



Bud Ossey Oral History Interviews, November 4, 2014

Title

“Building Powerhouses and the Beaver Club”

Date

November 4, 2014

Location

Ossey residence, Tualatin, Oregon.

Summary

Interview #2 begins with Ossey's memories of Oregon State's participation in the 1942 Rose Bowl, played in Durham, North Carolina on account of the war. He then shares the story of the founding of The Buck of the Month Club, OSC's first athletics booster organization, which later become the Beaver Club, of which Ossey is a charter member. He likewise discusses his interactions with major figures in Oregon State's past athletics history - including Tommy Prothro, Percy Locey, Slats Gill and Dee Andros - his own experiences broadcasting Beaver basketball games from Gill Coliseum, the evolution of OSU's athletics facilities, and the growth of its baseball program.

The session then shifts focus to Ossey's career working for the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bonneville Power Administration. He describes his involvement as a civil engineer in the construction of numerous power houses along rivers in Oregon and Washington. He also speaks of the flooding of Celilo Falls and of designing methods for fish to navigate through the dams constructed on the Columbia River.

After reflecting on family life during his working years, Ossey turns his attention once more to the history of Oregon State athletics, commenting on his interactions with athletes Ed Lewis and Terry Baker, and broadcasters Ted Carlson and Don Essig. He also details his work as a fundraiser for the athletic department, his involvement with numerous additional organizations working to advance OSU, his receipt of two awards from the university, and his pride at Oregon State's recent accomplishments as an institution. The interview concludes with Ossey's thoughts on the changes that he has seen on campus and the advice that he would give to students of today.

Interviewee

Bud Ossey

Interviewer

Mike Dicianna

Website

<http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oh150/ossey/>

Transcript

Mike Dicianna: Okay, today is November 4th, 2014, and we're going to do the second session with one of the famous alumni from Oregon State University, Bud Ossey. We're at his home today, in Tualatin, Oregon. So we're going to kind of follow up a few things from the last conversation we had that I forgot to ask about, because I was so enthralled by what you had to say. But one of the things that—you were on campus when OSC, at the time, got into their first Rose Bowl. The 1942 Rose Bowl was the only Rose Bowl never played in Pasadena. Because of World War II, they had the game transferred to Durham, North Carolina. So what are your memories about the mood on the campus, and not being able to go the game—that type of thing?

Bud Ossey: Well, at the time that we got the decision that we were going to go to the Rose Bowl, there was euphoria. Everyone was excited and thrilled, and talking about how they were going to go down to the game. I was fortunate enough to know an awful lot of the players. In fact, a couple of them were classmates of mine in engineering, one Marv Markman, and we studied together, in fact. And I had arranged that one of the fellows had a car that he was going to borrow, his family car, and about six of us were going to go down. We had no idea where we were going to stay or anything else, but we were going to drive down and just boot it out as best we can, and we were going to go to that football game, the Rose Bowl. In fact, we bought tickets. I had tickets for it.

And so, of course, when Pearl Harbor came, on December the 7th, then they came out with the decision that no way could they have the football game on the West Coast, because of the Japanese potential of attacking the West Coast, or dropping the bombs on mass gatherings. So they cancelled that, and fortunately, Durham came to the rescue, Duke University, and offered to host the football game. But there was no way in the world that we could ever go back there, because it was a four-day or five-day train ride then, and airplane service wasn't even thought of. And so we just sat back and waited, and when the time came to go the game, the kids on the football team, they took off about ten days earlier, and they had quite a trip going back.

And the game itself, that was quite exciting, of course. Stern, I think, was the announcer; I forgot his first name, but he was so pro-Duke that right from the very start there's no way that Oregon State even had a chance, and Duke was number one or two in the country at the time, and undefeated, and Oregon State was just a fill-in for their schedule. Well, that advertising prior to the game kind of put a little bit of bug in the rear of the Oregon State players, and no way were they going to be put in a position to be embarrassed. And they proved themselves to be well worthy of the competition. And there was tremendous excitement. It was a great day.

MD: Now, did you listen to the game on the radio?

BO: Oh, every word of it, yup. Yeah. Oh, I listened to every bit of it. Absolutely. And it was exciting. Bill Stern, that was it. And his broadcast was [0:05:01]—he's a good broadcaster, but he was so one-sided in his broadcast, it was getting a little disgusting to me. And the end result—he was humble enough to admit he was wrong. [Laughs]

MD: Well, that famous run by Durdan towards the end of the game that—

BO: Well, Don Durdan lived next door to me, and he was really a wonderful friend. We got to be real good friends. And he used to kid me a lot, and he tried to get me to come into his fraternity house and join. He was at Sigma Nu next door, and their fullback—oh, God, my memory for names is terrible; I apologize. But Jock Shelton was the fullback, and he lived there, too. And we got to be friends. And he used to tease me about engineering and stuff. But as a result, I got to be pretty well acquainted with an awful lot of the players, especially in the fact that several of them were high school classmates of mine, like Bill Halvorsen and Leonard Isbury, and Boyd Clement, the center. Those names all were part of my friendship days, so it was interesting.

MD: Now, one of the iconic pictures that we have during that time is the entire student body doing a serpentine, holding hands through the Memorial Union quad. And there's controversy as to whether that was—that happened when we found out that we had the Rose Bowl game, or after the game was won. Do you remember? Were you involved with that serpentine?

BO: No, I wasn't. I was still an engineering student, and I was probably in class. And our schedule—our curriculum for engineering was pretty tight, and you didn't dare miss anything. And we were down at lower campus, at Apperson Hall, and this was all way up at the upper end, and no, I think most all of us engineers were in our engineering class at that time, and so we didn't get in on that part of it.

MD: Now, in 1939, you became a member of an early Oregon State College booster club started by the athletic director, Percy Locey, and they called that "The Buck of the Month Club." And then eventually the organization became the Beaver Club in 1946, of which you were a charter member. So you've been a member of the Beaver Club, and been part of the Beaver boosters, since when you were a student, actually. So what are your memories of how this Beaver Club worked, and how "The Buck of the Month"—what was that deal?

BO: [Laughs] Well, that's interesting. Ralph Floberg [?], who was a classmate from—he was class of '42, but as I mentioned, I was class, originally, of '41, but I got to know all these guys from '42, because when I came back, they were upperclassmen to me, but our friendship was still there from the early days. And actually, Ralph Floberg was originally, I think, class of '41 with me. Well, when Percy Locey became the athletic director, he started this "Buck of the Month Club." They needed some support for athletics, and there was no such thing as booster clubs or anything, or donations to support the athletic program. So he started this "Buck of the Month Club," and that involved for \$10 a year, you could be a member of the "Buck of the Month Club," and the Beaver Club, as they called it. [0:10:00] Or they called it "Buck of the Month Club." And so you paid a dollar a month, or you'd pay in advance \$10, to take care of the year. [Laughs]

And that was a buck—in those days, it was a buck, and so I didn't join it then. I didn't join it until I got out of the Army in 1946, and came to Portland, and went to work. And I joined "Buck of the Month Club" right away. And I remember we met in the old Journal Building cafeteria. There was about eight or ten of us from Portland that were members of the original "Buck of the Month Club." And we'd meet once a month, and sit and talk, and it was just old Beavers getting together and talking. There was no organized function. We just sat down over coffee or lunch, and talked about the Beavers, and supporting them in the way we could. And that's developed into the Beaver Club. And my card, I think—I have a Beaver Club card that they give every year, and my card, I think, shows 65 or 66 years on it, that I've been a member. I think I'm the oldest one that has a card, because Ralph Floberg is gone, and Bernie Solberg was another one. I don't know if you know those names.

MD: I've seen them, yeah.

BO: And I'm trying to think of who else, but I can't remember names that far back. But those two I remember, because we've been friends ever since, and of course, they're both gone.

MD: Yeah, so you're actually an original Beaver Club member, and now there's thousands.

BO: That's when it really formally started, was after the World War II.

MD: Become the actual Beaver Club.

BO: Yeah. Well, it started, actually, as "The Buck a Month Club," and later changed its name to Beaver Club. I don't remember when it became official. But in the '60s, it was mostly—Beaver Club was active in Portland. That was the center of it, and I was president of that for about three years. And I was lucky enough to be active during the—president during the Giant Killer years, with Dee Andros, and that's when it really blossomed. Well, it started really getting popular with—oh, dear, the coach before Andros.

MD: Oh, Tommy Prothro. Yeah.

BO: Tommy Prothro! There's my old memory going on me. I was real good friends with Tommy. I used to go to his house, watching him play bridge and poker. Anyhow, that's when the Beaver Club really blossomed out, with Tommy Prothro.

MD: Well, speaking of name-dropping, you have known some of the greats of Oregon State University over the years, and have become friends with these folks. I mean, what are some of your memories about some of these people, like Percy Locey? You might have seen—he was playing football when you were down there as a child.

BO: That's right.

MD: So you saw him play.

BO: That's right.

MD: And then, later on you had contact with him when he as actual administrator of the college.

BO: When he was athletic director. I got to know him then for a short period of time, because when I was going to school, in the early days, he was athletic director. And then the funny thing is, his grandson, Jay Locey, became a football coach at Oregon State, and we reminisced quite a bit about his grandfather, so.

MD: Yeah, we hope to do an interview for the oral history project with him.

BO: With Jay Locey?

MD: Yeah, mm-hm.

BO: Oh, he's a—

MD: Kind of wait till after the season's over.

BO: Oh, he's a wonderful person.

MD: Yeah. [0:15:00] Well, how about people like—well, like people that we have buildings named after now? Slats Gill?

BO: [Laughs] I played basketball for Slats Gill as a freshman at Oregon State, and I got to know Slats and his wife, Mrs. Gill, very well. After the years, in later years, I used to take cherry tomatoes down to her. I had a wonderful harvest of cherry tomatoes, and she loved them, and I'd take cherry tomatoes down to her all the time. And we became very good friends. In fact, Slats used to let me work out against the varsity when I couldn't play ball anymore, and I got to be pretty good friends with him.

He wrote a book, *Basic Basketball*. He gave me once a personal copy that he signed: "To a dear friend, Bud Ossey." And one of the players—and I don't remember who in the heck it was; I wish I knew—wanted to look at that book, and borrowed it. I says, "Sure, but be sure you get it back to me," and then I forgot about it. I've never seen it since. But it was a great book, that he diagrammed plays in the book, and really had his playbook—it was his playbook. And his strategy on basketball is really what it was. But he was a great guy, and it was fun.

MD: Now, you have known, through your dealings as an alumni and also while you were on campus, quite a few of the campus, University of Oregon, Oregon State University presidents.

BO: Yes.

MD: Like President Strand, who was president just as you were graduating.

BO: Right.

MD: And did you have contact with him, at all?

BO: Nothing very much, but I did get to meet him, and I did get to know him, not as a longtime friend, but he recognized me and knew me, and I knew him because of my involvement on the campus. Why, I did get to know President Strand.

MD: Yeah, because with your time, you knew, like, Jensen and MacVicar.

BO: I got to know them very well.

MD: Yeah.

BO: In fact, I got to know President MacVicar too well. He was not one of my favorite presidents, with all due respect to President MacVicar, but he was the cause of the demise of the football program at Oregon State. But I don't want to get into details about that.

MD: We've talked about that with some other folks, and that's come up before.

BO: Well, I could go into a lot of details, because I was directly involved in his making decisions about hiring coaches.

MD: Yeah, now, you've known basically all the coaches from pretty much all the sports for the past half-century. I know that you have friendships with a lot of them, and some of them they were just kind of passing. Who were some of your favorite football coaches?

BO: Well, I would say Dee Andros was probably one of my most favorite coaches through the years, and I met Dee Andros from the first day he came on campus. We got to be friends because I was down for a weekend with Bill Ziegler and Del Schorr, who were owners of the Portland Athletic Supply, that furnished the athletic equipment for the football team. And Dee wanted to—when he got to town the first weekend, he wanted to meet with the athletic suppliers for uniforms and stuff, and equipment, and to get an idea of what there was, and what he could do by getting some new equipment. So we met in the motel room that first weekend. Dee came to Bill Ziegler's hotel and Bill Ziegler, Del Schorr and myself [0:20:00], the three of us, were close friends, and so we all had our motel room right together.

And we congregated in Bill Ziegler's room, and we sat and drank, and talked with Dee Andros, and got to be friends with him from the first day he got there. And Dee Andros and his family became very close with Maxine and I, and our kids, and after every single football game, win or lose, we'd always go over to Dee's house. His basement was fixed up with all kinds of Beaver stuff, and the bar was well loaded, and we'd sit and drink, and we'd take care of my son, at that time who was the same age as Jeanie Andros, his daughter. And they used to go upstairs and play, and they were just little kids, and they'd play in the house while we were partying downstairs. And so Dee was one of my favorite people.

I got to know Tommy Prothro real well, too, because I think I mentioned, I used to do the broadcasting with Bob Blackburn, and so on the broadcast team, why, I got to know pretty much all of the staff. An interesting story about the difference between Tommy Prothro and Dee Andros might be of some interest. One day, I was walking from the parking lot into Gill Coliseum to Tommy Prothro's office with him, and Tommy Prothro is a very, very concentrated person. His thought process is focused very strongly on one thing. And at the time, we were talking, and it was a very interesting conversation, something about the football. And as we walked down the hall, here comes a couple of his football players. And I was looking at the football players as they come by, and they were looking at Tommy, hoping that he'd give them some recognition, say something. Tommy was just focused on his conversation with me, and just kept walking right on past them, and never said a word or anything, hello, or anything. That happened two more times as we were walking, because a lot of the football players were in the area. And so he just kept walking, and maybe he might have nodded or something, but he never did any conversation with them.

Coincidentally, when Dee Andros got the job, the same scenario took place, where I came off the parking lot with Dee one day, walking into the hall at Gill Coliseum and to go to his office. And as we walked down the hall, here comes a couple football players. And Dee and I are talking, and I could see these football players concentrating on Dee, just like the others were for Tommy Prothro. Well, when we got opposite these players, Dee said, "Wait a minute, Bud." And he stopped and called each of those players by name, and he actually asked them about their personal involvement. One of them was a married young boy who had—which was kind of unusual at the time, but he asked about his wife. And that was kind of a shock to me. So after the conversation with them, we walked off.

The same thing happened two more times with different ball players, and he stopped and talked to each one of them. He knew each one of them by name, and by their involvement. He asked one of them, who was having academic troubles, about his grades, and asked him if he was catching up. And he knew every single one of those players, which, I'm sure, Tommy Prothro did, too, but Dee stopped and talked to each one of them as we went by. There was quite a shock to me, the difference. [0:25:01] It just registered on my mind.

MD: Yeah. Well, he was the Great Pumpkin.

BO: He was the Great Pumpkin; that's right.

MD: So now you've been involved with being a fan, being a Beaver believer for all of the sports at OSU. Do you have a favorite sport, or is it everything?

BO: Well, I love baseball. I played a little baseball in high school, and basketball. I love basketball. I love golf because I play golf a lot. And I just like sports. I like football because of the excitement of football, and because I was doing the broadcasting with Bob Blackburn. And Bob was a wonderful, wonderful sportscaster, and it was a pleasure to work with him through—we started with Kip Taylor, when he was the coach. That was before Tommy Prothro, is when we first started—or I started, first started the broadcast with Bob Blackburn. We kept on going right through Dee Andros, and some of the other no-name football coaches, but we won't go into that. Anyhow—

MD: So you had quite a long career in the booth, then?

BO: I spent over twenty years with Bob in the booth, and it was a hobby for me. The pay was nothing compared to a living. I just, I did it for fun, and when Bob left to take the job as the original voice of the Sonics—Bob Blackburn spent 25 years as the original voice of the Seattle SuperSonics—well, I worked with him all through those years when they came to Portland, and occasionally I'd go up to Seattle to help him do the basketball broadcasts. So, yes, I've had quite a long career, and Bob and Pat, his wife, and Maxine and I became very, very close friends. In fact, at Bob's funeral, they called me and asked me to be one of the presenters, and I gave a talk about the history.

MD: Well, one of the things that struck me on the drive up here today was you have watched sporting events basically all of your life. You have watched sporting events at Oregon State College, Oregon Agricultural College, and now OSU. You've seen Bell Field.

BO: I've sat in that field.

MD: You sat in Bell Field, which is long gone, and you also were at the original Parker Stadium, when it was first built.

BO: That's right. We did our broadcasts—first broadcast, first game that was broadcast there, played there, we broadcast. And I don't know if people are aware of the layout of Gill Coliseum, but on the side opposite the players' side, which would be the west side, I believe, up above all the seating arrangements, way up on the top of the building, there's a broadcast booth up there, and you have to climb the stairs to get to it. And that's where we used to do our original broadcasting from. And you couldn't see what was going on, or hear what was going on, and it didn't last very long. That was not a good place, because I had to be on the phone to—we had somebody down on the bench, down on the floor, and if there's a question of what was going on, why, I'd be on the phone with him, asking him, "What the heck's going on here? Can you fill me in?" And then I relayed it to Bob while he's doing the broadcast.

So it didn't last very long to have that broadcast booth up there. But there was room there, so Bob would let me bring my son with me, and friends, and we used to do a lot of recruiting. I used to take Billy Nickleberry, who was a great ballplayer—I used to take him and a couple of his ballplayer friends from Jefferson, and I'd have them up to the radio booth. And Billy Nickleberry, who became a star player, basketball, at Oregon State [0:30:01], had no idea that he would go anywhere else to play ball, except Oregon State, because he became so involved with it.

MD: Now, so you've seen Gill Coliseum be erected, and become an icon of the campus. Now, how about how Parker Stadium, now Reser Stadium? What's your feeling of the changes to that, because, I mean, basically, when it was built, it was a pile of dirt with seats.

BO: That's right.

MD: And now it's this wonderful facility. I mean, you've seen that progression.

BO: Well, you mentioned Bell Field, where there was a grandstand with wooden seats that seated probably about three or 4,000 people, and that was it. And when Parker Stadium was built, that was a grand stadium. Oh, it was wonderful! I think it seated 20-some-thousand people. And it had all the amenities a college team would want at the time, but it became ancient very fast. [Laughs] And when I think back about the progression from Bell Field, to Parker, to Reser, it amazes

me to see what's going on, all by the help of lots and lots of people. With all due respect to the University of Oregon and Uncle Phil—I respect them very highly, because they've done a tremendous job in transforming their humble beginnings into a grand, grand facility, through the help of one person. Well, controversially, why, we have built our facilities through the help of thousands of low-income people, who have done a tremendous job of supporting Oregon State.

MD: Yeah, and that says a lot.

BO: Well, it means a lot to us, because we're pretty proud of what we can do by a joint effort.

MD: Now, the baseball stadium. You used to watch baseball throughout the years.

BO: Yes.

MD: And the new Goss Stadium is a wonderful facility, but it's the oldest baseball diamond on a college campus continuously used.

BO: Well, I used to go—Ralph Coleman was the coach, who was also a personal friend. The diamond was located in the same place, but there was just some bleacher seats around, and that was it. But what's transpired from the time of Ralph Coleman, to Tanzelli, to Riley, Jack Riley, to Pat Casey, is amazing. Jack Riley was coach at—oh, what college was it? Up in Longview, Washington, when he applied for the job to coach at Oregon State? Treasure Valley is the school he was at. And I was very strongly supporting the hiring of Jack Riley. And he became the coach, and he did a tremendous job! And then, when Pat Casey came in, he took over and just went on from when Jack left off, and really boomed the development with Goss. And it's a marvelous facility, and they're adding on now more improvements to the stadium. It'll probably be one of the best stadiums in the country, for its size.

MD: Yeah, especially for a college program.

BO: For a college program—that's what I mean.

MD: Let's shift gears a little bit here. [0:35:00] I mean, we talked briefly about when you started to work for the Corps of Engineers, when you came back from World War II, but let's flesh that out just a little bit. Now, talk a little bit about your career as a civil engineer, some of your major accomplishments over your career, and what exactly did you do—that type of thing.

BO: Well, I started my engineering career with Bonneville Power Administration. I don't know if we talked about that.

MD: We talked a little bit about that.

BO: And then after the war, when I came back, I went to work for the Corps of Engineers, and I was the first civil engineer hired outside of the administration to work on the design of powerhouses in projection for the Northwest. And my first job was working on the design of the McNary Powerhouse, up in Umatilla. And that was interesting. That was one of the projects I worked on, and then after we finished that, we were working on John Day Powerhouse, and my work was all entirely in the design of powerhouses. And The Dalles Dam was another powerhouse. Chief Joseph Powerhouse. Those were the main ones: the John Day, The Dalles, McNary, Chief Joseph. Those were the main ones after Bonneville. Then I also worked on some of the Willamette Valley projects. Primarily I was in charge of the powerhouses. I had Greenpeter and Foster.

MD: Go there every summer.

BO: Hm?

MD: I go there every summer, yeah.

BO: It's a beautiful facility there. But it's interesting, if I could tell a story about—I may have told this story earlier, about speaking before a group in Eugene one day. They invited me to come and speak about the project, the Corps of Engineers, and this happened to be a fly fishermen and sport fishermen group. And when I got down to the meeting, it was a pretty

packed hall of people. All I could hear was talk about fly fishing, and I heard barbs about the Cougar Dam being built, spoil the fishing for the people in the Lyman Valley area. By the time I got up to speak, I hadn't had a chance to talk to anybody. They were talking among themselves, and they seated me, and when they introduced me to speak, I got up and I said, "It's been most interesting coming here, and I thank you for inviting me to speak to you, but I learned something today. I found out that not all the barbs are on fish hooks." And I said, "All I could hear are very anti-Corps of Engineer talk about the dams we've built.

"Well, if you'll remember just last year," I told them, I said, "We had a flood here, where downtown Eugene was underwater, and there was water over the walls in Salem and Portland because of the flooding. Well," I said, "just for your information, the cost of building that Cougar Dam and flood control that it provided saved four times the amount of money that would have been lost through damages because of that dam being there. And if that dam hadn't have been there, Eugene's whole downtown would have been underwater and flooded to twelve feet." And they sat there with their mouths open, and I went on and talked about the Corps of Engineer projects, and what they did, and went on from there. And that was my initiation to talking to fishermen in Eugene. [Laughs] [0:40:03]

MD: Well, that's one of the things that I was also curious about. Now, you were involved with the Corps of Engineers and everything during the time that there's the huge controversy over Celilo Falls, and the Indian fishing grounds there. What are your feelings about how that went? Did you see Celilo Falls before it was under?

BO: I have a very famous picture in my other room on the wall—I'll show you—of Celilo Falls before the dam was in, how the Indians fished off of platforms with nets. And it was a very famous tourist attraction. But it was not very clean, the accommodations where the Indians lived, and when The Dalles Dam went in and inundated Celilo Falls, the Corps of Engineers built very nice living accommodations for the Indians, and provided fishing facilities for them that maintained their potential for living through catching fish.

MD: It was a real controversial time.

BO: It was controversial, the dams, at times, but that's still a big controversy. This year, I just read an article here, just the other day, where we've had the largest fish run in almost history, of salmon. So it isn't all bad. And I also worked on the design of the powerhouses of the Snake River, and they're talking about wanting to tear those dams down. Well, it'll never happen, I don't think. I hope it doesn't, because there's too much good that is being derived with these dams in place. Power.

MD: Irrigation.

BO: You got your irrigation, you've got navigation, you've got recreation, you've got an awful lot of benefits that can add up to a tremendous cost benefits. And that's how we used to design our projects, by a cost/loss benefit.

MD: Yeah. Now, you probably had to work—when dealing with the powerhouses, you probably had to work closely with Fisheries biologists—

BO: Yes.

MD: —to design those powerhouses for the power, as well as the migrating fish.

BO: Yeah, we had to design the fish ways through the powerhouse. I had to work on that. And I'll never forget! One time, I was working on the design of a fish entrance channel into the south end of the powerhouse, and I had the fish biologists from the Fish and Wildlife and from the Bureau of Reclamation, and we had quite a meeting about how we could design this project that I was working on. And we're sitting over the drawing of the entrance to the fish-entrance channel, and at the entrance of it, because of the discharge of the water for attraction of fish, it created quite an eddy in the downstream part of the powerhouse.

And this fish biologist for the Fish and Wildlife was quite a character, and I'll never forget. He stood there and said—looking over the map and the area, he says, "I'm just wondering. Now, I'm a fish, and I'm coming down—I'm coming up the river to go into this fish attraction channel. Is this a favorable eddy or an unfavorable eddy, and what am I going to

do?" And we stood there and laughed. Here's this guy pretending he's a fish coming up the river! [Laughs] Oh, that's one of the ways, through conferences and cooperative study, we did a lot of our design.

MD: Yeah, and a lot of those Fishery biologists were probably fellow Beavers.

BO: Yes. Yes, they had biologists for Oregon State actually work for me, and we were in high school together. [0:45:00] Ivan Donaldson was the head biologist for the Corps of Engineers back in the '40s, early '40s, and he was a real smart biologist—a great guy, so.

MD: Yeah, so it was science and engineering working together.

BO: That's right.

MD: Well, one of the things—fill in a little bit about the family life, raising kids. When you came back, where did you and Maxine finally settle down and start a family?

BO: You mean, when we came back from the war?

MD: Yeah. Yeah.

BO: Well, that was something. We had to find a place to live. Maxine—my wife's folks lived in Portland, and we moved in with them for a few days. Then we moved in with my folks until we could get a place. And they were building houses pretty fast, and we found a house over in northeast Portland that we liked, and we moved in there. We bought that on a GI loan, which was, thankfully, the only way we could afford to do it on a young officer's pay, which we never got to save very much, and then my working for the Corps, just getting started. And that was nice. I loved it there. Kids went to Beaumont School in northeast Portland, and it was a nice neighborhood with kids, and I had my dog with me that I brought back from the war. It was a World War II dog who actually had seen action, and was brought back to the States. He'd been shot. And if you want to hold a second, I'll show you a picture of the dog.

MD: Well, what I'll do is we'll cut it in, and we'll take a picture of it and cut it in.

BO: Okay.

MD: This was a military working dog?

BO: Yes, it was, and it became my dog. I took it, and it stayed with me in the company area during—while I was in the service, and then I brought it home with me after the war. And that dog was the smartest dog you ever saw. I would tell that dog to sit and don't move, I'd come back an hour later, and it was staying right there; it would not move. And my oldest boy was still a little baby at the time, a little boy. He'd get up and ride on the dog, and sit on the dog's back and ride it. The dog loved it.

MD: German shepherd?

BO: German shepherd.

MD: Yeah.

BO: Smartest animal I ever saw.

MD: And a veteran.

BO: Oh, it was great. It was great! So we lived there for quite a while. Then there was a big threat of atomic bomb at that time, especially after the atomic bombs in the Pacific, and Seattle and Vancouver shipyards were all prime targets. And we were right close not from the airport, and the airport would also be a prime target area. And I got to thinking. Everyone was talking about building bomb shelters at the time, for themselves, in the homes, and so I decided, with Maxine, that we better look for a place away from this northeast area, industrial area and the airport. And so we found the lot over in southeast Portland, in East Portland, right above the East Portland.

We found some vacant property, and so I bought the property. I should say we brought the property. And I started building a home there. I hired a contractor friend, and we were just getting the foundation built, and just got the framework up, and he was costing me way too much money. And I couldn't figure out where the money was going, and so I fired him, and I took over and built the house myself with own hands. I did all the cabinet work, the flooring, the electrical installation [0:50:02], the plumbing. I did all that on weekends and after work, and it took me a long time, and I had some kids I hired to help. But we moved in there, and that became our home for quite a few years until we moved here.

MD: Yeah. So you raised the kids—they all went through Portland public schools?

BO: Oh, yeah.

MD: And then?

BO: We moved there, and they went to Duniway Grade School in East Portland, and they all went to Jefferson—not Jefferson, excuse me, to Cleveland, Cleveland High School. They all went to Cleveland. And they've maintained friendships from those days on to this day. It's unbelievable how these kids have stayed together as friends.

MD: Well, I know there's a story behind their college choices.

BO: [Laughs] I have three sons, and my oldest son went to Oregon State, and I think we talked about him, engineering with one professor, Glenn Holcomb. And then my other two sons, they grew up as Beavers; that's all they knew was Oregon State. But when it came time to go to school, my middle son was quite a baseball and basketball player. He was all-city in both sports. And baseball was his prime love, but he tangled with the baseball coach at Oregon State. He got into something, and he didn't like him. And I'll tell you, his name was Gene Tanzelli. They just didn't get along. And he got to be real fond of Don Kirsch, who was the coach at Oregon at that time, was a very well-respected and highly thought of coach at the University of Oregon, and he got invited to come to Oregon and play ball. And so he went and played ball at Oregon, and was quite a successful ball player there. And then my youngest son, who also grew up as a Beaver, wanted to be an architect, and he got accepted into the School of Architecture at the University of Oregon, and we condoned that. So my two youngest sons are Ducks, and my oldest son, who just passed away this last—a month, two months ago, he went to Oregon State. He was the smart one.

MD: Well, one of the things that I really wanted to talk with you about is your long decades as a Beaver Believer, and a Beaver alumni, and a supporter of the university. You've been following sporting events for basically most of your life. I know that you've been to some bowl games—

BO: Yes.

MD: And you went to the 1965 bowl game as your first bowl game—since you didn't get to go to the '42 game. What was your experiences at seeing us play at that Rose Bowl?

BO: Well, going to a bowl game is always exciting. The atmosphere's just all blown up with excitement, and I took back—Maxine and I would go to the bowl games, and it was just a fun time. When we went to bowl games, that was just a fun experience, especially if we'd win [laughs], which was not always.

MD: Not always, yeah. Now, like I say, not only bowl games. You have been—it'd be hard to figure how many sporting events at Oregon State that you have attended.

BO: Oh, my gosh. Oh, my gosh!

MD: I mean, it'd be hard to come up with a number, I suppose. [0:55:00]

BO: There's no way I can come up with a number. I mean, if you back to 1924, when I first started, started going to football games then, to see Oregon State play when my dad was in school—

MD: To just this last weekend, yeah.

BO: Oh, gosh, there's no way I can—

MD: There's no way to—

BO: Well, in those days, I'd go once a year, maybe, to a football game. And then, when my uncle was at Oregon State, I'd come down also, just occasionally football and occasionally basketball game. I got real interested in basketball because I played basketball. And I used to come and watch, oh, great ball players like, well, Wally Homberg at Oregon State, all-American, and Ed Lewis, a great—we used to square-dance with Ed Lewis and wife, Edith, after school days. They used to have square-dance club that they belonged to with us. We invited them to join. I mean, I got to know Mel Counts real well. We've been good friends.

MD: Terry Baker?

BO: Oh, Terry Baker.

MD: You saw Terry Baker play?

BO: Oh, yes, I was doing the broadcasting when he was playing.

MD: That's right, yeah.

BO: Yeah, and got to be very close friends with Terry. In fact, I still am. We still talk. I play golf with him occasionally. And Paul Valente was a longtime friend, and I just was at his funeral, memorial, a couple weeks ago. When he was sick, I would call him and talk to him, or come and visit him at the rehabilitation home where he was. No, I just love making friends with people, that's all. And I've had a wonderful life, with a lot of friends.

MD: And like I say, they're—you've known some of the greats of this institution, and having your insights into some of these people is real special for this oral history project.

BO: Well, I got to be—I was lucky, because I was able to work with Bob Blackburn in his broadcasting, and through that connection, I was able to meet most all of the sporting figures on the campus, and I got to know them. They knew who I was because of the broadcasting.

MD: Yeah. Now, a fellow broadcaster—did you know Ted Carlson?

BO: Yes. Yes.

MD: And of course, another interview that we've done with a Beaver-gone-Duck, Don Essig, who is now the voice of Autzen Stadium, yeah.

BO: Uh-huh. Well, Don Essig and I also became good friends. In fact, just about a month or so ago—I don't know if I mentioned this in the other session of our talking—I was down at Eugene with Rob Kloss, who was a very famous ball player at University of Oregon, and who is also a very good friend of mine. He took me down to a basketball game in Eugene, and having the clout that he has, we got into the VIP area.

And we were walking along, and there, standing over a few feet away, was Don Essig, talking to some friends. And I was over in a small group with Rob Kloss and a couple others, and Don saw me, and he—I jumped up, and he jumped up and saw me, and he left his friends and came over, and gave me a great big hug! Oh, it was so good to see him, and we both had a wonderful little visit right there.

MD: Well, you, as a Beaver fan and supporter, and super-alumni, have been terribly instrumental in fundraising for this institution over the years. [1:00:00] Without getting into too much detail, I mean, what are some of your major efforts that you've done, as far as being a cheerleader/fundraiser for this organization?

BO: I just work with the university on any effort that they put out, or any plan that they had for raising funds. I just join them and do my share, try to be a part of the team in raising funds, as a Beaver Club member. We had the committee of the Beaver Club's board of directors that primarily led the group, and as a member of the board, we would make calls

to people, soliciting Beaver Club membership, and selling tickets. And I just worked on that with everybody else, like everyone else did, through all the years. And I just tried to do as much as I could, like everyone else was doing.

MD: It'd be hard to say no to you.

BO: Huh?

MD: It's hard to say no to you, I suppose.

BO: Well, there's another place where—by calling on these people, I developed so many friends over the phone. And every year, I'd pick up the phone at the right time of the year to make my call for soliciting funds, or to make sure they buy their football or basketball tickets, and I can't tell you how many times they'd say, "I'm waiting for your call, Bud." [Laughs] And then instead of just getting on a couple minutes talking about the signing them up, and let it go, I'd be on a ten or fifteen minute conversation with them, and I used to have so much fun! It was just wonderful making these calls. I really enjoyed it, because I got to talk to a lot of people. I've got lists that I've saved of hundreds and hundreds of people that I've talked to.

MD: Well, as a member of several of the OSU organizations, I feel I should include a list here, for everybody watching: the Alumni Association Board, and a lifetime member of that; president of the OSU Dads Club; charter member of the OSU Beaver Club; president of the Beaver Athletic Scholarship Fund; the chair of the OSU Council of Regents Board; and the OSU Foundation Trustees. I know I don't want to embarrass you, but I wanted everybody to know. What's your philosophy about giving back, and supporting your alma mater?

BO: My philosophy is do what I can to continue supporting them, and give as much as I financially can in support of the needs, where it's needed.

MD: And that's what every alumni should think about when they give back to their alma mater.

BO: Well, that's what I try to sell to them when I talk to my friends.

MD: Well, you've been—I'll embarrass you some more—you've been honored so many times by this college over your many decades of service. To name a few, you're a member of the Oregon State Engineering Hall of Fame, the BASF Hall of Fame. You're also a recipient of the Martin Chaves Lifetime Achievement Award for Athletics. It goes on and on and on. Do you have a sense, really, about how many—of how your years of service and philanthropy and work have touched OSU, and the sporting programs that you've been involved with through this?

BO: I've never tried to analyze that. I just keep doing it. [Laughs] When I see addition to Reser Stadium being built, when I see the new basketball facility being built, practice facility, when I see the baseball grounds getting built, and built up, and the facilities for the baseball being built, when I see the track programs coming back, and thinking of Bernie Wagner and how much work he did there, and how hard he worked, and when I think of them having swimming [1:05:00], all the volleyball, the gymnastics program—when I think of all the good things that kids are able to derive out of being involved in sports, and I think of all the kids that I read in the paper getting in trouble and danger. And proportionately you don't see many athletes who participate in sports in the headlines, but when there is one or two, they get a headline right away. But it's so few in proportion to the number of athletes that were doing good; they're doing good for Oregon State, and we're trying to do good for them by helping them with scholarships.

And scholarships cost a lot of money at the universities, and I don't think the average person realizes how much a scholarship costs for a student. And you're looking just for one—let's just say basketball, or football, or women's sports—how much one single scholarship for, and there are so many out-of-state athletes that come, and out-of-state scholarships are so much more expensive! I think it's around \$37,000 a year for a athlete coming from out of state to go, and we pay for each one of those. And then it's the housing, and the books, and the living expenses. I mean, it's expensive for a student to go to school, whether they're an athlete or not. Tuition's a lot of money. You mentioned earlier the debt, or I think we were talking about the debt that students have incurred through student loans. It's horrendous!

And to help pay for these student athletes is what we're trying to do, because it brings recognition to the university, it helps the agricultural department, the pharmacy department, the engineering department—all the different schools in

the university, the colleges. Every one of them benefits through the success of athletics. And I've talked with several of the presidents about this, and some who have supported, or have not supported athletics very much, and most of them who realize that the door to a university is the success of the athletic programs, and through the success of the athletic programs, helps develop the success of the other colleges within the university. Athletics is just one college within a university, and each one of the colleges have their own agenda for raising funds.

And in this campaign for Oregon State, which we've just succeeded raising over \$1 billion, which is fantastic, every college within the university has contributed its own particular share towards that success of the campaign for Oregon State. And they've done a wonderful job. And it all goes right down to President Ed Ray, who was been magnificent as President of Oregon State University! I have been fortunate and lucky to become friendly with several of the presidents, and I don't want to single out anyone as better than anyone else, but for the present time of what's going on, Ed, President Ed Ray, has been magnificent! He's been a tremendous leader.

And it's through his efforts and leadership that the campaign has really developed, along with, I would say, the Oregon State Foundation that is under the university, with Mike Goodwin as CEO and president. Then you've got the chairman of this campaign, Pat Reser, who has been fantastic [1:10:00], and Gary Flanagan, and oh, the other name—there's the three chairmen there. Oh, my mind has gone blank again. But it's been a team effort, under the leadership of Ed Ray and Mike Goodwin, as president and CEO of the Foundation.

MD: So it's a time to be a proud Beaver.

BO: Pardon?

MD: Time to be a proud Beaver right now.

BO: Oh, absolutely! Even though their football team is not doing very good right now. They'll have their ups and downs, and I'm looking for them to bounce back. I'm an optimist. I'm a critical optimist. I'm a Monday-morning quarterback. [Laughs]

MD: Yeah. Well, we spoke earlier, just before we started here, about the changes of the campus, when you were just here for homecoming weekend this past Saturday, riding around campus and seeing all the changes between 1937 and today. And part of that is largely in part to Ed Ray and his vision.

BO: That's right.

MD: But what were your feelings about the comparison between the campus in 1937—

BO: Oh, my gosh!

MD: —and the campus of 2014?

BO: When I came to Oregon State, there weren't 3,000 students here. That was a large campus. And now what is there? Close to 30,000. That's quite a difference. Of course, there have been quite a few years, too. But when I think about the original buildings that we had on the campus, as I remember them, and driving around the campus last Saturday, and seeing these marvelous new buildings and the restructuring of some of the older buildings such as Apperson Hall, where I grew up, in my engineering. And then it became, through the generosity and donations of tremendous financial support of Lee and Connie Kearney, it's now become Kearney Hall for engineering students. And when I see the transformation of all this progress, it makes me feel so proud to be a Beaver.

And when I was going to school, Oregon State had a tremendously good engineering school. We were called "The West Point of the West." "MIT of the West," excuse me. There I go again. And it's through the progression and development of engineering schools throughout the country since then, Oregon State has lagged behind, but they're building back up again. And Ron Adams was a great leader in the School of Engineering for several years, and did a great job in helping develop the engineering school. There's an awful lot of progress that's been made, and it's through the efforts of individual leaders. Leaders are the ones that take a hold of the whip, and gently tap people on the back, and say, "We need your help." And people respond, especially if they're led the right way. Ed Ray has been a master whip-slinger.

MD: [Laughs] Well, one of the things that I always like to check in with is, is there anything that we've really missed? I mean, with your tremendous history at Oregon State over eight decades, it's been kind of a special interview. But is there anything that we've missed for you to say to your fellow alumni, and Beavers of tomorrow?

BO: Well, for one thing, I do want to say thanks to all of those who have been so generous in supporting Oregon State, people like the Resers, and Al Reser, the Kearneys, and then all the individuals in the individual colleges who have been leaders in support of their particular colleges. [1:15:02] Without all of these individual small people that are joining the leaders, Oregon State could not be the university it is today. It takes a foundation. As an engineer, your structure's only as good as your foundation, and the foundation is the people, the people that are down there laying the groundwork, to help build it up for the leaders up on top. And the leaders on top are supporting the foundation, and they work together. It's a cohesive effort from top to bottom. And that makes me very proud to be a Beaver, to know that there's been such a cooperative effort from what I've seen in 1924, to 1930s and 1940s, and onto 2014.

MD: Well, you are a true treasure of this institution, and it's been my honor to be able to spend time with you, and have your story captured for the OH150 project, and for Beavers of tomorrow to be able to learn from somebody that's been on the Oregon Agricultural campus, the Oregon State College campus, and today's Oregon State University campus. We thank you so very, very much.

BO: Well, thank you for letting me be a part of this. It was an honor for me. Thank you. [1:16:46]