced around doing odds and ends of stuff and was kind to everybody but not very energetic. Where his brother George, his half-brother George, was very energetic, but was a little bit more blunt and you know, had fewer friends and made more money, or something like that. But you know, they were relatives and they got along fine. And the three of them, William Bell, and Austin and George all started an International Order of Oddfellows, whatever in the world that was down in the Belltown area. And I think, I've heard people that the Oddfellows, in spite of its name, that it was tied to burial lots, that they'd have cemeteries. But there's actually an Oddfellows Lodge up on Capitol Hill that's still there with the name has been sort of survived over the years, not because of IOOF, but definitely Mount Pleasant Cemetery. There's one whole section that's the IOOF cemetery. It was like a fraternal organization of some kind. They had meetings and things like that. And the story my grandmother, and they had a lot of funny hats, too, because I do have one trunk that has these funny hats in it. But then my grandfather later became associated with the Shriners and you know, went up to the high levels. And some people say, well, they're just as wacky. But I don't know. See I don't know what they're common basis is, but you think of the Shriners and the Masonic movement as being pretty straight line. I mean, a lot of people were involved in it. When I grew up a lot of kids belong to Masons and I don't know what the Shriners did but we used to go out to great picnics at the Shrine Lodge out on Lake Ballinger and you know, Easter egg things. If you could say the Shriners sure made a lot neat Easter eggs, that's my recollection. (Laughs) But

nowadays they get together and they all wear these funny little potentate type hats and, of which he had one and my grandmother was in the Order of Assisi, or something like that and she had a white hat with all the sabers and jewels on it and things like that. And I used to get it out and play with it when I was a kid and I still have it in all those little containers. But Austin apparently fell out of sort of relevance in the IOOF and my grandmother said that, see, she was George's son, daughter, so she was maybe defending her father. Her father, only lived as long as Austin did, because, you know, one killed by his own hand and the other killed by the train. But, all this history's imbedded in you know, thirty-five years or so between the two of them. But she, I think at one time asked her why would my great grandfather be the beneficiary, you know, not half or three quarters, but all of it, and Austin not. Because Austin was still alive two years, after his father passed away. Maybe that was part of why Austin, you know, didn't like life at that point. Every recording I've, either three or four places I've seen elements discussing in general terms or less than general terms, the fact that Austin, one way or another was afraid he was going to lose his marbles like his dad had and he was beginning to see the early signs of it and took his life. Some of the accounts say he had had business reversals and took his life. Well, people do that today. I've certainly had business reversals and didn't ever think about taking my life, but I do have a sister that took her life. It doesn't have to be a very savvy reason why they do it. They do it the spur of the moment and the accounts of Austin that have been well published were that he was enjoying things in the family the day before and then just took his life. So, something went wrong. Now, nowadays, you know, the J.A. Nance's, or whatever the mystery writer, you know they say, well how do you know he took his life, how do you

know somebody didn't steal his Sister's of Assisi hat and kill him on the way out or something? Well I don't know. I just have to accept, because everybody at the time, sort of said, we're not surprised, but saddened that Austin apparently was well liked, but not very energetic and not very you know successful in ventures he took on. He's sort of like, remember the movie of the William Randolph Hearst, well you know, which one, the one where Orson Welles, playing Randolph Hearst and they say, you know, you lost a million dollars last year and he said, so what I can do it for fifty more years and it wouldn't hurt me. Well, maybe that's what Austin Bell sort of hoped. I've got fifty more parcels of land down there to sell, so I can do anything I want so I don't have to be successful. And it's easy to draw parallels with today. The dot com environment, to people listening to this tape might say, "What's a dot com?" Well, we're in an era where, you know, a web site dot com was sort of the beginning of the sort of the electronic information age. And all kinds of people who didn't have the foggiest idea how to run a business had an idea they thought was a worthy business idea and turned out not to be. And just in our era in the 1999, 2000 period, a lot of people made and lost a lot of money, not because they didn't work hard, they worked, very, very hard. And although it were so, Austin somehow came to the conclusion, apparently, that life wasn't worth living. Right while he was in the process of building the Austin Bell Building. It was not complete at the time that he took his life.

Sherry: Tell me a little bit about that building. Do you know anything about that?

Gary Gaffner: Well, quite a bit, but not as much as, I do know an architect that was going to restore it. And I had the feeling at the time, like I really

should go down and try to you know, and then I sort of concluded, well try to what? Give them the history of it? You could put the whole history of what I know about Austin Bell on one bronze plaque or something. But the sort of, but then everything I know is well-written in other local chronicles and you can, and I was very busy at the time and just never got around to it, but they did take the building and restore it for residential suites, now. The building was started before 1889 when Austin died and I think it was started after his father died and probably from resources that were made available maybe to his mother was gone, but it would be his step-mother is what Lucy would have been, maybe indulging in him or something like that. I sort of had the feeling Austin by himself didn't have means. So probably Lucy and, you know, he would be like a half-son, or what, stepson, I guess you'd, he'd be a stepson. And yet he was old enough then in his thirties that she didn't really need to take care him, but she had, ever since he was like two or three years old had been like his mother, so there might have been a very endearing relationship there. It just didn't come out of her womb, but came out of her twin sister's womb, so, it could have been exactly like an adopted son. Maybe they treated him that way. In any event, he got marshaled resources together and started the building and then took his life and I've seen it written that his mother continued on, but I think it was really his wife. He did have a wife, Eva, the remaining mother adoptee or nominee would have been Lucy. I've never heard within the family about her playing, so I would assume that Eva, I think it was Eva Davis was the one that Austin married down in California, another day's research, finished the building off. And then there was a bad period in the 1890's that brought David Denny down and might have been the same thing. It could be, I mean, our family never owned the Austin Bell Building,

so I don't know. I've always known of its presence. Ten or twenty years ago I many, many, many times I've been involved in what's called Historic Seattle Preservation Development Authority since it was founded. And the Austin Bell Building would often come up as one being on the National Register. And I many times thought of taking it on as a project. I'd done several projects like that but just never really pursued it. It was you know, Austin's not George's and so it wasn't like there was a real tie there. I was developing things down between Virginia and Lenore Street that had been part of you know, William's holdings. And did a lot of work down there in a two-block area and just didn't get around to doing it. If you had unending time or unending money, neither of which I had unendingly, didn't get around to doing it. And I'm glad to see that it got done and the building will be preserved for a long time. I've taken a thousand photographs of it over the years figuring one of these days that building is going to be gone, it has that lovely cornice, Austin A. Bell on it. And I've also wanted to do some research into Americus, which was his middle name, and Laura Bell was Laura Keziah (?) Bell and my great grandfather was George Keziah (?) Bell. Now, where did the Keziah come from? Was that an earlier middle name or the maiden name of one of the, like a William Bell's mother or something like that? Don't know. I don't think it's going to be very hard to chase it down and find enough of a connection somewhere. But Americus, I don't know. There might be some early geographer or somebody'll say, "Oh, the Americus movement," or something, if something that ties it to something other than the family. But I've never seen it associated with anything else. Why would William and Sarah at that time in early Seattle, name a son with a middle name Americus. I think he was the second boy. Roland was a Denny, when I was trying to think of

the fellow out north of Windermere. Roland Denny, I believe was maybe the first child born in the area. Or was it David Denny and the Boren girls?

Sherry: Yeah, I think it was Louisa.

Gary Gaffner: Louisa Denny was probably named after Louisa Boren. Was she the first--?

Sherry: I believe she was the, and I don't have my facts in front of me. But she may have been. But I have read that the second child born was a Bell child.

Gary Gaffner: Well, that would have been Austin then. But I think Roland was born here.

Sherry: Maybe it was Roland first.

Gary Gaffner: Well, no wait, no, because, no, that wouldn't be true because at the time, I was doing research on the Denny homes that still existed here. The Roland Denny and the Orian Denny or Orian Denny whichever it was, were, the research was on the family, those who settled here, even if they were half a year old. Roland must have arrived as probably the youngest son of Arthur Denny. And then the Sweetbriar, wasn't it Louisa Boren and she named her daughter Louisa also, didn't she? I think Louisa Boren who was related to them already from Illinois, married David Denny and then they had, I think then Roberta Fry Watt married James Watt was a meat packer, but she was Roberta Denny, I guess. And was she third generation down or was she? Well, it doesn't make a difference,

the whole point is the early, where Americus came from, I don't know. It could have been the name of a book of matches that they had at the time. It just could have been anything. But it's unique enough that it's worthy of pursuing a little bit.

[End of Tape Two, Side One]

Sherry: --before he left him and that was that he was also for a time in the either publishing or printing business?

Gary Gaffner: That was my understanding that he was either you know, the job case is the thing where you set type from the little lead things and made up things. He was either, they would call them usually a printer was the person who set type. Or he was a publisher who owned a firm that would contract to set up type and print books or newspapers or IOOF programs or something like that. Every description I've ever had of Austin has focused on the printing or publishing business and with partners who took, who carried on after his death. And then descriptions often of Austin in glowing terms were by his partners who were in the printing business. And, you know, cynical people nowadays they say, "Oh what person did you ever know that when their partner died, didn't say things they'd never say about him when he was alive because they're not going to have to put up with him anymore." So maybe, how many bad things. Read Bagley's book. How many bad things are ever said in there about anybody. They're all wonderful patriots and their ability to shoot a musket exceeded only by this or that or something like that. You know, including my own ancestors. The closer you got to them, and I really only have three generations. I did have Jessie Elliot who was the next generation back, sister of my great

grandmother. My great grandma died the year I was born. So Jessie I knew for fifteen years and she'd really be the fourth generation back. And spent a lot of time with her. But that's the only direct history you have and only to the degree they didn't embellish it. And I had the feeling that I was lucky in having people who didn't embellish things because nothing they said was that self-congratulatory, you know. They just talked about times were hard and you know, that you would, other people would talk, Museum of History and Industry people talk about Jessie in more glowing terms because she was a painter and there weren't many women painters out here and they ran a whole series on women painters and were restored several that they have in their collection. So they talk about you know, what a sort of a, you know, indomitable lady she was, 'cause she took, some of those trunks that you've seen are steamer trunks which she'd take off around the world on steamers and paint for people. I wouldn't even do that today. I wouldn't want my daughter to do that today. Maybe the world seemed safer to them back then, but to hop on a steam ship. All you've gotta do is run out of fuel and you're gonna sink, out in the ocean and head off and paying your way by painting? You know, brush and some paint and you put it on a canvas and that pays to put ten tons of coal, you know, in the bilge and away you go on a steam ship. But apparently, there was a lot of coal back then. A lot of people who were willing to shovel it and do it, 'cause it does seem like, I mean, even the railroads, you know, how much energy it took to move this million tons of steel across the plains, to bring a cow? By today's standards, I don't understand it, 'cause I wasn't part of that economy. But she wandered all around doing stuff and then she finally settled in the Burke Building, which was where the Federal Office Building is now. She had the whole second floor with baskets

and totem poles and things that were, that you stepped over when coming in there. It was the last totem pole out of Alaska, 1899, and all kinds of things growing up. And all kinds of Indian rugs and things like that. And she sold them, she'd buy them and sell them, buying and sell them hopefully for profit and so, you know, I had a lot of interesting conversations with her and the place she was living was just full of beautiful carved oriental furniture and things. Beautiful, beautiful things you know, all kinds of oriental rugs and when I got married, my wife thought it was all old lady stuff and so we proceeded to you know, sell it off. Actually I was living in for about three years, lived where my grandmother had lived. And she was in a rest home at the time, until she passed away I just lived amongst her things. And some of these things are beautiful things that had been brought back from the Orient and I really, my wife today kicks herself and because we've acquired you know a large, large number of antiques since then but you've been in the business of it. But you know, those things that she thought were you know, I mean my wife was only nineteen when I married her. She had no way to know what was, she'd call them dust catchers, you know, all these dragons and things. Things like this see this dragon type of things, see you have to dust them all. That's a lot of work.

Sherry: We should establish your great grandfather was George Bell and George Bell married—

Gary Gaffner: Eva Hanes. See, not to mixed, Eva Davis from a little town near, Eva Davis married Austin and Eva Hanes married George. And I know that the name Eva Davis came from was a town that's associated today with either wines or cheeses or something, it's a

small little town but it's a, well, can't think of it. So there were two Evas in town.

Sherry: Eva Hanes came—

Gary Gaffner: Eva Hanes' parents came out. He was like a landscaper. My mom always would say, "He's a gardener." Well, then he's a gardener. Well, an early phone book, I think, there's several, this is one of the early phone books here but it's sitting, I keep covering it up so the sun won't get on it, but some of those early phone books, you look in there and it'll have like you know, a name and then a profession that goes after it. And they were Elmira, well, whatever they were, I just know it so well. Hanes something and Elmira Hanes and they came out here and had two daughters, Eva and Jessie and Jessie was the one who did the painting and Eva was her sister. And Eva married George. And the, so that's where the Gaffners and the Bells came together, collided, or whatever. And then George Bell died early enough, you know, way, way, way forty, fifty years before I was even born.

Sherry: And he was trying to bring cattle back in?

Gary Gaffner: Yeah, well, they were in the train, they would come to a little town up near the Canadian U.S. border, that I looked at it on the map and it's just sort of right up north of the Okanogan. And the Canadian Pacific Railroad, apparently they'd get to there and then they'd get on another more rickety train would come down through the sort of the flat lands. See, it sort of got around the Cascades that way. They came, got over, so they were on this side of the Cascades and then they come down this railroad, they come down to a place called Stick Junction, Stuck Junction, either s-t-u-x, like

Stucks, I've seen accounts written, people joke about you get stuck in Stux or something. But the train would go through there down to the coalfields and occasionally come back with coal, one of the early trains, I think the Coleman family ran the Newcastle railroad. And it came down through what recently had been developed the Newcastle golf course over down north of Renton. And the little railroads would come in, James Coleman had built that railroad to bring coal down to the waterfront to ship out or feed the boats or something like that. And you could piece together, by as early as 1889 a way to get all the way here from Illinois on a railroad, but then you had to switch. I mean, they'd dump you up in Canada with like three cows or something and then you'd go and wait three days and then you get a coal thing and you get on it or something. I have no, he wasn't carrying a motion picture camera with him. But that was the way they would come. And that railroad dumped over and I heard, gee, I wish I could remember better. It seems to me my grandmother said he was stuck in the toppled up car for three days. You know, they knew he was there and trying to get him out, but the cows and he and some other belongings and things were in there and they got him out and he was crumpled over. And so he was you know, permanently deformed and unable to do hard work for the next six months or so. And then passed away as a result of those injuries. But he had been all the way back to Illinois to bring these things out. I mean, can't they get, see I guess you don't, cows don't grow on trees, so you have to have a little calf or something. But why wouldn't they bring calves out here and drink berry juice for a few years and you know, you could bring ten calves in the room it takes to bring one cow, but I guess they needed, you know, I mean, children needed milk and things. And so, somehow the economics one can only speculate at. But in this

case it cost him his life and that was too bad. And yet, you know, everything else would be different in life if any one of those people had lived. Maybe we'd have been way better off or worse off in some, you know, some, you know, way in which financial was not really not a very important element. Because William had way too much for any one family anyway. He didn't live long enough to either liquidate it and do benevolent things like the Coleman family did. I mean, the Coleman family gave away huge amounts, you remember you and I talked about that. But Bell didn't have enough time because his brain departed before physically he and whether he died of dementia or some physical reason, I've never just you know, died of feeble minded water on the brain or something. It's always been recorded as being something to do with the mental state. Where in fact all kinds of people reside for years in hospital with feeble minds but active bodies, so I assume see he would have been eighty-nine minus seventeen, in his early seventies. And people, hearty working people, they live about past their or at least in our family, they've all lived in their seventies, eighties, nineties, or so on, so. You know, you'd like to have known more about George, but his life wasn't to be recorded. It was sort of like John Denver or somebody that you know, you get half of his life and then there, more like Jimmy Dean or something, he's a movie person, that you know, died at like at twenty two. Well everybody feels like they know him but you know, the world never got, to, he never got to even develop into what he might have become a real tyrant and a nuisance and an embarrassment to Hollywood, you know, you just don't know. He got the best of all worlds except you think to live to enjoy it.

Sherry: Now, George left a wife and two children?

Gary Gaffner: His son died the same year. So whether, how, within like three or four months of each other. And a lot of those piles right over there, I have both dates written out but they're just right off the tombstones up in the cemetery. I think George died in November and the son, I think the son had died by the time the father did. But my grandmother is certainly, for all who would listen, let it be known she lost her younger brother and her father in the same year. And that life was really pretty rosy and then, all of a sudden, no men around. And that was, but then her mother did marry again, a fellow named Percy Hoadley, they called him Papa Hoadley I don't know where he came from, my wife's tried, but hasn't found much. He's buried at the same cemetery next to his wife's former husband, not quite as fancy a stone, but you know, Percy L. Hoadley, whoever he was. But he was, you know, here's a young widow and he was a man in town from somewhere and she married him then I think he died before she did. So she had no children by that marriage. And then my aunt on my mother's side had like six husbands and only, I think, two are buried up there. But at least two of them got in the same plot together and the rest are just spewn all over the place, you know. She was one of the most endearing people. My kids got to know her well. They were probably ten when she died. What a wonderful sweet lady, you know, six husbands.

Sherry: And this was Jessie?

Gary Gaffner: No, this was in the Fuller side with my mother. And this was my mother's sister. And she was just Aunt Betty and she played the piano beautifully, played the organ downtown at the early theatres that came in. A wonderful musician and she was alcoholic and I think five of her husbands were alcoholic and she was going to

reform every one of them. And two of them I knew very well and they were both wonderful people. One of them was just as useless, wonderful, tall, dark, handsome, wonderful trumpet player, fine, fine, example to me, but I didn't know he was just absolutely useless, useless, useless. Very handsome and boy did he play a wonderful trumpet. And then the other one was a house painter so he was very *useful*. He painted and painted and painted and he was funny looking and I don't think he could write or read or anything. But she was awfully nice to him and yet she just, it was almost like, I'm put on earth to take care of men until they shoo and away they go. But it was certainly not that she was something wrong in her you know, personality. She just wasted herself on too many people. But they do, they are filling the cemetery up. And she never had any children either. You know, it's, some lines just go down and keep having children and other ones don't. And that's what you see when you line these things all up in the organization charts, some of them just fade out. Or, you know, some lines don't have sons so the names get dispersed and if they're back far enough. I ask my wife often, how many of these paths, you know, with the new digital sources available, how many do we follow. If you just take somebody like Laura Bell, probably, because she did get married and she had some children. There might be fifty of them by now. Do we pursue them all, with equal fervor, you know? I don't have an answer to that. Well, and they could be pretty easy because they all would emanate out of the Napa Valley and they're pretty good recording. Napa has wonderful, gee, I got a web site from Napa that looks like some lady is full time maintaining this web site on just the pioneers of Napa Valley and boy, what a wonderful resource. She won't even take donations, that's just her life. And

beautiful titles and things on it and I've found all kinds of other counties that have the same and some that don't.

Sherry: Now, tell me about, so your grandmother, though, tell me about what was her full name? And tell me about her.

Gary Gaffner: My grandmother on the Bell side? Yeah. Reba (?) Bell she was born and Reba Gaffner after she was married. Only one husband was Charles Gaffner.

Sherry: But so, her dad dies when she's five?

Gary Gaffner: Four or five something like that.

Sherry: And she lives with her mother. It sounds like you did get to talk to her some, tell me a little bit about what she thought her childhood was like.

Gary Gaffner: Oh, Reba I knew very, very well. I mean up until, I was even married. My wife said she never really went into the nursing home, but I spent a lot of time with Reba and, because we had an apartment called the Hanes Apartments over on Capitol Hill. And after her husband had died she lived up there and then we built another one called the Charles Apartments, which for her husband was Charles. But I'd go over and I'd just stay like I'd go over in summer time and stay in the Hanes Apartments and shovel coal into the furnace and fix things and you know, do all kinds of things around. She needed maintenance going and so, and do things but she was she lived until oh, way up in the sixties somewhere. I was in my thirties when she died. But see it was her aunt, one

generation back, that was the lady I said was a painter. See there's the Hanes family and the Bell family. And the Hanes had Jessie and Eva. And Eva married George Bell and Jessie married somebody Elliot. My wife says it's W.I. Elliot. She said she picked it up somewhere off a, I've asked and asked and asked. And my mom said, "Oh, it's pretty clear." She married some guy named Elliot to beat out her best friend wanted to marry Elliot. So she married him to settle a debt or something like that. I said, "How did you know that? Do you really know that? Should that become the world's history, or something?" I said, "What was his first name?" And Mom said, "Well, I don't know." See my mom knew that she was back in that generation, at least the story was that Jessie married to settle a debt and then divorced the guy shortly afterwards and he was never around, no history but my wife said it was W.I. Elliot. And Eva was her sister and so then Jessie and Eva had to raise my grandmother. And it was an all feminine undertaking but they weren't not well taken care of. I mean, Eva had good resources available to her. Too much, really, and they used to say they spoiled my grandmother but my grandmother was nice, if she was spoiled she was a wonderful disposition. She had trouble, she had only good memories of, you know, both you know Grandpa Bell, was William Bell who died when she was like five or something like that. Well, how many things does a grandfather do to a five-year-old girl that would make her unhappy, you know? They just always you know, happy and bouncing on their knee and things. So she remembered, but I have discount any memories of a five year old, but she's the one who sort of reported that her dad was blunt, as I'd said earlier. It's just one lady's opinion, but it's the only lady I have. She's the only one that's around that grew up with her dad. But then her dad died just two years later, so she was

only like seven, so was he blunt because her mother said that her dad had been blunt? Or because she knew or it was written somewhere. You know, those are things don't know and it's too late to find out. If you long, long gone, but I think they were, she was always very proud of the Bell connection. My dad didn't seem to care a hoot. Just wasn't into that kind of thing. But she was very proud of that, she never went out of the way to, you know, bore people with it, but she always, you know, wanted me to go down to the Pioneer Association and you know, sort of establish credentials and things, and you know, let them know. She was getting older and I was living with her over there at the time and so she was in a two generations ago period in her life and was pleased, as I think most any family would be either pleased with sort of the recognition that their family had been founders. It that's about, my feeling is that's about as far as it goes in terms of establishing anything wonderful about the genetic makeup of the ensuing generations. If anything, we're all born with whatever genes we have, but if your family has too much in the way of resources so you never learn to persevere and get yourself educated and take a hard course of studies and get out and take risks and do things and you know, really work hard because, you know the bank account already got plenty in it, then I certainly seen a lot of people who withered under that kind of situation. More often than not. But it doesn't change their genetic make up if they really tried to make something useful out of their life then that was, you know, some were blessed with more. But I never had the feeling like the Bells had any really great genetic connection to libraries of the Western world, or anything. They were just, and had they dithered around down in Portland, they wouldn't have even had, you know, the well-recorded history. You just stay down there another year, probably the Borens and the

Denny and the Callahans or somebody, would have, or whoever the captain got on the board. Well, no it must have been better organized than that, because they were coming up. They knew where they were going. They dumped David and I think one of the low boys didn't they out there and went back down to get other provisions, and things. Actually they had a plan and it was a plan that you know, some would say was ill hatched, I mean, to drop these mothers with little girls and things amongst the natives out there might have seemed very appropriate at the time but nowadays it would seem like it was, ill hatched but it was ill hatched, what would you do? You just have, you know, intrepid trapper men you know, going around and settling and then building it up and then to bring their Mercer girls out to you know, make their families or something like that. The wives went along, more power to them, it was a great you know, it's a great inspiration to women that they're you know, that the earlier women played equal or tougher roles often, they just didn't chop all the trees down. But I'll bet that probably Sarah Bell could chop a tree down. I'm not so sure about her sister, 'cause she was living in a more comfortable environment back there. But you know darned well know she could milk a cow and you know that somehow and would do a lot things. Yeah, everything else, you know, it probably it helps to record things I remember. The thing that I always, is it better to record the most the most fringe memory things than a generation from now there'll be nothing to do, so you know, the best you can do is to try to piece different things together, but unfortunately where death took the people it was really my grandmother and great grand aunt that tied me on that side. And my grandfather on the Fuller side, my grandfather on the Fuller side was out here selling encyclopedias his middle name was Putnam, the same as mine is. He decided

that he was going to marry a Putnam girl, so he's going to go all the way to New England, where there's all kinds of Putnams back there and find himself a Putnam bride. And he happened to stop somewhere on the way and met his future wife and that was the end of his pursuit, and things. But you know, I mean, well written up in his things and my mom and aunt certainly knew the whole story, but of course he would tell the story. He was a publisher, you know, he wanted to tell the world about you know, sort of how life doesn't follow a particularly well planned pattern. So, when these people decide to come up from Portland and land in a place that they had maybe heard roughly about, that's about as far as the planning went t I guess back then. And the fact that, no wonder other people, it wasn't like the whole, weren't some of them already settling down in Maple Valley and up the upper Duwamish and things that were even before 1851, weren't they?

Sherry: Yeah, although they didn't stay, they left here and then come back, so I think they were, there was definitely people around ---

Gary Gaffner: People coming in, white people going and trying their looking, but then the settlement, really put down roots and really decided you know, to create a town. They couldn't have through much beyond the town. I mean, I grew up amongst it, way down in the Alki playfield. Every year we would re-enact the landing of the boat. I'll bet not one out of five people in my grade school class knew I was related to one of those people. We just didn't talk about it. But I would play Princess Angeline one time and you know, the captain of the boat another time, and you know, you'd re-enact it on the old thing and, you know, Mr. Doxy (?) would come out and do the Russian, you know, what are the things, the legs. Not the polka,

whatever the Russian did where they squat down and do. And I was thinking, just 'cause we had a guy in Alki who could do it. What does that have to do with the history of Alki, but he'd do it every year, right along with Sweetbriar, and we played out the Sweetbriar bride thing. We'd have the David and Louisa dressed up, you know, eight years old, and the little crepe paper tuxedos, I mean we played that game out all the time because that was the lore of the little neighborhood you lived in. I remember when General MacArthur was deposed by Harry Truman and on his way back, he came to Alki, we were putting this time capsule and he was coming back to the United States. Somebody had implored upon him to come out to Alki on his way back to go to Congress and speak. And he was there and he dedicated this time capsule for a hundred years and ought to be opened right there at the monument at Alki. And I think maybe I told you when we met before that I reached up and touched his hat. And for about five years, I just, my fingers would sizzle with that, I touched General MacArthur's hat. See, I grew up knowing General MacArthur was just as big a hero as the world could produce, you know. I was between five and ten years old, he was conquering other countries and conducting naval battles and you know, I guess he was in the Army but he was commander of all the forces out in the Pacific and of course, all the pictures you see today with him and his corn cob pipe and stuff and grand pronouncements and stuff that was the living stuff of which boys of that time would almost fancy themselves being a general and sometimes now, why were we reenacting the Sweetbriar bride, we should be reenacting the whole MacArthur lands on the Philippines or returns.

Sherry: But think about here you are, out there reenacting it and you have a grandmother and a great, great aunt, I guess, who remember--

Gary Gaffner: Remember the people, yeah.

Sherry: -- remember Angeline, remember the Indian people who were there. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

Gary Gaffner: I always felt it. I would go home and I'd call Deddy (?) is what we called Jessie, I'd call her up and tell her, you know, we reenacted the landing at Alki. But her response would be, "Oh, that's nice," you know. Because she was really getting along in years. She happened to live a long time is how I got to have experiences with her. But see my grandmother would have been you know, sixty-ish or so when I was born and this was one generation more. So she was probably eighty to ninety-five, or something like that. But boy, she walked right up until, she'd take the bus to come out and see us. She got around. Her, you establish feelings about people. Here's a lady in her young life that cast out on her own and you know, traveled all the world and did all the things I told you about before. And then when they're eighty, they're still going strong. I mean, no man tells them what to pick, or she had a man in her life for such a short time. She was a woman of her own you know, of her own desires. Today, I'm going to go downtown to shop, you go down and shop, a strong, strong woman. And it gave you a feeling, you know, I was fortunate, women can be very, very strong. Whereas my Aunt Betty's trumpet playing husband was so weak. So you sort of associate this little white haired lady with this glamorous, glorious trumpet playing useless individual and you come to sort of conclusions about people. And, if anything we had

the strong women in the family and the men didn't last that long, you know, unfortunate things. So, still, I would feel sort of a pride that they were reenacting the arrival of my family but I never really wanted to you know, jump up on the stage and say, "Hey, you know, that was my grandfather." You know, it's sort of a, where do you learn modesty? I don't know where you learn it. I didn't learn it from that Uncle Sid that played his trumpet. Who teaches you keep your mouth shut about those things. I think in a way, Dad would say, you know, "There can only be a blessing for you." I think he more directly felt the financial benefit and he'd more feel like that's a blessing to you. People don't really enjoy others having more wealth than they have and particularly if you didn't earn it yourself. And therefore, don't go around trumpeting it. So I didn't know, where do you not trumpet? Well, you don't trumpet it anywhere and yet you could have been the descendant of any of those people and based on national economies and the depressions and things like that. I mean, look at David Denny's, certainly young and energetic and able and you know, lost everything, as far as I know, didn't he? Everything? Did he go bankrupt? It all went away and that's fine if you're twenty and it happens at thirty you can build it up again at forty. The younger you are. He had more advantage than Arthur had because he had more years on his time. But you know, every account of David is that he was a fine individual, extremely fine, and the financial's no measure of David Denny---

[End Tape Two, Side Two]