

# **Oral History Interview Transcript**

Course Title: Energy in World Civilizations

Institution: University of Chicago

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Interview Date: May 16, 2024

*G: Can you first introduce yourself - who you are, where you're from? How you know me.*

J: I'm Jeremy. Geneva's grandfather. And I live in the UK. And I was born in the UK but a young man, I spent 20 years in America from 1950, the middle of the 1950s to 1972. And then my wife and I came back to England. So, I've had a bit of both. And part of my career in America was four happy years in the US Navy, which I had to do because of the draft. It was three and a half years.

*G: Where in the US did you live?*

J: We lived in Washington, DC. To begin, my mother was American, and my dad was English, and my dad lost his job. In 1952, he didn't have a job. And he basically, he'd been naughty. And he gambled and lost whatever money he had lost on the horses. But then he redeemed himself. And as a result of the fact that [him and my mother] were married, we had all sorts of relatives in the USA. And they agreed to sponsor my dad to go to America, which helped a lot because he didn't have any money. Anyway, he got into States and when was there, to begin with, he stayed with some rather remote, female relative who looked after him in Washington for a little while on his own. I was at school, and my ma was here working. And anyway, in due course, my dad redeemed himself and got a job at the Canadian Embassy, and that's where he stayed until he retired and died. And, in most people's terms, as a family, he and my mother left us quite a bit of money, so we were lucky especially in lieu of the fact that at 40 he was destitute, really.

So he died at 87, I think. And in fact, I know, by that at time he'd done wonders. Anyway, I grew up in England boarding school, a very posh boarding school, which today is one of the best boarding schools in the UK. In my day it was less so. I first went when I was five years old in 1941 because the war had started two years before and most of the teachers and young people were all inducted into the services, so they were off fighting the Germans. This is two years before anybody in America knew about the war or cared less. Yet, the only reason that the US got involved when they did is because the Japanese were stupid enough to attack them in Pearl Harbour. So anyway, I don't know where I am now.

*G: Tell me what boarding school was like during the war.*

Well. You see pictures, even in America, of the White Cliffs of Dover, and we lived on the top of one of those White Cliffs. It wasn't Dover, but it was just along the coast from Dover. And there was a main road that went all along the top of the cliffs. And our house was about 50 yards backwards, inland from the main road. It was a nice house and a nice community. But on the other side of the main road, which was like 100 yards away

from us, had gun emplacements. Big, big - I forget what millimetre they were - it wasn't sort of an Ack Ack gun. It was a big thundering gun that could shoot the ships that were coming to attack the country and there was a whole row of gun emplacements. They were big guns that swivelled on bases. And occasionally they did see something to shoot at. But most of the time, they didn't. But they were there. And there was what we call an under Cliff Walk at the bottom of the cliffs where in peacetime, you could walk along just inland from the sea. I mean, you could step off the walkway into the water, basically. But they closed all that down and had great huge boulders that they put on the beach so that tanks and the boats couldn't land there from the Germans when they came or if they came. And there was no access up a cliff, there was a whole row spiral staircases that you can walk up, I mean, they were quite high, I don't know, 200 or 300 feet, it was a long walk to get from the bottom to the top, by the time you've done, you know, 200 steps or something. It was alright for an 18- or 17-year-old, but it wasn't so good for my dad. But you couldn't get down to the beach from about 1939 to 1945. In fact, late in 1945, they opened some of the beach and we could get down and walk along it. Although we lived about 100 yards in the water, the first time I've been in the sea was 1945 when I was eight or nine - nine, in fact.

*G: And then when you were at school, is that when the petrol rations for the war were happening? And were there any changes to how much electricity you could use anything like that?*

J: Yes, of course, that there was. First of all, my dad happened to be the boss of the local Civil Defence, just the local area. Because he lost his job earlier on, for some reason, he convinced himself to go a training course that trained one about Civil Defence, but this was actually before the war. So he was one of the few people who had some knowledge of civil defence, which I mean by that not soldiers, but the people that were left at home in the civilian population, who could help to defend the country in the event there was a war. Well, he got involved in that, so he was the boss of the local Civil Defence thing in the city in the town, quite a big town 300,000 residents perhaps, of Brighton, and he was civil defence boss. So, he was lucky enough to get a bit of petrol for his car. Not much, but something. And most people's cars were up on jacks in their garage and never moved for several years on end. But because of his Civil Defence interests, we got petrol, and he would occasionally take me to school in this car, which was great excitement at the school because nobody else had a car that could move!

And, to begin with, we all slept in dormitories, just the same as you would imagine. And then, on one occasion, the bombs started dropping and all the windows blew in. So, on that occasion, we bundled up and went downstairs to the lower level, where there was a

basement. That's where we stayed, and we spent some months basically trying to sleep in the cellar. And then the school authorities thought "Well to hell with that – the kids aren't getting any rest." So, we just stayed in the dormitories and hoped the bombs didn't land, which it didn't, but one day it did blow all the windows in, in the dorm, all the windows came shattering into the room, on top of the beds and nobody was hurt, but there was glass all over. But it was the lesser evil to put up with that – clean up the glass and board up the windows - than it was to spend the whole night in the cellar, and not sleep at all. I mean I remember it as being frightening rather than anything else because we were never actually blown out of home and house which some people were.

And my brother and I would go back up behind the little village that we lived in and walk, find all sorts of ammunition bits and pieces that we weren't supposed to touch, but of course we did. They were huge shells and things from the German's and unused shells that the Ack Ack guns that were up there and firing. It was quite exciting but one didn't know anything else.

*G: Why were the petrol limits in place? And were there electricity use limits as well?*

J: Yes, a lot of the time, and even 80s, long after the war, the miners. Electricity was generated in small proportion with waterfalls and river generated electricity, but that was a very small percentage, 5%, something like that. Almost all electricity in the UK came from burning coal. The power stations all over the country burned coal, that was the only fuel. And so, the fuel had to be dug out to the ground. And all the people who traditionally had been mining coal were off shooting guns at the Germans so they had to preserve whatever coal they could dig out very cautiously. So, for a lot of the time, there was only a fuel for hours. Sometimes it was, you know, six to nine in the evening, sometimes it was all day without any. But most of the time, because a lot of people had gas and electricity, they tried to keep those going at mealtimes. But during other parts of the day, especially if the sun was out, there was no fuel, and there was very little fuel at all. And I mean, then, not long after the war, the miners were on strike, nothing to do with the war, but the miners just walked out on strike. So that was fine for the first several weeks of the strike. There were the reserves for that. But after they used up all reserves, there was nobody to dig in and out and there was no power. So, they had to restrict the usage of power. So, Edward Heath (Prime Minister of England at the time), in the 60s probably, made it three days a week, so we only had power for three out of seven days. And all industry could only run on three out of seven days. Well, you can imagine how good that was for the country.

*G: Well, I presume that both in the war and post-war times, normal people were not necessarily the priority. So, what was the fuel being used for? War effort? Recovering the industry?*

J: Well, the main purpose of the fuel was related to defence. They had to make the guns that were fired. Supply the troops that were later on driving through France towards Germany in the latter part of the war. They had to be supplied with armour and guns and tanks and motor vehicles, and personnel and uniforms and everything. And, sure, the Americans were there who obviously, you know, if it hadn't been for them then the Brits wouldn't have been able to do what they did do. But it was all a big struggle. And that's what fuel was mostly use for at that time. Certainly not much of it was burned.

*G: On the note of National Defence, is that how the public was told that they could help the war effort, by reducing their energy usage?*

J: Well, yes, they were told that and I suppose they did restrict it. But most of the restriction was done by cutting it off! Even if you wanted it, you couldn't have it, which of course worked.

*G: And what about rations and food imports?*

J: Well, things were fairly basic, you know, especially in this country. So, we never had a fridge before we went to America. But we did have a sort of a "cold" outside space where we could put something. Basically, it was a cupboard with netting all the way round it, with very small wire netting, and there was a breeze coming through it all the time, so it did keep things cool. And it was fine for three quarters of the year, but it wasn't much good when it was really hot. You know, you couldn't buy it today and keep it till next week. You had to buy it today and eat it tomorrow or the next day. And all the shops sold meats and things. Most of us all went down to the butcher once a day. That was no such thing here as supermarkets, where you can go in and buy a bit of everything and put it all in the car and drive it home to last a week. You had to walk to five different shops in the village. One was a greengrocer, and the other was the butcher, and the other was the dairy selling milk and ice cream. Well, no. In those days, there was no ice cream.

*G: Where was this food grown? Were the animals in the butcher all raised on English pastures? Was all of the grain grown in England, or was it imported?*

J: Yes. Some of it came from America, of course. But most of it, I think, was in the UK. And I mean, all the fields behind where we lived happened to be full of sugar beet. Well,

I didn't know, and neither did anybody else, what sugar beet was until we couldn't get sugar from the warmer climates. It's a thing that looks like a turnip or you're on beetroot but it's got a sugar base, and you couldn't get regular sugar out of it. Don't ask me what you have to do, but you boil it and crush it and so forth and then collect the juice. And that is basic sugar.

*G: And you said you only found out once the war began. Does that mean that stuff was being imported before and then imports shut off?*

J: Yes, yes. The huge majority of sugar cane came from from the Caribbean. Any vessel that was carrying anything useful, and all sorts of vessels that weren't carrying anything useful was sank immediately by the Germans. Their submarines were blasting ships away. Moving anything at the beginning stages the war, there was a huge liability of being sunk by a big fleet of German submarines which lurked around basically, you know, without any deterrence because the Brit were busy and the Americans weren't in the war, you know, to begin with, so there was nobody. Before they got their wits together and started building submarines. Any energy that was available was things like submarines and building guns and making ammunition and making uniforms for soldiers and sailors to wear.

*G: When you went to the US, what were the changes that you experienced in the way that you and people experienced energy and how it impacted your life?*

I think the primary means of energy production was coal mining early on. I'm not entirely sure. But also, I mean, what I do remember is pretty soon after oil became so difficult and expensive. I remember looking at a picture of Texas and seeing, literally, literally 50 almost hundreds of different oil wells pumping away from the ground. And all over the place! You throw a ball between one and the next one. And they are all pumping away. And if you know where to look, you could find pictures of very dense masses. And of course, they were supplying oil to the British and everybody else as well as themselves. There still are whole areas where they're very dense, but not as dense as they were when the whole economy was dependent on Texas.

*G: Did the US ever have any energy rationing things?*

J: They did have restrictions. I can't remember exactly what they were. But not nearly as severe as they were here. First of all, because they whacked the price up. That would inhibit a lot of people. But you know, America is a lot different from here. And the

economy is on the move all the time. And it was then, and it is now. Cars were everything, well not one person in 10 in the UK had a car. So, it's a kettle of fish, really.

*G: And before you left the US, did you see anything about miners strikes in the country – you might have already left.*

J: I don't actually know. I mean, I know it went on. I mean, the mistake in this country was they didn't have any reserves. So that when the production of coal and or oil was cut off, they couldn't generate any electricity. In America, there was a much wider spread of energy source. Especially a whole lot of available petroleum, which I mean, there's virtually none in the UK.

*G: Can you talk a little bit about the minor strikes in the UK, both the Heath and the Thatcher ones?*

J: Well, Heath was hopeless. The unions here in the UK are a lot stronger than in the US. And when the miners went on strike, which was mostly coal miners, because they need the coal to generate fuel, Heath said, "Oh, that's awful. We'll close the industry down for three or four days a week." So, it was the government restricted a whole lot of industrial activity for four days a week. Two of them were weekends. But two of them were weekdays. So, we were on sort of three days week. Well, you can imagine what good did to the economy. And that was all in an effort to reduce fuel consumption. That was the main purpose of it. So, that was in the, whenever it was, the early 60s or middle 60s, sometime. When Thatcher came along, she was smart enough to know, "let's do something about this before it happens again," because it was the British unions that demanded this because they were striking for more pay. So, Thatcher, first of all, she made sure that they were putting away a lot of oil in reserves, they were literally filling up mines, which, you know, had a big open space underground, they were filling that with oil so that they could draw it out when they needed regularly rather than having to, so to speak drill for it. So, she, she made the precaution of getting a lot more in reserve, so the unions didn't have the strength.

They did go on strike, but there was enough oil here to supply everybody while they were on strike. And in the end, because they were on strike, they weren't being paid. And the ladies of the families decided they wanted to have food rather than be on strike. So, the unions had to send their people back to work in order for all their members to be able to eat.

*G: So, what was the role of the women and wives in these strikes?*

J: Well, the women said, “Look, this is nonsense. We want food for the family.” I would doubt that the women could pay any money to anybody. That's what causes the problem, is when the money runs out. That's the only reason Thatcher prevailed and Heath didn't. She had saved enough money in the government to outlast the unions, as far as pay was concerned. So, she had money to operate the government and everything else, whereas the unions didn't have money to feed their union members.

*G: And were all of the mines operated by the UK government?*

J: Not all but most. I mean, I don't know whether that's still the case today. I'm not sure. But it's not so important today, because there are other sources. There are oil sources, there's waterpower, there's nuclear. But even those, I would guess, and I'm pulling a number out of the air, but I bet coal is 50% of all that's used in this country. It's probably higher here than it is in the US, where so much can readily come from oil.

*G: So, is that the first time you were hearing about alternative energy sources?*

J: Well, I don't know when that was. I'm not sure. It's evolved over the course of my lifetime. It didn't happen overnight. When we first went to America, I was 16 or 17, we didn't have any money. We basically lived in a one big room flat in DC and my dad and mother and we all went to work, and I was working as a messenger for the British Embassy. So, the only reason we kept going was because there was three of us working and we managed to pay the rent for a little while.

*G: You said that renewables had evolved over your lifetime. Where do you think it's going? What are your predictions? Will we make a transition to carbon net zero?*

J: I think the answer is yes. They will, but when that happens and how soon. I think to say that everyone here may not drive a petrol motor vehicle 10 years from now is barmy. It simply won't work as quickly as that. And the UK government has said, if I understand it right, that there will be no new petrol fuelled motor vehicles will be sold after 2030. Well, that's barmy, I think.



*G: Can you tell me your name, your relation to me, and a little about where you grew up?*

S: My name is Sally Drayson, and I am Geneva's grandmother, and I grew up in Indianapolis, Indiana, which is where I was born, and I lived there until I was 18 and then went to university at Douglas College which is part of Rutgers University in New Jersey. From there, I was fortunate to be offered a job with the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) in Washington DC. So, I worked for the DIA and my good friend from college worked for the CIA, and so we both went down to Washington in our ambition to live in Washington! Didn't care what the job was, just wanted to live in Washington, so we went to Washington and shared a flat.

*G: What was so great about Washington at the time?*

S: We just thought it was an exciting place. When we were in college we belonged to the Model UN, and we went to Washington for a conference -

(J: And look who she met!

S: You're not supposed to be in this.)

S: And we just thought what an exciting place it was. It would be just fun to work there. And that's where she introduced me to Jeremy, and we went on a blind date.

And I wanted to go there because I thought it would be exciting to be near New York. It was 45 minutes up the turnpike to New York City, and it was just all places I had never been as a child, and I wanted to see a bit more of the US.

*G: So, you didn't really travel a lot as a child?*

S: No. We didn't travel a lot. We travelled locally. We used to have horses that we would take around to horse shows and things so a lot of inland Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky. But then my grandfather had a summer house in Ontario, Canada in a place called place called Manitoulin Island, which is the largest freshwater island in the world. And it's on Lake Huron. It's 100 miles long and on the island, there are 100 lakes. The house was on one of the lakes, the biggest lake on Manitoulin Island. And so, we would go, every summer for, I don't know, a month or something like that in August. And part of it was because there was no air conditioning in Indiana, it was very hot, humid summers. So part of the thinking was to escape to Canada, where the weather is much more like England in the summer, where you don't have the high humidity, and so this place on the lake, it was very remote was in 200 acres, middle of nowhere, hasn't changed much all of these years. And so, it would take, at the time, about three days to get there because the roads weren't great. There weren't the bridges that there are now, so it was a real expedition, which was part of the excitement to get there. We went by car, a sort

of station wagon with seats in the back of it, with the dog. And then we stopped in these funny little cabins and things to stay the night. But part of the excitement of the whole thing was getting there. So, we would be there and to be in with there was no electricity. So the water for the house was pumped directly in the lake into the house, you know, very clean clear water, you could just drink it out of the tap. And we had coal oil lamps, where you can kind of visualise the sort of glass chimneys with the oil and this wick that goes down into it. And you could adjust it. And it had you know, produced a terrible black sort of smoke, you know, the chimneys that these things were so polluting. And we didn't know at the time – it was the only option. And we had open fires. And we had an icehouse. The icehouse was built out from the ground, it was a wooden structure. And then it was filled with sawdust and the lakes would freeze in the winter, really thick, thick ice, and they would cut big blocks of ice off the lake and the winter when we went there, somebody would come in, but put it in the icehouse and cover the ice with the sawdust. And it would last all summer. So, you'd have to get the big block of ice and bring it in and put it in the icebox to chill things. I loved it. I was very much against them getting electricity when the time came because it wasn't me who had to clean the coal fire lamp, drag in the ice and the wood! We always had fires even when we had electricity. But it was a different time. Fantastic. Go out in a boat and put a line in the in the water pull up a fish.

*G: What was the reason that there was no electricity? No AC? How much of it was technology not being around and how much of it was logistical?*

S: It was just so remote. They didn't have it available. There were no telephones. You had to drive to the nearest town five miles away if you wanted to make a phone call. You'd go into the phone office, and there'd be this switchboard with somebody punching things into the wall, and you'd have to sit there and then try and phone down to the US if you wanted to phone home.

*G: When it did become available was that because the US government or the Canadian government did a push to expand infrastructure?*

S: I don't know, I just think it was a gradual, it became a little bit more civilised. They ran a few electricity wires a bit further. I mean, to bring it into the property, the drive to get to the place was a mile long. So, I suppose my grandfather had to pay to have it put in and for a long time, he didn't bother. But they finally realised it was so remote that maybe it made sense to be able to communicate a little bit more. It was really long time before they got a phone. But they did have electricity that earlier, but I don't know what he had to pay to have it run into the property - he probably did because it was private land. So anyway, it gradually became a bit more up to date.

*G: In this remote house in Canada, how did you cook things?*

S: I think it was an oil stove. Gradually with electricity, it all changed. Electric everything. In Indiana it was probably gas. Mostly gas, maybe electric. I can't quite remember. I think everything seemed to be pretty up to date. We had a dishwasher probably, you know, a long time ago, before there were even thought of here (the UK) so was all pretty. But again, it was probably a lot of gas. I think gas or electric.

(J: We had a dishwasher, Geneva, but her name was Marjorie.

S: That's terrible. [Laughing] Stay out of the interview.)

*G: When you came to the UK, how did some of the amenities that you had in your house change where we use?*

S: It was pretty good. End of 71, beginning of 72. The house we moved into in Betchworth, we lived in London for six months in and rented somewhere while they had redone the the kitchen. So again, it was pretty it was pretty up to date for its time. And yeah, you know, there was never any great hardship. The hard part was doing the shopping!

*G: Did you ever experience any energy rationing, either during the Cold War or during the miners strikes in the UK?*

S: During the miners strikes there were power cuts in the homes as well as businesses could only operate three days or something. But there were power cuts to conserve energy. And they would be like for two or three hours, maybe in the evening. And they you know, they made all the television channels end at 10:30. And they you know, they sort of restricted how much you know, electricity could be used or how much energy could be used. I think things like supermarkets stayed open and hospitals, but a lot of business that's had to close and they really suffered as a result. You know, pubs and normal businesses could only operate three days a week. We had to queue up for petrol at times I can't quite remember exactly when that was but there were petrol shortages. So, you had to queue up and get it when you could. Some of those seem to me not that long ago, but I can quite remember when that would have been, but I think then during the miner's strike, that's probably when most of it was. But in the house, we're in now, we have this Aga oven, which traditionally they were fuelled by probably wood originally then coal, and even in our day here, some of them were still operated by coal and then gradually they seem to change over to oil or to gas. And when we move to the house here, there was one here that was oil fire, but it was very unreliable. Boiling hot one day,

and the whole idea of the Aga is it's on all the time. You turn it on us, you set it and the temperature stays steady. You have the hot oven, and the cool oven and the hot plate and cool plate but they don't vary. They just stay steady unless you turn it up and down a bit. Ideally, you get a steady temperature, and you work around to things depending on whether you want things to be on the hot thing or the cooler thing. So anyway, this one didn't work. So we found a secondhand one, at the time they were a very expensive piece of equipment to buy, and very sought after for larger houses, particularly houses in the country because they also provide a source of heat, as you can imagine, being on all the time, they provide quite a lot of heat, some people could heat their hot water, or they'd have a hot water tank that they would heat from it as well. So, in some ways, they were probably in their day, a pretty efficient way to have heat and hot water and all that. So we we found a secondhand one, which was originally had been oil fired, but someone had converted it to gas. Thinking that, I guess at the time, was cheaper way to do it. And, of course, people have oil fired ones, they have to have a big oil tank, and they have to keep the oil tank filled up. So, it's not as clean. The fuel I don't think was as clean and the works of the Aga would get blocked up easier. Anyway, so this one was gas, which is the one we've had for 42 years. And it's a way of cooking, which a lot of people don't understand. But you get used to it, and most people really like, as do I. But, of course, during the energy crisis and everything, to buy a new one would be, I mean, thousands of pounds. But now because they're very out of fashion, because they operate nonstop - I mean, the man who fixes ours tells us it costs 25 pounds a day to run it - they have become very, very unpopular. And whereas even buying a secondhand one used to be quite expensive, now you can't give them away. Literally, I've been offered three or four newer ones than ours. And we've met people up in New England, Vermont, who have them. Because in a warm climate, they're no good because it's too hot all the time. But in colder climates, like up in New England they have been very sought after as quite an expensive bit of equipment. But now, you know, of course Aga has now changed over so they have an electric version. And they have they have different different versions of it. But to me that none of them are the same, but you know, I'm very out of date and people were horrified. But no one in their right mind these days would put a put a new one in like we have.

The other thing that's brilliant about it is when we have a power cut, and you can't boil the kettle, and you can't turn on the oven, and you can't use the microwave, this thing is steaming away. When there were the rail strikes and the horrible storm and 87, and we didn't have any electricity for 10 days. And [Jeremy] was trying to go to work, he would put water in the bottom of the Aga when we went to bed so he could shave in the morning, you know, with hot water, and then go to the office and have a shower or something. Whenever the power's out, the electricity company phones up and says "Are you okay? If you need anything, let us know." We're fine, because we've got the Aga. So

that's another bonus. But it's as I say, I wouldn't get another one now. The era has moved on.

*G: Were there other types of self sufficiency did you experience? And was it to the end of trying not to import things?*

S: I think during the war, it was not being able to import things. They needed to grow everything they could themselves and any equipment or things that might be used to transport things for distances or overseas were not available. So, they just had to make do with what they could produce at home. And I think here the whole attitude is much, much less wasteful than it is generally in the US. Recycling - we're not brilliant at it, but we do try. I think people are much more conscious here about trying to do the right thing.

*G: So you lived through the Cold War. Can you tell me a little bit about what that was like? Just what you remember about the Cold War generally?*

S: I just remember everybody thinking they needed to build a bomb shelter, In the US everyone was sure there was going to be a sort of nuclear catastrophe next week. And we never did. We never had one. But I know there was talk about, getting provisions, putting provisions in your basement, tin cans of food, that I kind of remember - whether we did it or not, I don't know. But I remember there was a lot of talk about doing it. But I was still pretty young, I don't think I worried so much about it.

*G: Can you tell me about your job at the defence department during the Cold War?*

S: I went to Washington in '67, this before the start of the Cold War I was very inexperienced in our new recruit, and one of the first things I did was to be sent to the Pentagon because it was the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. So, I was working in the in the Pentagon, which was really quite, quite exciting stuff, except I had no idea what I was doing really, I mean, I was reading messages that were coming in. I can't really remember. But it was a very basic job. But it was quite interesting, because it was in the Pentagon. You had briefings and, and the people we were working for were these attaches, so they were naval and air force and military officers, who were stationed in all these different countries. And every country would have a military attache, and then an assistant attache, and they would work within the embassies in the countries. And I there was a suggestion that I go to Romania to work as a researcher. Basically, it was sort of secretarial, to work in one of the embassies in Romania. And, I mean, it all came back because I had my degree in Russian studies. So I was not fluent in Russian, I hasten to add, but I knew some Russian and because of that background, it was why I

got involved in the Soviet, Eastern European bloc countries. But for one reason or another, I didn't go. And of course, I've always wondered what would have happened if I had gone. But then I was made a research analyst and stayed in Washington. There was there was a team who were looking at all the railways and all these Eastern European countries. They knew wherever a railroad was or how many rail cars they were, and they knew which track. And the attaches would go out and drive around and send those reports. Say, you know, the track is broken here. And of course, they had to be careful because in the Soviet Union, they couldn't just go wherever they wanted, you know, there were always people trying to restrict what they were doing. They go out and try and gather these reports and send them back. And mine was particularly looking at aircraft, civilian aircraft, because in the event of a war with the Soviet Union, we wanted to know how many aircraft might be available, which they would recruit for military purposes, if necessary, so we wanted to know how many aircrafts that were. So we would go out and say, 'I've seen number HT35" because they would crash, and you'd never hear that they crash of course, they were so badly maintained but the Soviets would never admit that anything had crashed. All sorts of things, you know, they didn't want anybody to know. And these were civilian aircraft! But there was, again, there was no satellite photography. While I was still there, we got a top-secret clearance. There was an SI clearance, which came in while I was working, which was Satellite Intelligence, so we had access to things or some of the new satellites that were flying around. So it was quite new, then. They used that you could get good photographs that you get sort of zero in on. Somebody else was doing roads - highways and byways, we called it! When the satellites started, but you could sort of zero in on a particular bit and see if the bridge was standing or not. They had the whole network mapped out. They'd go and see them and if there was a change, you know, the attache would say, well, this bridge has collapsed, and then we'd have to make a note that that's collapsed and see what happens next so that you would know what roads were accessible if you needed them.

In the event that there was a conflict and had to send people to restrain [the Soviets], we'd have to know how to get there, which roads to use. I mean, it was all military based, all for military purposes. Because it was part of the defence department. CIA was more to do with State Department, more politically oriented, but not so much practically oriented towards military. So, it was interesting. But then, I mean, I wasn't there all that long. Because we got married in 69. I was working until your dad was born, basically. And then I didn't come back. And then we moved here so it was a pretty short career.

*G: Amazing, thank you so much for telling me about it.*