

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

American Bicentennial

Personal Experience

O.H. 1343

DONALD STEVEN BROWN

Interviewed

by

Joseph Paul Alessi

on

October 11, 1990

DONALD STEVEN BROWN

Donald Steven Brown was born on March 26, 1946 in Sharon Center, Ohio, the son of Donald and Elizabeth Clara. Mr. Brown attended Highland High School in Medina County, and graduated in 1966. he was drafted into the United States Marine Corps in January of 1966. While in the Marine Corps, Mr. Brown was an active participant in the Vietnam Conflict. Mr. Brown was honorably dishcarged in January of 1968.

After several years of self employment, Mr. Brown currently is employed with Jim Ross Construction, where he is involved in home construction. In addition to his employment, Mr. Brown is the Assistant Chief of the Berlin Center Volunteer Fire Department. Mr. Brown is also an active participant in many organizations. These groups include the National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Mr. Brown resides at 15995 Shenandoah Drive in Berlin Center, Ohio with his wife Shirley Ann. He married Shirley Ann on May 3, 1969. Mr. Brown has no children. Mr. Brown is still active enjoying many of his hobbies such as shooting black powder muzzles loading weapons, studying history, and participating in primitive camping.

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INTERVIEWEE: DONALD STEVEN BROWN

INTERVIEWER: Joseph Paul Alessi

SUBJECT: Mahoning Valley Colonial Brigade, Bicentennial
Events, research

DATE: October 11, 1990

A: This is an interview with Donald Steven Brown for the Youngstown State Univeristy Oral History Program, on the American Bicentennial, by Joseph Paul Alessi, at 15995 Shenandoah Drive in Berlin Center, Ohio, on October 11, 1990, at 8:05 p.m.

How are you doing Mr. Brown?

B: Oh, alright. You can call me Don.

A: Okay. Before we get started on the subject of the Bicentennial and the Mahoning Valley Colonial Brigade, I would just like to get some background information about you first if that is okay?

B: Alright.

A: First of all, when and where were you born?

B: Well, I was born in Wadsworth City Hospital on March 26, 1946.

A: So, how old would that make you?

- B: I am forty-four.
- A: You had to think about it huh? What were your interests as a child when you were growing up? Sports? Reading?
- B: Not to much. I did a lot of reading. I was interested in hunting and farming. My dad was a farmer and I always wanted to keep on farming but it was too expensive. We had to sell the farm and we really couldn't carry on the family farming.
- A: When you said that you liked to read, what type of literature did you like to read?
- B: Just about anything. Anything that wasn't required. I didn't like reading anything that had to do with school, but I was always interested in history and historical fiction type of work. I wasn't interested in World History but American History and the American Government was a common thing that I was interested in.
- A: Can you think of any works that stand out in your mind that you might say were in your top ten?
- B: I really can't think of any at the moment, but a long time ago several of the Civil War books I particularly read a lot of and during that period. Also, books on World War II. Some sports books, but I really enjoy reading about anything.
- A: Now you mentioned your father and the family farm, could you tell me a little bit about your parents? Your mother and your father?
- B: Perhaps one of the reasons I was so interested in history was that I am a descendant of Captain Lyle, who fought in the American Revolution in New Jersey. He was captured by the British and was taken to Quebec for three years and five months. Also, a descendant of the McCormicks, who invented the McCormick Reaper. I had always known that I had Scottish blood in me but I really didn't know what clan it was from until recently when a relative did the study of genealogy. I think that that is why I was so interested in both farming and history. Maybe it is just running in the blood.

My dad never knew his father. He was raised by his mother and at the age of seven he started working on his cousin Herman Crane's farm. He worked that farm up until...From seven years old up until the time that Mr. Crane sold that farm in probably 1968. So, he spent just about his whole life working on that farm and as a kid that is what I did when I wasn't in school. I worked on the farm. I enjoyed it. It wasn't really work

it was something I enjoyed. Basically, my father had been a farmer all of his life until Mr. Crane sold the farm and then he was a greens keeper on a golf course. I have two sisters and each of them have a couple of kids. That is really all that is to my family history.

A: What did you like about farming?

B: I guess being outside mostly. I like that. I liked driving the tractor. We had a maple sugar camp and one of my favorite times of the year was when the sap was running, and going out to gather sap and start getting close to the sugar bush and smell that sap boiling into sweet maple syrup and getting in there and getting a little cup of hot syrup and drinking that maple syrup. It was so sweet. Now it is sickening. But at the time you just couldn't beat it. And that was one of my favorite things, being outside in the spring of the year. I also enjoyed the harvest, and going to other neighboring farms we used to get together and they would harvest this farm, and go to the next farm and have farmer lunches. It was something that I liked. Just the outdoor type of thing.

A: What types of employment have you engaged in through your career?

B: Basically, when I got out of high school I started to do carpentry work, and outside of the two years I got drafted into the Marines Corp. that is what I have been doing all of my life. I am also a volunteer Fireman. I have been in the volunteer Fire Department since 1978. I am the Assistant Chief right now. It is time consuming and also something that I like. I like the idea of helping people. When we do a good job and save someone's house it makes you feel pretty good. Also, at the Fire Department I am an Emergency Medical Technician. So, we help people out that way too and when you can help somebody it always gives you a good feeling. Out here in the rural area you pretty much depend on volunteer services.

A: Now you said that you spent two years in the Marine Corp., can you tell me a little bit about that?

B: Basically, I got drafted. I went up to Cleveland and they read off the list of names to go in the Marine Corp and it was rather shocking. I had no idea that I was going into the Marine Corp and the next thing that I knew I was standing in the line at a Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego, and some great big guy was just chewing me out for I don't know what. After that I went through Basic Training, Advanced Infantry Training, and went to Radio School. When I was in Vietnam I was a Forward Observer Radio Operator for the 81mm

Mortars. I was there for fourteen months and came back all in one piece and wouldn't want to go through it again, but I wouldn't trade the experience for the world.

A: Now you said that you "wouldn't trade the experience" when you were there or even when you look back and you look back on it it was probably trying?

B: Not really. The best that I could describe it would be days of boredom followed by minutes of sheer terror followed by more days of boredom. It was a beautiful country. If things would have gone different I think it could have been made into some kind of real resort area. It was just unbelievably beautiful. Parts of it stunk to high heaven and there weren't many sanitary facilities. I feel badly if we lost the war, but I guess that we did but our military was never beat as far as I am concerned. The people back here in the States like the politicians they lost the war.

A: Did this tour in the Marine Corp... Do you feel that it brought you more intuned with history? I mean in your childhood this is what you read about?

B: No, I don't think so not a whole lot. It made me I think...Well, the discipline of course helped and it made me more dependable. I do what has to be done. I might have been a little scatter brained like you, but now I except responsiblities more.

A: What would you say is the reason that you liked history? What was it about history that enhanced you?

B: It is really hard to put a real finger on it. It is just the real hardships that people went through compared to what we do the rendezvous type things we do now, we try to duplicate living years ago but it is just for a weekend or week. The terrible hardships that they went through on a daily basis just boggles my mind. To think of what they had to put up with and things faced in a daily life was just nothing can compare to.

A: Now you say that you rendezvoused, can you let me in on what this is?

B: Basically, it is a group of people who get together and try to live for short periods of time as people did basically before 1840, 1850. We go out and dressed in primitive clothes, shoot muzzel loading weapons, go out in these for a week and you don't have any telephone, no television, no radio, no flashlight just the basics. It kind of gets you in touch with reality as far as the reality is how the people lived back in that period.

- A: Now do you make your own camp equipment?
- B: I made my own buckskin clothes. I made a lot of my equipment. I haven't made any of my tents or anything like that, but I sewed up clothes for myself and for my wife. I made a lot of the articles that we take.
- A: How did you get involved with the rendezvous?
- B: Well, I guess that it was after the Bicentennial era was over. Things sort of died out in that period and just basically the next thing was fur trapping. We just kind of played right into it.
- A: Now, how did you become involved in the Bicentennial and the Mahoning Valley Colonial Brigade?
- B: Well, before I ever heard of the Mahoning Valley Colonial Brigade I had gotten a muzzling rifle and had my sister sew me up a hunting frock. Basically on my own what I thought would be nice to have for the Bicentennial and I think that it was probably early in 1975 I was over where a Civil War group was having a Civil War reenactment and I went over to watch. I was in a Revolutionary outfit and Chuck Pemberton was over there and he got to talking with me and was telling me about this group the Mahoning Valley Colonial Brigade. I told him that I didn't know that it was anything like that and I told him that it sounded pretty good. This lead to that and I ended up going to a couple of meetings and got involved with that group.
- A: After the initial meeting with Mr. Pemberton which was by word of mouth that you heard about the Brigade, how did you actually get inducted? Was there a ceremony or did you sign a sheet or how was it?
- B: I suppose I signed a sheet, but I really can't remember anything formal. I just went to one of their meetings and they were working some drill and as far as how to march together on the field. Well, it is different from a modern day drill and they were doing some marching around and shooting the muzzle loaders, I really can't remember whether that meeting was over the grotto or what the first meeting was. But I know that a lot of the people had the same interest and we started talking about some of the parades and things that they planned on doing and it sounded like a good way to celebrate the Bicentennial.
- A: The Mahoning Valley Colonial Brigade was started by the "Colonel" as he is referred to, Mr. Alessi. What was your first impression about Mr. Alessi?
- B: A little bit strange I guess standing out there in his

uniform with a big old cigar in his mouth like he was king of the world, but I liked him and he definitely showed who was the power behind that group, who was the motivator and I think that we hit it off pretty good to start with and the friendship has endured long after the Mahoning Valley Colonial Brigade, which is nothing but a memory.

A: Now, you said that he was the "motivator," how did he motivate people?

B: He was in charge and he knew what needed to be done and made sure that it was done. There was a lot of bickering and arguing about who was right and who was wrong, but we knew that he was the fellow in charge. It didn't take long to realize if he said something...I think that he did the research and knew what was going on and most people went there and what they thought what was right and I don't think that they did much research and Joe, the "Colonel," did his. I think that he inspired a lot of us to a little bit of research and find out and make sure what we were talking about instead of what we figured probably was.

A: Now, you said that there was a lot of bickering do you recall the bickering at all?

B: Oh, just different people having different ideas and everybody thought that they were right and nobody wanted to admit that they were wrong. It was just like any organization that has bickering. The people were so enthused about this that they were enthused about the differences too I guess. When it came time to perform everybody got along pretty good, but in between there was some arguments and disagreements.

A: Do you think that the Brigade could have been better with another commander?

B: No, I don't think so. As big as it was you might have been able to have a smaller group that could have been better, but as large as the group was I don't think that it could have been. I can't think of anybody off hand that could have done a better job. There might be somebody some place.

A: Do you recall how the Brigade was organized?

B: Really, it was pretty much organized before I go into it. I heard how it was organized but supposedly Joe and Butch were walking down the trapping stream and got to talking about the Bicentennial and they thought that they should organize a group and get some uniforms and see if we could form a military group. That is what I heard. I don't know if it is true. That is what the

story is over a couple bottles of booze and so forth.

A: Now as far as the initiation, you know the initial meeting with Mr. Moore and Mr. Alessi, how is the actual Brigade organized as far as a military organization?

B: How it was really organized as far as what they did to organize it I don't know it was pretty well organized before I got into it, but the pace was set along military lines and had a commander, which was the "Colonel." We had a couple of lieutenants. We had a couple of sergeants and corporals. We also had an organizational staff, which was the president, vice-president, treasurer. There was a military performance, chain of command, and then there was the business side of the organization.

A: Were the commanders of the Brigade...Did they have the dual rule of being president and vice-president or were those separate individuals?

B: If I remember they were separate individuals. At first it might have been the same but I know that we had elections and a couple of elections we had a different president and vice-president and commander and several other.

A: Now, Mr. Alessi said that he organized the Brigade into companies and that there were several companies: The Trumbull County Militia, The Mahoning County Militia, The Green Mountain Boys, The First Maryland Company; can you recall any of these?

B: Yes, I can remember all of them but when you got to a parade there generally wasn't enough to have four different companies so they were put into one company and it was divided into groups like that. Basically we were all one unit with people who went by different names.

A: Do you know why it was organized like that?

B: I suppose to spread power around so that more people could feel that they were big shots and belonged. I guess that there were different people who wanted to represent different heritage. There were some that represent the Green Mountain Boys and some were from the Maryland unit and some just from the Counties that weren't in existence during the Revolution but actually wanted to represent so that is what they did. I think that we also had an artillery unit in there that I would like to mention.

A: Can you think of any other units that you had besides

that?

B: No. I really can't think of any others. It has been a long time ago that we are talking...Fourteen years ago?

A: Can you recall how many members, as far as men, that did the actual marching and reenacting unit was?

B: Probably around thirty and most everybody showed up, but it could vary a little bit from there. Particularly the weekend parades we generally had close to thirty people there but on the weeknight we may not get that many.

A: So, you guys did parading throughout the week?

B: Yes, particularly in 1975 and 1976. Sometimes we would have two or three parades a week. I would have one Thursday night, one Friday night, and Saturday or Sunday. We were pretty much in demand. Everybody wanted something to do with the Bicentennial celebration.

A: Did this become more like a job than entertainment?

B: Not really, because it was going to for a couple of years thing and everybody had a good time. You weren't forced to go. I mean if you had something else to do that night you didn't go but we went and had a good time. Sorta like going out and bowling. If you are a good bowler you can bowl three or four nights a week.

A: Can you recall of any other activities that you engaged in besides parades?

B: Oh, sure. We had some battle reenactments. We went around to schools and talked to the kids. We had some activities for our own people. I particularly remember the awards and trophies we won. I remember but I can't remember the year that it was. Maybe it was January of 1975 or something like that. We had a winter camp out and it got down to about...It was pretty cold probably around twelve degrees or whatever. It so cold that my whiskey froze in the jug and we came home and we went down I think Saturday morning and spent Saturday night there and came home late Sunday. We felt really, really tough. We went out and camped in this cold weather and I got home and read the paper about the Boys Scouts that did the same thing but they didn't have any liquor to keep them warm though. Shot the hell out of my ego!

A: Can you recall any attendance problems with the Brigade?

B: Well, later on. I think that there was a real good attendance during 1975 and up through probably the Fourth

of July of 1976 and then it was over with as far as a lot of people were concerned. They started losing interest and plus a couple people had had some problems, I think got angry and didn't participate that much. But through 1975 and the summer of 1976 we had a pretty good participation for a volunteer unit.

A: When you said...Going back a little bit, you said that Mr. Alessi did most of the research and that he had inspired the Brigade members to do research.

B: I think that he did most of the research and there would be a few people that didn't believe him and they would do the research to try and prove him wrong, but it didn't very often happen.

A: How much research did you do on your own?

B: Well, quite a bit. I started looking and reading lists of historical fiction and into more historical works so we got several books from there that were pretty dry reading but had a lot of good and useful information in it. I would primarily...If there was something in particular that I wanted to know I would try to find it and read all of the books initially cover to cover. Some of them I did but I learned a lot of things. I think one of the biggest things...This doesn't necessarily concern the Mahoning Valley Colonial Brigade but the whole thing as far as the Bicentennial, when it first started I think in 1972 or something like that to reenact Lexington and Concord. All of these young kids were lined up marching and they all had identical white shirts, identical knee breeches and identical tri-corn hats and as time went on people started to do more research and got there outfits more authentic. All of the minutemen didn't dress alike. They weren't a formal military unit.

One thing that I remember and always sticks out in my mind is during the Bicentennial they had a reenactment of Ticonderoga. All of these people came to watch this battle of Fort Ticonderoga. There were thousands of people lined up. There was this Revolutionary military group took Fort Ticonderoga. They took the Fort without a shot just like it was really done and it is over with. All of the people were waiting for this big battle. They almost had a riot. The troops had to fire weapons and do some stuff just to entertain the people because the people didn't realize...They didn't know enough about history to realize that there was never a shot fired at Fort Ticonderoga. You see the whole military group from that area advanced from what I said earlier, from what they thought people did to what they really did and wore and what they really did and there was quite a bit of difference.

- A: Do you think that this amount of research enhanced your love for history?
- B: Yes, and it made me realize that you can't always believe what they taught you in school in the history books. I know in school in American History they taught us about this guy Benedict Arnold, who was the traitor of his country, but when you read the true historical works you found out that he is really probably one of the best military technicians that we had and he just became so exasperated with the government that we had here and not knowing what was going on that he just thought that we had no chance at all in winning the war and just basically decided that he wasn't going to do what they wanted. As far as I am concerned he is a real hero that had one bad moment compared to what they teach you in school. They just teach you that he was the first traitor or something like that.
- A: Can you recall any other activities that the Brigade did, not as a Brigade unit for example, fighting and marching; but more less as a social group?
- B: We had a couple of St. Patrick's Day parties that were a lot of fun. We had several different social gatherings. St. Patrick's Day we got some band to play old time type of music and sometimes we just had a square dance. I know that we had a least two St. Patrick's Day parties and a couple of Christmas parties where we all went dressed in Colonial outfits. Some of the people went to the big Fourth of July ball down in Youngstown. That was limited to a few of the people that had the regimental uniforms which I didn't have. I guess that was great, but I don't really know that much about it because I didn't get to go to that.
- A: Because you did these other activities did you feel the Brigade was more than just a show group? Did you guys actually feel like a bonding and closeness?
- B: Oh, yes. A lot of the people did. It was more like a club I think. And a forming unit. It was a group of people that had the same interests and pursued them together. Much like any fraternal organization I guess.
- A: During the Brigade's existance the unit was involved with many different types of activities, if I name a few of these maybe you can help me or explain what they were and how the Brigade was involved in them if you can recall them. Can you recall the reenactment at Fort L'Boeuf?
- B: No, I wasn't at that reenactment. That was just about the time that I got in maybe a couple weeks before or

after I got in the Brigade.

A: How about the reenactment at Fort Ligioner?

B: Yes, I do remember that. Basically, it was a reconstructed Fort over there and they had this big old field across the street from it and had different military groups from all over area that got together for one big battle reenactment. We also, got pretty much free run of the Fort for the two days that we were there. It was primarily a money-maker I think at Fort Ligioner. We attracted a lot of people in there and the town itself made the most of it by having all kinds of other things going on so people could spend their money.

A: When you were in the reenactments were they dangerous?

B: No, I mean accidents could happen but I really can't recall any serious injuries. As figuring as much explosives as we were working with but we had pretty high standards for safety particularly for reenactments. So, that nobody would ram a lead ball down the barrel. The only accident that I can ever remember happening was over at the Canfield Fair when a photographer wanted to take pictures of us firing and it was dark and one man, whose name will remain anonymous, wanted to make a good loud bang and rammed the powder and paper down into his barrel and forgot to take his ram rod out, shot his ram rod in the air and it came down and hit some lady in the arm. There was no serious injury involved but it was rather embarrassing.

A: During these reenactments I am sure that the participants were captivated. I mean that they were really into it, did they ever get overly excited over fixed bayonets and actually come within range or how was a reenactment regulated?

B: They were pretty well regulated as far as one group on one side and the other group on the other side and marching and shooting and finally we had it planned out ahead which group was going to turn tail and run. There were a couple of people that were pretty well skilled at doing simulated bayonet or knife fighting. These two people worked together quite a bit and they did some pretty close fighting which was well choreographed and nobody got hurt, but they sure did make it look real. The biggest problem that we had is the guys in the regimental fancy uniforms never wanted to be the casualties fall down on the ground. Those of us that had more of the hunting flock and not real fancy uniforms had to be the ones that took the casualties.

A: How did you feel about that?

- B: Oh, if I had about several hundred dollars invested in my uniform I probably wouldn't have wanted to do that either. Mine you could put in the washing machine and wash and it didn't matter.
- A: How much did an individual invest in a regimental uniform and the one such as yours?
- B: Well, I think you could have \$500, \$600, or \$700 in an officers regimental particularly British unifrom. I probably had \$50 or \$60 in mine.
- A: Could you just go buy the uniform or did you make these too?
- B: No, later on you could, but when I made mine I got the pattern material from Dixie Gun Works, I believe. That is where I had gotten the material and my sister sewed it up on the sewing machine later and we found out about hand stitching and everything through the Brigade of the American Revolution, but this time it was basically to find patterns and we would buy patterns and sew it up.
- A: Who got you on to these patterns and why?
- B: I think that I got mine from Dixie Gun Works. I had my outfit made before I ever got into the Mahoning Valley Colonial Brigade. Now there are patterns available all over from different suppliers, but at the time it was pretty hard to find.
- A: When you first started into it Mr. Alessi or the Colonel, mentioned that you had workshops. Like a meeting would be fifteen or twenty minutes and then you would get into an assmebly line and make carriage boxes or...
- B: Oh, there was a little bit of that but not to much. We usually started out with something like that but it just turned into bull sessions. I can't really remember much about anything really being accomplished in a work section.
- A: During those work sessions you said that they turned out to be a bull session, what did you guys discuss things at work or of that period?
- B: Anything from that period to who was going to win the superbowl or whatever. Just whatever guys do whenever they start talking.
- A: Just a good rap session huh. You mentioned the BAR, what is it?

- B: The Brigade of the American Revolution was a very sophisticated, very authentic nationwide group of reenactors. They were well paid when they went anywhere. They put on a heck of a performance. Every piece had to be documented. You couldn't just say, "Well, they had to have a powder horn so they made a powder horn." You had to document what size your powder horns were and if there was any engraving around it. The materials had to be the authentic materials. If it was a real coat it had to be 100% wool and it had to have so many threads per inch just like the uniforms did in that day. Everything had to be hand sewen. Just close to coming out of the pages of a history book.
- A: Mr. Alessi said that you guys had an encounter with a Major Peeper, a British officer, who was your first encounter with the BAR and a Mr. Clyde Pense, I believe. What were your reactions to those individuals?
- B: Mr. Peeper's looked like he walked out of the British Army from the 1700's. I swear that man could walk across the mud puddle and not get his shoes wet. His complexion was just perfect, smooth almost. It is real difficult to explain. He looked picture book perfect. Mr. Pense was sort of a big somewhat heavy guy that probably bigger than anyone who was in the American Revolution. He was a tall and stocky man. Peeper's I think was a teacher by profession but he was very good. You believed him and when you were talking with him you thought that you were talking to a British officer. You would automatically respect him. Pense was just an ordinary guy. He didn't leave an impression on me I don't think that Peeper's did.
- A: According to Mr. Alessi, Peeper's kind of came out playing the role of a British officer...
- B: Absolutely, it was superb. He made such an impression on everybody I think he met. You were talking to a British officer from the 64th regimen. His troops were no different from the rest of us but he was just difficult to describe. Like we were looking at somebody who was back from history and who came from a time machine or something.
- A: Did that arrogance hinder the enviroment of the Brigade and the BAR?
- B: I don't think so. I think the main thing that hindered us in the BAR was people wanted to portray a militia unit, but it was difficult to document in history outfits and you know equipment. It is kind of funny, you know, I still, on occasions of historical societies and so forth, talk about living history as we call it

now. And one of the questions that I ask the people is, "If you were alive back during the time of the Revolution would you be a loyalists or a rebel?" And most everybody says that they would be a rebel. because they are red blooded American. But if you really think about it the same pride and heritage in our country makes us proud of America would have made us just as proud as our British heritage and we would have nothing to do with them rebels. So I think that just about everybody that has pride in their country and pride in their history makes them all participate in things like this is very proud of their country and of their heritage and would have not let them been part of the rebels that tried to overthrow the fine British heritage or rights of Englishmen.

A: Now back to some of these events, can you recall the dedication ceremony at Youngs Memorial by the Springs Street Brigade?

B: No.

A: How about Greenfield Village?

B: Yes, the first time that we went up we were just awed by that whole thing. There was quite a gathering of troops. The battle reenactment was nice. The thing that I remember most about it was the grand ball that they gave for us the night after the reenactment. I think that we had a reenactment for Saturday and Sunday and Saturday night we went into some ballroom in Greenfield Village and it was just spectacular. Everybody dressed in the finest that they had. They had a band there and we were sort of new at it so we just sat like wallflowers with our mouths opened. That and the fact that on Sunday morning until the place opened we had free reign of the Henry Ford's Museum. There were probably fifty of us in there at the time going through it. They treated us real good both times that we went up there.

A: Now when you were in the Brigade what rank did you hold?

B: Sergeant I think was the highest I got.

A: How did you get there?

B: Nobody else wanted it I guess. Just because I was pretty active in it probably. I believe that we had elections for that or maybe Joe appointed I don't really remember. But I know that when we more or less started to wind down I had the rank of sergeant.

A: Were there other awards that you could win during the Brigade?

B: There were participation medals for making so many battle reenactments just like military. Also some of the activities that we had for our own group. We had rifle matches and so forth and you could get a medal for that. Also participation...We made some pretty good money a couple years doing this and they would buy things. One, I believe, was cast iron pots and to how many activities you made determined the size cast iron pot you got. A few other things like that. More or less we were a non-profit organization so we couldn't show a profit. What we did with the money that we made was buy things to make our group better and the more that participated the better piece of equipment that you get. One year I believe we got pewter plates so everybody had a pewter plate so when they went to places they would have authentic flatware plates to eat on.

A: When you were at the reenactments or when you were doing a camping of some sort who cooked and what did you eat?

B: Well, we had one fellow by the name of Chuck Port, who was probably our primary cook and really enjoyed it. I do a lot of cooking. That is one of the things I like best about going camping is the cooking. Some of the people now refer to me as the "Gallopig Gourmet." But Chuck Port did most of the cooking for the whole group.

That same winter incampment mentioned earlier a real cold day in January the Sarver clan was cooking cornish hens roasting over a fire and we were pretty cold while they were getting cooked. We finally got them done and took them off of the spit and handed them around. I think that there were four or five Sarver's there and one of them opens up his bird and said, " Oh, I didn't know that you put a potato in here to cook with the stuffing." And what it was it wasn't a potato the gibbllets were wrapped in wax paper were never taken out of the paper and they had these roasted cornish hens with the wax paper full of gibbllets cooked in the middle of it.

A: Did these type of things happen a lot?

B: Oh, yes. We had some crazy people. We had some good times. Just crazyness.

A: Now you mentioned back again about the awards, what did they mean to you?

B: Well, pride you put them on your uniform and makes it look impressive. I got a couple of participation medals. I was one of the better shots in the Brigade so I got a couple for shooting too. I still have them. I still

have them on my gun case whenever I go to rendezvous muzzle load and shoot I hang them from the gun case that I made.

A: Back to when the members of the Brigade...How did they take this? I mean was this just, "Eh, we got a metal." Or was it, "Wow, we really did something. We accomplished something?"

B: Oh, you have a group of people and different people take it different ways. I think that most people felt pretty good that they had them. A couple were proud of them. It was something that everybody had. I am sure that they will be handed down as heirlooms to most people. Some people may have thrown them in a junk drawer and never looked at them anymore, but I think that most people...You have them, you looked at them, it reminds you that, "Oh, I remember this. I remember that."

A: We had discussed a little bit about that these would bring back a little bit of your memories and you said that every time that you meet Howard Sarver he starts talking about getting back the Brigade, what do you think about that?

B: Oh, it was a good thing on its time, but you will never get the participation again. Howard Sarver is one character and I will see him every once in awhile at a rifle shoot...And he still thinks that the Brigade will pick up again. It served its purpose and its time is over with and it just wouldn't work I don't think.

A: What was its purpose?

B: Its purpose was to celebrate the Bicentennial that is what its purpose was and every little town wanted to have a sign saying that they were a Bicentennial community and to do that you had to have some sort of celebration thing and so everybody was having parades and we found people that got in there and made the outfits and found out that there would be parades. We would get invited and we didn't very often come away with out first or second place.

A: Were you really that good? I mean when the people saw you...

B: Oh, we weren't that good but we were different and we had to do with the Bicentennial so we just impressed people. We were that good but mostly we were the only group in town primarily I think.

A: When you were at these parades how did you feel as you were marching through the parades?

B: We had a couple musicians that were absolutely fantastic. I can't even remember their names. Our drummer was George Weadon. Who was the fifer?

A: Was it Jack McClellon.

B: They were the best musicians. They made us special because it was so good. George was a drummer in the Navy band for years and our fifer played at the shows in Williamsburg so he knew how to play a fifer. We got first place trophies because they were a couple of terrific musicians and I would give anything to have a tape and listen to that again.

A: Did you ever do anything unique at a parade or anything? I mean most people marched and played but did you ever do anything unique?

B: Nothing particularly unique that I can remember. One time I took my dog in the parade with me. We tied white and blue ribbons around her neck and she marched in the parade with us.

(SECOND SIDE OF TAPE IS INAUDIBLE.)

END OF INTERVIEW