Bill Best Interview
with Abby Huggins
Berea, KY
November 13, 2017

00:02 Abby Huggins: This is Abby Huggins. Today is November 13th, 2017. I am outside of Berea, Kentucky at the home of Bill Best for an oral history interview. Bill, can you introduce yourself?

00:21 Bill Best: I'm Bill Best. I'm sitting in a house that I've lived in since 1973. Although, we've been in Berea since [19]62. I'm originally from Haywood County, North Carolina. But I've lived here in Kentucky for over forty, over fifty years now.

00:51 AH: Can you tell me about growing up in Haywood County?

00:56 BB: Well, I was born during the Depression. Lived on a subsistence farm. I was the oldest child of Ray and Margaret Best. And, grew up growing everything that we ate, trading for a few things. When I was young, we took everything to the mill about five miles downstream. The corn to be ground into cornmeal. The wheat to be ground into flour. But when I was, probably in the early elementary school, we were trading for flour and spices, flavorings. And, when my father would take thirty dozen or so eggs each week to McClure's grocery store in Hazelwood, he would trade for flour and pinto beans because we didn't grow pinto beans. They're not typically grown in the mountains, that they were harvested by machine. One of the first things I noticed about the pinto beans was there were stones in them. And, one of the first things I learned to do was to take my fork and mash the beans up to remove the stones so I could avoid breaking any teeth on them. And that's a habit that I have continued to this day. But, anyhow, you could trade in a dozen eggs for several pounds of pinto beans, so it was a cheap source of protein. Not only my family, but a lot of families in the mountains started eating pinto beans during that time. But, daddy would also, by the time I had a lot of memories of this, there were three children in my family. There was a younger sister, two and a half years younger, and a brother five years younger. And, daddy would bring home ten pieces of candy that he had traded for as well. And, I would get three and Adeline would get three and Dan would get three and mother would get one. But, I remember some of the pieces of candy, Kits I think they were called, there were four pieces for one. So, it was always good to have four pieces of candy as part of my one, part of my three pieces that I remember getting at that time. But, anyhow, I don't remember my mother or father, either one, ever using the word "shopping." It was always "trading." And, that's been something that I've done all of my life too is trading things. As probably I'll explain a little bit later in the interview as we go a little bit farther. But anyhow, we didn't have electricity until I was, I believe, in the second grade. I'll have to check my dates on that. But, I learned to read by kerosene lamplight. I don't remember much about learning to read. I learned my ABC's very early from a tenant farmer who didn't read and write. But, he visited us pretty often and he taught me my ABC's. He knew them, but he never used them to learn how to read and write. But, I learned to read and write pretty early. I know very little about that. But, I learned to read and write very early and have continued reading and writing all the rest of my life. Still doing quite a bit of it.

06:10 AH: Can you talk more about your parents?

06:13 BB: Well, Daddy was thirty-six when they got married. Mother was twenty-four. And, like I say, I was the first born, I guess when my mother was twenty-eight. She had a, what was then, a

high school education. I think they only went to eleven grades at that time. Daddy dropped out in the seventh grade to become a migrant farmworker. I don't remember how many years he left home to be a migrant farmworker. But, as I understand it, he did migrant farm work all the way from Florida to New Jersey, perhaps Pennsylvania too. But he talked most about being a migrant farmworker in New Jersey when it was truly the garden state. That's still on its license plates, but I don't think it's nearly as much a garden state as it was during the [19]30s and [19]40s and perhaps even in the [19]50s when it was providing a lot of the food for New York City. But not only did he go to New Jersey to do farm work during the summer, but many of his cousins who were also my cousins, obviously, went too from Upper Crabtree Community, Haywood County, North Carolina. And two of the cousins actually made enough money to buy a farm and stayed in New Jersey. Most of the others came home and eventually took up other things, or maybe inherited a farm of their own or got a farm of their own in Upper Crabtree and continued to work there. But, two of the McCracken cousins were able to purchase a farm in New Jersey and stayed there. Continued writing occasionally to Daddy. And, when I won the North Carolina Corn Growing Championship as a 4-H student in tenth grade, as a fifteen-year-old, and got a lot of publicity, actually nationwide, they read about me in the newspaper and sent an article home that they had cut out of the newspaper, sent it to Mother and Daddy, were boasting that they knew the two of them. But, anyhow, we, they supported me, Daddy and Mother did in my 4-H and FFA [Future Farmers of America] projects. Most of my FFA projects were animal related. My 4-H projects were plant related so I could sort of satisfy the interest of both groups in my projects. But, Mother and Daddy were supportive of my projects, although they gave me some good natured teasing when I was, I did something unusual in the tenth grade with my corn project. I took a sharp toed shovel and transplanted some corn stalks instead of just thinning out my corn. If I had places in the rows that were no corn plants, instead of replanting with corn, I transplanted. They didn't think they would live, but they did live. So, I ended up with my own innovation source there I guess, having a very good stand, which paid off because when the 4-H agent came out to do an estimate of my yield, he thought it was significant enough that the county agents also came out and looked at my corn crop and they thought that I might be good for the men in the community to actually - Like I said, what happened was, they thought that I might be the North Carolina corn growing champion that year. And so, we harvested the entire crop by hand, loaded it in trucks, took it home to be weighed. Took it to the scales to be weighed. And as it turned out, not only was I the Haywood County champion, I was the North Carolina champion, setting a record that lasted, that beat the old record by fifteen bushels and lasted for nineteen years. And so, I got publicity, not only in Haywood County, but in Western North Carolina and all over the country. And the Associated Press did an article and the United Press did an article. And one of the articles, I think it was the United Press, I'm not sure right now, I've got record of that somewhere - they sent out an article saying that "corn on stalk thrives in moonshine country." Sort of taking advantage of the Western North Carolina penchant for moonshining. I thought it was a little bit of a devaluing article in a certain sense, but I was pleased with it to get the publicity as well. But, anyhow, Mother and Daddy were quite pleased with my accomplishment, which was actually their accomplishment too because they had been quite supportive of it. But, the farm was subsistence. We had a very small tobacco allotment, about a half-acre that kept the family going, financially. The basic need each year was to pay off the land payment and the taxes. And we made enough to do that. But when it came time to think about college, I knew that I, Daddy said that being the oldest and there being five of us by that time, actually my younger sister was born six weeks before I left for college, that it might be best if I went to college to learn how to make a living. And I agreed. I didn't feel that I was being pushed out. But, I knew that we had a small farm and it was all they could do to keep things going. And so, I had heard a new English teacher from Berea College had been brought to

my small community school. We had three hundred people in twelve grades. There were twenty-two in my class. And, a new English professor came to Berea - came from Berea - came to my small high school, the Crabtree Iron Duff School, to speak about a place where you could work your way through. And, I was impressed by that. I was not impressed by him. I was impressed by the idea of working my way through school. And so, two years, that was when I was a junior because I was sitting in on a class that had both juniors and seniors in it. And, I liked the idea of working my way through. And so, I asked my English teacher if she thought that I, my grades were good enough to get into Berea College. And she said she thought they were, but that she wasn't sure, she thought my family might have too much money because she knew that my family had wooden floors in the house and that I might not qualify for Berea. But, she called Dr. Weatherford. She said, "I'll call Dr. Weatherford and see if he thinks you might qualify. And she said, "Oh my yes, lady. Tell him to apply." And so I applied, was accepted. That was in the spring of 1954. And so I came to Berea for five years with two majors and a lot of courses that it was hard for me to decide on a major. I took one course in agriculture where we took a field trip to learn how to dig potatoes. And I thought, I'd had four good years of 4-H in high school, vocational agriculture, four years of FFA and I thought, well, I knew more about agriculture than the particular teacher that I had in college. And so, I decided to major in biology instead. And so, a couple of years later, I was working as a PE instructor at Berea College as part of my labor assignment. And by being an instructor, I was able to get time and a half instead of making eighteen cents an hour, I was making twenty-seven cents an hour for my labor, which I thought was a good deal. So, I decided to add Phys. Ed. to my major, got a double major in Biology and Physical Education. Then decided the following year that before I did my time in the army, which I was at that time, I was obligated to do. I went ahead and went to graduate school at the University of Tennessee on a $1,000 assistantship, which was big during that time. And so, I spent a year doing, teaching elementary kids, sixteen different schools, mostly in the inner city of Knoxville at that time. And ten hours a week, I would be going out to do teaching elementary students in Physical Education with the teachers staying in the class as well. So, I was not only teaching the kids, but I was teaching the teachers how to teach Phys. Ed. at the same time. [pauses] I got a little off track there didn't I? [laughs]

19:28 AH: That's ok. No, that's, you're good. Whatever comes to mind is the right thing. [laughs] Well, I'm wondering more about seed saving in your family growing up too, before we get too far ahead. What you observed your parents doing, what you learned from them.

19:52 BB: Well, my father, with his seventh grade education was nevertheless a scientific farmer and he took several publications and was always trying to find new and better ways to do agriculture. He was the first in the community to grow hybrid corn. And influenced me to grow hybrid corn in my 4-H project where I won the state championship in setting a new record. But at the same time, and he was, he grew purebred Poland China hogs, and he was part of a new way of devising a farrowing, little farrowing house for individual sows that was sort of an A-frame farrowing house. Which would allow the young pigs, piglets I guess, to avoid being rolled on by their mothers. That way, more of them would survive the first, the few crucial hours. And, but at the same time, Daddy was scientific in his approach. Mother was with her high school education was very much traditional in her ways of cooking and especially in seed saving. And she was, as her mother had been, one of my earliest memories is being with Mother in my Grandmother Sanford's garden, which was very orderly. Gardens, plural. She had several gardens, including one straight across from her house that when people come by, would come by needing food, she would invite them to take from the garden across from her house, whatever foods they would like.

But, anyhow, Mother was the seed saver. Daddy was all for using hybrid seeds. Mother was saving the seeds that she grew up with and continued throughout her life doing that. When I had my first garden in [19]63 and bought seeds from commercial sources and was bitterly disappointed in them. At home, that Thanksgiving, she said - when I said the beans were just simply tough as nails - and she said, “I can solve that problem.” So she gave me seeds that I had grown up with and had always eaten. And, so she got me started just working with the seeds that I had grown up with that she had always saved. And, I wrote about that a few years later. And, Judy Sizemore in Jackson County, who was doing some freelance writing at that time, wrote an article about my discussion of my mother's seed saving. And, within six months, it was in the Rural Kentuckian magazine, now Kentucky Living, and long before the internet, but not before the telephone and the US Mail, we received eighty-six letters from people in six states interested in saving seeds. And, I, people writing me wanting to trade seeds, or wanting to get seeds from me, asking. And that's in my most recent book there, "Saving Seeds, Preserving Taste," I describe that in some detail. And, as a result of that, to make a long story short, my youngest son, who is sort of following in my seed saving footsteps, that I'm following my mother's seed saving footsteps in, we developed a not-for-profit organization called Sustainable Mountain Agriculture Center. And, to make another long story short, now a days, I have, what, my wife Irmgard says, is over a thousand heirloom bean varieties, and probably a hundred tomato varieties, a few other heirloom seeds as well. We developed a not-for-profit organizations called the Sustainable Mountain Agriculture Center where now we ship seeds all over the world, all fifty states, Canada, Western Europe, even countries in Eastern Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. And what we've discovered is that the Appalachian heirloom beans, the same kind that I grew up with in Western North Carolina, do well all over the world, even in Alaska and Hawaii. In Alaska, they're grown in high tunnels, but in, certainly in Western Europe, especially in Germany, they're doing very well. Much of Canada, and in Australia and New Zealand. Certainly in all of the Southern Appalachian states, they're doing well.

27:08 AH: A thousand different varieties of bean seeds.

27:10 BB: A thousand plus different varieties. We grew sixty some new ones to me this summer and we're just now finishing shelling them out. Just finished harvesting in the last few days and here it is almost the middle of November that we've, we had a late freeze this year, only about three or four days ago. So, I've still got tomatoes in my greenhouse to cut up, ferment, then save for seeds. And we're still drying out the last bean seeds in the high tunnel and the greenhouse. And we'll be shelling them out, most of them will be shelled out in the next two weeks. Then, cleaned up and put in the freezer to save for, and I might add that I've had 100% germination of bean seeds from my mother's freezer. 100% germination after thirty-five years. So, freezing is the way to go with, certainly with bean seeds. We don't freeze our tomato seeds. They last pretty well at room temperature, which in my case is 68 in the winter and 78 in the summer, what we keep our house at. They'll last up to ten or twelve years. But, we don't keep them in the freezer, but we do keep the bean seeds in the freezer. We've got six different freezers that we keep them in at this time. Is that good?

29:10 AH: Well, your mom wouldn't have used a freezer?

29:11 BB: She did use a freezer.

29:11 AH: She did use a freezer?

29:14 BB: As soon as we got electricity and she was able to buy a freezer. But she never defrosted her freezer in all the time. She died at almost eighty-three. My father died at eighty-three. My mother was almost eighty-three, within four weeks of being eighty-three, twelve years later. Because of the twelve-year difference in their age. But as soon as she got a freezer, she started keeping them in the freezer. But she never defrosted it. When my sister inherited the house that we were raised in and called me, probably, it was at least a dozen years after my mother's death. She was the only one in the family who didn't have a home of their own by that time. So, she called me after she had looked in the freezer, saw all of the bean seeds frozen and I went and said I need to kind of check the bean seeds. And so, I got, I think thirteen different varieties, all of which were still viable. And then, when she finally defrosted the freezer some years later, she called me again and she said she'd discovered more bean seeds on the bottom of the freezer and some of them had shelled out and when she defrosted it, she discovered that some of them had sprouted. And so I went and got them too and had 100% germination of seeds that had been in my mother's freezer for thirty-five years. But, the traditional way of, she had kept some in mothballs before that. But, traditional ways of keeping seeds from year to year, much of which, we probably got from the Indians, I'm not sure, was to put a twist of tobacco in with them, then, after that, or hot peppers. And then when mothballs became available, people started using them to keep beans viable and to kill the bean weevils. But when freezers became available, I think almost everyone who had a freezer started keeping them in freezers. Certainly my mother did.

32:07 AH: What were some of those varieties that your mom made sure to save? You said there were thirteen.

32:16 BB: Well, they were almost all different greasy bean varieties. When I was growing up, we didn't call them greasy beans. I guess because everyone, they were all greasy beans, so they were just simply cornfield beans. And what I remember most vividly when I first started harvesting them with my mother when I was probably two and a half, I would be picking the ones on the - they were all grown in corn fields - I would be picking the ones on the lower parts of the vines while mother picked the ones higher up. And I remember the ones being very colorful, different colors of seeds. And I realized years later that the ones I remember were from the Hill family beans. And possibly from my Aunt Bertie's beans. Aunt Bertie's had three colors, white, black, and tan. Whereas, the Hill family beans that we grew, we sell both those varieties now on our website. The Bertie Best Bean and the Hill Family Bean. The Hill Family had different shapes as well as different colors. Eight different shapes and colors. And, I remember the different shapes and colors. I also remember my mother pointing out and teaching me to avoid the stinging worms that would be feeding on the corn stalks at that time. Especially the pack saddle, which is a very beautiful worm, larvae, insect. But, very, if you touched it and some white stinging worms too. If you touched them to the bare skin, welts would quickly come up. And so, I learned to avoid them, but those are two things that were my dominant memories of picking beans. How to avoid the stinging worms and the beautiful colors of the beans. And of course, the flavors of the beans as well. And Mother would cook them on the woodstove. She always cooked on the woodstove. One of my dominant memories is chopping wood. Splitting wood for the wood stove. But my youngest brother won an electric stove drawing, Rural Electric Corporation drawing, when he was five years old. And in Daddy's truck, we hauled it home, put it in the kitchen beside the wood cook stove. But Mother never used it for cooking. She used it for storing pots and pans and heating water. But cooking was still done on the old cook stove because she preferred it, Daddy preferred it, all the children preferred it too. And, I guess that's true to this day. But the beans that she cooked, both

the fresh green beans and the dried green beans, leather britches, there would almost always be a pot of beans on the wood cook stove waiting to be warmed up. Just add a couple of sticks to the coals in the wood cook stove and heat them up. And, they got better at each meal because the pork seasoning would permeate the beans, making them better at each meal.

37:01 AH: You mentioned all the people that started writing you letters when that article came out about bean seeds.

37:11 BB: Right.

37:13 AH: That sounds like it was a sort of a catalyst for collecting all of these new bean seeds. Can you talk about maybe some of those.

37:24 BB: Well, a lot of them wanted to trade seeds with me. And not just writing letters, but phone calls as well. And people paying me surprise visits because they would find out either through the post office or something like that, how to get here. And, they would bring seeds, some people just give them to me. And, that wasn't the only place that people started. They would start trading seeds, wanting to trade seeds with me, or just simply send me a letter and send me a $1 and ask me to send them a half a dozen seeds to get a start. And that's the phrase that is used almost universally among mountain people for sure is. "Can you just give me enough seeds, or trade me enough seeds, a half dozen, or just one or two to get a start?" And I never turned anybody down on getting a start. And very often, they would send me seeds and say "Here are some to get you a start. And would you mind sending me some of this bean or that bean to get a start?" And so, I would do that. But, I also became a charter member of the Lexington Farmers' Market in 1973. And I started the Berea Market myself in [19]74 by getting some of the local fellow gardeners to help get it started. This was long before that article, but, people at the Lexington Farmers' Market, I started selling, what I called heirloom beans at the Lexington Farmers' Market in [19]73. And I started selling the heirloom beans and tomatoes there. And, then many of the people who were my first customers at the Lexington Market were from eastern Kentucky who were newcomers to Lexington and didn't have enough land to grow their own gardens. But, they would bring me seeds and give them to me sometimes in medicine bottles or bank boxes, check boxes from banks. And those are the two dominant images that I have of people bringing me seeds, saying, "Here, try these. They're from such-and-such county. You'll like them." And I wasn't sharp enough at that time to start getting information because, and very often, they would hand them to me while I was busy with another customer and say, "Here, try these. You'll like them." And so, I have some beans that are listed as Red Top Medicine Bottle Beans or White Top Medicine Bottle Beans. But later on, I started trying to document and that's something that's difficult, even to this day. I got an email this morning from a fellow in Transylvania County, North Carolina, giving me the history of a bean because I asked him. And he also gave me a phone number that I'll call tonight, trying to document beans that James Norman sent to me, a beautiful greasy bean that I didn't have. And, like I say, it's explosive, it gets bigger all the time. And, far more than I can handle by myself. But, I'm deeply indebted to the people in Lexington and Berea, especially in Lexington, newcomers to Lexington from eastern Kentucky who brought seeds from their homes. And one - many years ago, this would have been in the 1970s - he was passing through from Cincinnati on his way to his home in Harlan and he gave me some seeds and I didn't even get his name, I just got the information. He said that, and he gave me some information, he said he'd been growing them for years in Cincinnati, but they were a Harlan County bean. He said he'd been growing them for years in Cincinnati, and had over the years

started picking, saving for seeds some of the earliest beans and that way had gradually created a bean that was two weeks earlier than the one that he had had years before. But what I remember, even more about that bean was that he gave it to me early enough in the summer that I could still have time to plant it. And I planted it late, but it still matured early enough. And, I planted it in such a way that it, we had a lot of wet weather after that. And, only nineteen seeds survived. But from those nineteen plants, I saved the seeds. And one of those nineteen plants was different from the others. This was a brown bean and the bean that, one of the nineteen plants was a white bean that came in matured two weeks earlier than the others did. And it was a much longer bean. And so, I saved the seed from that bean as well. And, it bred true the next year. And, I called it, mistakenly, I called it Bill's Original. And I decided, no it shouldn't have that name. I named it after the mountain behind my house, Roan Mountain, that we own the north face of. And so, the Roan Mountain bean is still now one of our best-selling beans, still selling, still breeding true. But I learned from all of that that Monsanto will never be able to control the world's bean supply the way they're controlling some of the corn and soybeans and wheat and other varieties. Because beans tend to mutate readily. And the same, my thinking is, the same solar radiation that gives me skin cancers that I have to have removed at Bluegrass Dermatology in August of each year is also creating new bean varieties. And that's why in the Southern Appalachians alone, we have thousands of bean varieties.

45:36 And, by the time I had fifty or sixty, I thought, well, you know, there's not that many more to pick up. And by the time I had four or five hundred, I said to myself, I'm getting close to the end here. And by the time I had seven or eight hundred, and now over a thousand, I've finally realized that I'm nowhere close because there's thousands in the Southern Appalachians alone. And I'm so happy that there are. And, just the new ones that I had breed true, the new mutants, and I don't care whether it's a mutant or a true breeding cross, it doesn't matter. These are new bean varieties. And we also, as I noted in my book, the chapter there, the forward written by Dr. Gwen Henderson, the Indians were growing the same four basic types of beans that we're now growing, a thousand years ago. And I'm very thankful for that. And I'm thankful that they gave them to us, I'm thankful for the intermarriage that took place and the seed savers among the Indians. And, many of the seeds, as I understand it from Dr. Henderson in her forward in that book, were gathered from burial mound of an Indian woman. And there was a photograph in there of some of those seeds along with your counterparts today. But anyhow, the upshot of all of this, there are thousands of bean varieties in the Southern Appalachians alone. Many, if not most of them named after women because it was the women who were the gardeners who would notice the sport, that's the Appalachian term for a mutant. And, they would grow them the next year and if they bred true, they would share them with family and neighbors, extended family and neighbors. And then, pretty soon, they would be named after that woman. So we have, Aunt Bette, Aunt Bess, Aunt Bessie, Aunt Beth, and go on through the entire alphabet, seeds named after women. Because they were the ones who were the seed keepers. Now, many of the seed savers today are men, typically brought into it by their mothers and aunts and grandmothers and great-grandmothers and so on down the line. But, most of them in my experience have women's names.

48:46 AH: Women were the seed keepers.

48:47 BB: Right.

48:52 AH: Can you talk a little bit more about Native American history with beans?

49:00 BB: Well, what I've discovered over the years is that, of course I grew up in Western North Carolina, near the Indian reservation and some of my early beans that were given to me by family and friends were given to them by Cherokees, people of Cherokee descent. Many of my friends now are of Cherokee descent. I guess some of my great grandchildren can now claim Cherokee descent too. One of my great granddaughters in the photograph in the book, learning to string beans, two of her, I guess, great grandmothers on the paternal side of her family. I don't have any Indian blood that I know of myself. But, I did notice that many of the people who were most instrumental in saving seed claim Cherokee heritage. And, some of the ones that I was most involved with in establishing the Berea Farmers' Market were, had a lot of Cherokee. And, Frank Barnett's great grandmother in there is full Cherokee. But, I think that they were dependent on the protein from beans, at least they didn't have the animals, they weren't overrun by deer and turkeys. And they, especially the cut shorts, that were very high in protein because the seeds were packed so close to the end in the hulls. But, some of the friends, people who've become my friends who are seed savers from way back, claim Cherokee heritage. I just think that we need to be very thankful for them. Cherokee influence. Not just the Cherokee, but the Indians of a thousand years ago, I guess they were more than the Cherokee during that time. But I think the Cherokee were the ones who spread the most broadly, most intensively. But, then, I've got several that were just simply named after the Cherokee. But of course, they had the three sisters, as I understand many other tribes did as well. The Indians would plant the corn, beans, and squash together. And the corn provided the stalk, or the stick for the beans to run on. The beans provided the nitrogen for the corn and for the squash. And the squash provided ground cover to help shade and help control weeds. And the three of them together existed in a very symbiotic relationship and provided a near perfect food for anyone eating it. I guess today we call that succotash. But, the symbiotic relationship of the three together I think is very important.

54:13 AH: Let's see.

54:17 BB: I think I've covered it all, huh? [laughs]

54:22 AH: You’ve covered it all [laughs] Well.

54:26 BB: At least superficially.

54:26 AH: Pardon?

54:26 BB: At least superficially.

54:28 AH: Oh, there's a lot to cover, a lot of depth. Each seed has so many stories. So that's thousands of stories. Well, in your own chronology, you mentioned you went to graduate school at UT.

54:51 BB: I went to graduate school at the University of Tennessee. And, at the University of Tennessee, I was the, I had been a Phys. Ed. instructor in Berea's labor program for three and a half years, mostly with swimming. And, but at the University of Tennessee, I had taken, I was in Country Dancers at Berea. I had a background in square dance from the 4-H club in high school. I was in Country Dancers at Berea. I was also the first male to take Modern Dance at Berea. But, shortly thereafter, several other males joined as well. I was the first and only male at the

University of Tennessee in Modern Dance. I was also involved in our Aquatic Art at the University of Tennessee. Then later, taught Aquatic Art in several short terms at Berea. But, being in the Modern Dance at the University of Tennessee was somewhat dangerous as I discovered because I was called in one day by the chair of the department, who had no training at all in Physical Education, let alone in dance, who had a master's degree in math from Ohio State, but was a good friend of the then head of the department, head of the University of Tennessee, the president. And so, he rewarded his friend by making him chair of the department that he had no training in. So, Mr. Hobb called me in one day and said he needed to talk with me. Said he was going to have to ask me to drop my concentration in Modern Dance because he couldn't have men and women in the same class with such a small amount of clothing on. So, I went immediately to see Ms. Bowman, who was head of the Modern Dance program at the University of Tennessee. She walked back with me to Mr. Hobb's office and she said something to the effect, I don't remember her exact words, but, she said, "Either Mr. Best stays in my classes or I leave." And so, he didn't want to lose his most noted faculty member. And so, he said, "Well, I'll leave him in your classes if he'll take a course under me in administration." And she and I agreed to that, not thinking anything necessarily about it. But, so, I took a course under him, my final quarter there, in administration, in which I got an incomplete. The only thing we did in the class was to build a box to store records in. And the box was all, we could go to the supply place where they sold wood and different things. It was already cut to us, all we had to do was just put it together. But I realized, when I got that incomplete that I had been set up. And, he was saying to me that you will get your degree over my dead body. And, just, because there was no way that I could ever make up that incomplete under him. Fortunately, for me, I left, managed the country club swimming pool that summer, taught Aquatic Art, coached swimming, there's a lot of other stuff involved in this too in my trading my skills for money. But, then I went into the army, spent my six months and came back, taught Physical Education in Knox County, Pleasant Ridge Elementary School, for a year. Then, my spring of that year got invited back to Berea to be the director of the Alumni Building and coordinator of social activities and swim coach and cross country coach and a few other things. My wife and I, my wife was dorm director in one of the dorms, senior men's dorms. And then, in about, maybe even October of that year, I got a call from Dr. Brady, who was a real professional, who was the new department chair at University of Tennessee, Physical Education department. And, he said, "Bill, if you'll, why don't you come down and we'll have a discussion and I'll send you home with your degree." So, Mr. Hobb was right. I would get my degree over his dead body because in the meantime, he had retired and had died and Dr. Brady, who was an outstanding professional, physical educator, he and I had a discussion and he sent me home with my degree. Three years after I should have gotten it probably, certainly two years later than I should have gotten it. But, I wasn't there for the degree necessarily anyhow. I was there for what I could learn and to become better at what I was already fairly good at. But, anyhow, in 1988, after I started, I was hired full time in the Physical Education department after twenty-six years as an administrator. But, I almost always taught and coached. I did whatever I was assigned to do at Berea College. And they assigned me to do a lot of things, much of which, all of which I appreciated, to tell you the truth. In the meantime, I got my doctorate in Appalachian Studies, [19]69 and [19]70. First doctorate in Appalachian Studies. But, in terms of dance, whenever I taught Phys. Ed. classes, I always did exercises with my students. And I did Modern Dance exercises because they were actually superior exercises for physical fitness. I never even necessarily told my students what I was doing. I just did dance exercises. And plies, as far as dance was concerned. But, I appreciate all of the background in dance that I had. Square dancing, I grew up with. The folk dancing that I learned at Berea College, the Modern Dance that I learned at Berea College, the Modern Dance that I learned at the University of Tennessee and the, at one

time, at the University of Tennessee, I was taking Modern Dance. I was participating in Aquatic Art, although not getting credit for it. I was taking tap dancing at the University of Tennessee. I was paying additionally for Arthur Murray dance lessons. I was highly involved in dance. Each day when I went into the dressing room at University of Tennessee, I weighed 174 pounds, in the nude. Was totally in very excellent physical shape. And, doing what I really wanted to do, despite Mr. Hobb's objections to what I was, to who I was and what I was doing. Now you've got it all [laughs].

1:05:02 AH: What made you so interested in dance?

1:05:04 BB: Well, when I was a kid, it seemed like the measure of one's manhood was the ability to dance. And I really admired all these old guys who could do all of these flatfoot, clogging, different dances. It seemed like every male was a dancer. I never, I was never not interested in it. I didn't suddenly discover dance in college. I had grown up observing, but never been given any formal instruction by anybody. It was just something that came naturally I guess, as it is in folk cultures throughout the world. It was nothing new to me. I mean, it's, I think dance, only started becoming considered feminine in the American middle class probably with the rise of football and basketball and things like that, is my guess, I don't know. I just don't know. But, Mr. Hobb was, he was this tidy little fellow with a kind of mustache that was, had to spend quite a bit of time, he was fascinated by how he looked. But he was totally incompetent as far as administration was concerned, and certainly as far as Physical Education was concerned. He might have been good in math, but I'm not sure. But, he and I never got along very well. Although I never confronted him with anything. I just stood up for myself in terms of getting my concentration in Modern Dance at the University of Tennessee. And, Ms. Bowman stood up for me. She had trained under Mary Wigman in Germany, who was a contemporary of Martha Graham, who was the top Modern Dance person in the states at that time, as Mary Wigman was in Germany. And Ms. Bowman was very interested in having me because she did, I was the only male, probably the first male she'd ever taught. She used me for doing adagio numbers. Every time. And we danced with the Knoxville Symphony orchestra. I mean, I couldn't imagine when I was a kid dancing with a symphony orchestra. And then, Ms. Joan Evans in Aquatic Art. I never too, anything in Aquatic Art, but she used me all the time as the only male in her group too. Doing the, all Aquatic Art is is Modern Dance in the water. And Aquatic Art and synchronized swimming were the same thing until I guess the late [19]40s and they split. Synchronized swimming became exclusively, almost exclusively female and Aquatic Art continued to be co-ed. But, I don't know that you'll ever see a male in synchronized swimming in the Olympics. It became an Olympic sport many years ago. But, there have been one or two that I'm aware of, men involved in Aquatic Art. But not many for sure. But, I mean in synchronized swimming, but Aquatic Art, has always been co-ed. And then, I met, I had the International Academy Aquatic Art festival at Berea several years. And, then I met and became pretty good friends with a lady that started it all, Beulah Gunman who died in her late 80s, I guess a number of years ago. But she performed on up into her 80s. And was still considered the best at that time. Anything else on any other subject?

1:09:52 AH: Well, I'm curious if you could you describe a little bit about what those dances were like in Haywood County growing up?

1:10:02 BB: Well it was all, the team dances were all square dances.

1:10:14 AH: Were they four person square dances, I mean four couple square dances?

1:10:15 BB: No.

1:10:18 AH: Or big circle?

1:10:19 BB: Big Circle. And I did, I was the choreographer for Wilderness Road, I didn't mention that, for six years in Berea, when Berea had the Wilderness Road, which was developed by, written by, I can't remember his name right now, Paul, it will pop in my head in a minute, Paul Green. It's the story of the founding of Berea College. And we had square dancing. So, I did, I had to do what I grew up in Western North Carolina, Haywood County. And he once said to me, he said, I want you, when you choreograph this, I want you to do some high kicking the way they do in Broadway. And I said, I'm interested in doing something authentic and I did one thing, I had in the basket, a large basket where the women were sitting on the men's arms in a big circle. I had them turn out to appease him. But, I didn't have the high kicking, Broadway kind of stuff. I said, it's important that this be authentic as far as I'm concerned. And I won. But, we didn't do any of the buck dancing. I never actually learned a lot of the dances that I watched men do as I grew up because they were so individualized. They were doing their own thing. And clogging was pretty much the same way. Clogging, synchronized clogging, came along much later for demonstrations and things like this. It was just simply that men took their proper role and individualized dancing. And, no one ever taught me specific clog dance moves. I didn't, I learned that very much until I took tap dancing in graduate school. But in Country Dancing in Berea, we never did clog. We did mostly English and Danish and we did big circle square dancing, but never any clogging. None of the people, Ms. Caps who was the graduate Phys. Ed. major at the University of Tennessee, probably thirty years older than I was, but she had learned dancing at, folk dancing, basically at Berea College. And then she was in charge. Then, Mr. Frank Smith, who was from England. That's why we did mostly English and Danish, Danish from the John C. Campbell Folk School at Brasstown, North Carolina. But, I saw my father do a few dance steps one time, but he was basically a country fiddler, traditional fiddler. And my first cousin Carol Best was a renowned banjo player until he was killed at age 64 by his 66-year-old brother. Crazy, jealousy of a lifetime. But anyhow, I was just captivated by, and there's one, Hilliard Ross, in my home community who was extremely bashful man, as were his sons as well. His face would just turn red if you talked with him. But when he got out doing dancing, just somebody playing something, he was just, like he was transported into another world. Very, very beautiful dancer. But, I never saw. I only saw him do solo dances. And many of the men did. Just whatever their jig was.

1:15:19 AH: So, most of your career was at Berea College?

1:15:21 BB: Most of my what?

1:15:24 AH: Career.

1:15:24 BB: All but one year. Forty years. Well, my career in education.

1:15:31 AH: In education.

1:15:34 BB: I taught in Elementary Ed., Phys. Ed., Science and Health to seventh and eighth graders [19]61-62. Then we moved to Berea that fall when I was invited to come back to Berea. And then we just, I did a lot of things, I directed the Upward Bound. Well, I did Project Torchlight [19]66-

67, Upward Bound from [19]67-88. But, during much of that time, I was coaching the swim team as well. And also teaching courses in short terms at Berea College in Mythology and Aquatic Art, Literature and Poetry and General Studies. So, I just did whatever I fed into. And fortunately for me, I was good at whatever they asked me to do. So, looking back, you know, I was very fortunate. Not being, I was never a square peg in a round hole. I always was competent at what I was asked to do, which I appreciate. But, just recently, some students that I had taught in seventh and eighth grade - sixth, seventh, and eighth I guess. Some of them were at their 50th high school reunion and they started talking about their experiences in seventh and eighth grade and decided to contact me. So, I've reestablished contact with some of the kids I had last seen fifty some years ago, fifty-five years ago, in fact. And, I'm on Facebook with a couple of them right now. But, what they had remembered was the dance that I had taught them dance as well. And, some of my seventh and eighth grade dancers I had brought to a program at Berea College and some of them appeared on a Knoxville TV station on the Cas Walker Show. And, apparently those dance experiences were what they were most captivated by. And, I had written an article many years ago. I had, part of my graduate work was in Aquatic - not Aquatics, Aesthetics, there's a little bit of a difference there. And I had developed the idea, an article published on the arts that bridge from feeling to thinking. And I had worked in the twenty-two summers, twenty-two years that I had worked with Upward Bound and Project Torchlight. We had focused on the arts mainly because I was developing the idea that the so-called high risk students are simply artistic. And, that if you go approach them through the arts, as a bridge over to thinking, then you can win them over quickly. And that worked out for me. And I had done a thirty-year follow up of students that I had had in [19]66 and students that the principals had designated as trash, the fact is one high school principal pushed me out of his office. He said, "You're dealing in trash." And I was recruiting his high risk students. He said, I won't have anything to do with anyone dealing with trash. When I did a follow up on them, thirty years later, I discovered that they had gone to forty-five different colleges and universities all over the world. And, four of them, four of the guys, first hundred guys had been killed in Vietnam, one of whom was a helicopter pilot. But four out of a hundred, which was an astounding, virtually all of the boys and some of the girls had gone into the military after the program. And this was right during Vietnam. Some of them had come home, one came home with only one leg. Another came home disabled by Agent Orange. But, most of the black students had gone into the professions, most of the whites had gone and become entrepreneurs. And, they just happened to be coming out of the military just as computers were taking off. So, a lot of them who had become entrepreneurs had gone through computers to do it. Which was astounding to me. But, at least it verified my idea of the arts, the important role of the arts in my own background for sure. Because, I was a C major in college. I don't think I even, I had four D's and four A's and everything else was just B's and C's. But I was mainly interested in my own development in how I might assist others in discovering their voices as well. And that it worked out that way. Of course, I thought a C was a good grade. I mean, it never occurred to me that I should be doing something else. But, I didn't try to make grades. I tried to learn what I needed to learn and that was it. Now I can't think of anything else.

1:23:06 AH: Well, can you tell me what your day to day life is like now?

1:23:21 BB: Mostly, dealing with our seed operation. Although, I've spent a lot of time, I spend a lot of time writing. Which is more difficult because my fingers don't operate as well on the computer as they used to. But, I'm going to work on my memoir of some kind that I will probably call *Hillbilly Legacy* to counter the effects of *Hillbilly Elegy*. I think, I don't know whether you've ever read Jack Weller's *Yesterday's People* or not because he was pretty harsh on Appalachian culture.

Hillbilly [Elegy] is pretty harsh on Appalachian culture too. And from my own background, I know that there are tragedies like my first cousin being killed by his brother like that same first cousin's grandson recently committing suicide after serving six years in the military. And, you know, so many of our veterans are now committing suicide. Then I had another first cousin commit suicide years ago. And there have been tragedies in my own family. But, my first cousin, who was, when he was in the Navy was playing the banjo with the Japanese symphony orchestras as a guest artist while he was stationed in Japan. And, I have several cousins who have PhDs. And have done exceptionally well. So, if you look up the Kennedy's, I mean, they've had their problems, the Rockefeller's. It isn't based on culture. As Jack Weller and now the guy who did *Hillbilly Elegy*, I can't remember his name right now.

1:26:11 AH: JD Vance.

1:26:13 BB: JD Vance, yes. It's just crazy when you see what the number of people who are willing to right off an entire culture because of the opioids and things like this. But anyhow, I'm, my, I'm writing. My favorite writing, and where I consider if I have a gift, it's in satirical allegory. The thing I wrote on Harry Caudill, the "Great Appalachian Sperm Bank." Every, all the satirical allegories that I've ever written have been published on place or another. Including one on our website where I redid the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. And I'm working on one right now on Little Donny, Donald Trump, and Steve Bannon. I'm having Li'l Stevie, Li'l. I don't have enough of it yet; I have twenty-seven pages. I wrote one on Rush Limbaugh, Rush Slime-baugh. Others published by Rudy Thomas in Old Seventy Creek Press. But, and then, I've had a lot of satirical allegories published. But, the "Great Appalachian Sperm Bank" is probably the most extensive one. And there was a guy in North Carolina who was going to make a movie of that. And, I kept waiting and waiting and I had his phone number. And I called it one day. And, I asked can I speak with, I don't remember his name right now. I said, "Can I speak with this guy?" And it was his son I was talking with. And he said, "No you can't." And I said, "Why not? I need to discuss with him the progress on the movie." And he said, "He can't speak with him because he died this morning." So, I didn't have much to say after that except to express my condolences for his death. But, I thought the "Great Appalachian Sperm Bank" would make a good movie because of the way I had approached it. Bachelor Smith, it was sort of based on, maybe one of the women who had founded places like Hindman and Pine Mountain, places like that, except more positively about that. But, there are, I think Harry Caudill was, he blamed Appalachian culture too much for its own problems, just like Jack Weller did. But anyhow, that's my writing project right now. But I've, I'm getting set to outline and I had talked with, briefly with a former editor of the University Press of Kentucky about what she had suggested to me that I do one based on my different publications at different times. And so, part of it will be what our discussion was this morning. And then, part of it will be what led me into doing different books along the way. But, I have a very active life of the mind right now. And, but most of it making fun of Donald Trump at this point [laughs]. In my own mind in what I'm writing down. But, I'm having trouble typing because, my fingers, this kind of weather, it's a little bit too cool for my taste. And I'm not doing enough exercise. I have two new eye lenses. I've got macular degeneration in my right eye, but I've got good sight in my left eye thanks to a cataract surgery in my. It's also been in my right eye. And then I've got a new hip in my right hip. So, there's no more dancing for me and very little swimming too. So, my physical activity is basically doing farm work. I wish I could do more. And the table, my sister in law did that, the other one there. But I did all the rock work on the chimney and my wife designed the house and I did all the rock work from it. I've done all these woodwork here. You can see some of the woodwork. Not these chairs, but some of the tables over there. But, I like to do woodwork,

although I don't get to do much of that anymore either. Mostly, we've been so dominated by the seeds, that's why I'm actually anxious after all these years to turn that over to somebody else so I can get back to just growing and selling for the farmers' markets now. That is taking a back seat to growing for seeds. I felt obligated to really get that thing off the ground. And I wish that I had that, more people involved in this. But, so many people are involved in heirloom seeds now. But, very few of them in actually growing them. It's like, I wrote a guy last night on the Facebook, not Facebook but email, wanting seeds. Everybody wants to take advantage of the work of other people and do the distributing rather than the producing. And that's irritating. It really is. I had, we sent several hundred dollars' worth of seeds to a women in Georgia to take to Haiti after the earthquake. And, I suggested to her that she be responsible for making sure that they get planted. Several weeks later, she sent me photographs of all of the plants that were growing. But none of them were beans. And so I asked, where are the beans? And she had to admit that several hundred dollars' worth that we had sent her had been eaten. And, then, a guy in Louisville, we sent him probably several hundred dollars' worth too, to distribute to people. And the catch phrase now is food deserts and food insecurity. And, one of my friends, Frank Barnett, who's featured in the book there discovered that and made me aware of it, he'd been selling the seeds on Craigslist. So, I contacted him and I said, "You know we gave you these seeds to be distributed to people in need." He said, "I was selling the seeds to earn money to give to people in need." I just, it was discouraging. And now, I, just last night, I wrote a fellow a note. I told him about those two incidents. And he's wanting seeds to distribute worldwide. And, but he says, they check out each individual needy person and how can you do that? I just don't think you can do it. I just, so we're going to send him some seeds if he'll pay the postage and see what happens. But, I don't know. I'm impressed by people who actually get out there and get their hands dirty and grow the seeds to distribute. I'm less impressed by people who want the seed growers to donate to be distributed. I think I'm very impressed by people who are actually getting their hands dirty. And, doing the work that needs to be done. Because I've done that all my life and I figure it's less important for me to give seeds to people to distribute than it is for me to actually give them to them myself. And, that's why we developed a not-for-profit organization was to help make sure these seeds end up in good hands and continue to be grown. I think my wife is back, she's done her shopping [laughs].

1:37:58 AH: Yes, and you've shared a lot. And I thank you for your time.

1:38:05 BB: You can ask me some more questions if you want.

1:38:12 AH: Well, I know that the seed saving is something that you may be passing on soon, but something that's been a big part of your life.

1:38:23 BB: Well, I'm going to continue the seed saving, it's just the having to do so much of the work. I want to see other people picking up the - and like my son is very anxious to do at Tennessee Tech, once the things can be arranged. And it seems like the people at the top level are very anxious to do it. But, when you work your way down through the administration, people wanting to have a say and have their own recognizable part of it, that it gets to be a little bit of a problem. Not for profit, even the Seed Savers Exchange, they've, the two people who founded that, husband and wife, split. And I've had problems with them too in the sense that some of the seeds that we've sent, that we send out, are listed on Seed Savers Exchange with not the correct documentation. For example, my friend that this book is dedicated to, Venson Watts,

1:40:06 BB: you can come down, Irmgard.

1:40:08 Irmgard Best: I'm back.

1:40:10 BB: This is Abby, maybe she introduced herself to you.

1:40:14 IB: I did out in the car.

1:40:22 BB: Ok. [laughs] Alright.My friend Vincent Watts who worked fifty-two summers on the same tomato, and the tomato is listed there on the front. It was listed by some guy in Seed Savers Exchange a couple of years ago as being an old Virginia heirloom. Well, it started out that way. But if you have somebody who's worked, and it bears his name now. So I wrote them a letter, withdrew my membership. I'd only been a member for a year and I thought, I ought to become a member. But then, I'm very keen on having proper credit given where credit is due. And Vincent Watts had worked for so long on that, year after year, selecting the best tomatoes. Until, I asked him two days before his death, when did the Wilson Evans tomato become the Vincent Watts tomato. And, he was all tubed up because of lung problems, but he had a yellow pad and he wrote out "1980." And two days later after that, he died. Tell you something else too, this, I don't know that I've written this down, I think I probably have written it down. But if not, I'm certainly going to. When he, I think it was in March, anyhow, I had some of his tomatoes growing in his greenhouse. And I took the best looking one that I had and I put it in a pot. And, bigger pot, and I took it to his visitation at Morehead. And I brought that tomato plant to his visitation. This would have been sometime in March. And, his sons were there, and his wife. And they found a little table, the two sons did. And we put that pot and that tomato on that table, right adjacent to his father's house in the casket, his face in the casket. And everybody knew who came to the visitation what that tomato plant meant because he had worked on it for so long and shared the seeds with so many people. But, I just - and there's a guy whose picture's in that book there now too. You've got a copy of that book, right? You've read it? The Willard Winn, that's his tomato. It's originally from Harlan County. And I've got a photograph of him there, holding a packet of the tomato seeds. And I actually never met him in person until probably thirty years after I'd been growing the tomato. Didn't even realize he was still alive. And then suddenly, he shows up at the Berea Farmers' Market and introduces himself and reaches over and gives me a hug [laughs]. And, but he, I think he's 87 now, just retired a couple of years ago from driving a school bus in Rockcastle County. And I think he's still teaching a Sunday School class at one of the churches there. But, one of my college classmates had given me the seed that Willard Winn had given to him, probably thirty years ago. And I've been growing it ever since, and it's still one of our best sellers and it's a good seller at the Berea Farmers' Market and at the Chattanooga Farmers' Market where my son sells it, big time.

1:44:48 AH: It's a beautiful looking tomato. Yellow and red.

1:44:48 BB: Oh, it is. I'll tell you another story on that tomato too. Dealing with a University Press is a little bit difficult at times too. But, they had chosen as a cover, they had chosen all the writings, but then they put a picture of some commercial vegetables on the front. And then, suggested that that be the cover. Well, and I saw those commercial vegetables and I said, I wrote them an email. And I said, "If the University Press of Kentucky were to publish a book on thoroughbreds, you would not expect to see a picture of a workhorse, a mule, and a burrow on the front. You would expect to see a picture of a thoroughbred on the front. And, why would you

expect a picture of heirlooms to have a picture of the workhorses, of the commercial vegetable industry on the cover?" Well, that got my message across. The very next day, this came with four different pictures of this same tomato on the cover. And so, we chose that one to be the cover. But, I couldn't believe it. Here, people who probably had never read the book, and certainly didn't understand that these were people who were marketers and things like this. Not people, and I said, people who understand heirlooms will think this is a satirical book about heirloom seeds and not the real thing. And so, that got the point across. So, then just three weeks ago, when I had ordered some of those to sell, at the events where I do book signings. The cover inserts, which were contributed by Berea College, $4,000 worth of color inserts in there had been turned upside down. And I got fifty-two books. I don't know, now the press, that wasn't their fault, that was somebody else. I think they were just as chagrinned by it as I was. So, shortly thereafter, we got the books, and fortunately, this was before our seed event here, the first Saturday in August, in October. Fortunately, I had enough left that I didn't need that. But, I was, it makes me realize that any time before I sign one of these books now, I open it up to make sure that the color inserts are right side up. Anyhow, that's my bitching for the day [laughs].

1:48:28 AH: Well, why is it important to save all these seeds and pass along?

1:48:40 BB: Well, if we turn it over to Monsanto, everything will be grown for the benefit of the machines that harvest them, the stores that display them and keep them on shelf for thirty-five days. And we might as well determine that children of today are going to have a life span ten years less than their parents because the food is important. And, good food is becoming increasingly important. And it's important to take food seriously. And, if we believe that global warming is going to be a part of our future, the seeds, heirloom seeds that are adapting, the seeds that are adapting to different parts of the climate the world over are going to be increasingly important as we look to the future. As we try to combat global warming. We're going to have to realize that seeds the world over are going to have to be a part of that. I just think that it's important for, as young children become increasingly acclimated to the electronic universe, it's equally important that they get acclimated to the seed universe and that's very important for young children to watch as seeds sprout and to grow seeds in school gardens. I think it's important for their teachers to be just as acclimated to horticulture as it is to them to be acclimated to the new variants of email and computers as we increasingly have to adjust to them. It's increasingly important for them to adjust to the natural world as well.

1:52:12 AH: Do you get asked this all the time what your favorite bean is? [laughs]

1:52:19 BB: Well, my favorite types of beans. One of my favorite beans is the non-tough half runner that came to me as a mutant over twenty years ago and is now our best-selling bean worldwide. But then, the beans that I grew up with, the greasy beans are also very important. And, it's easier to say what my favorite tomato is. My favorite tomato is the Vincent Watts tomato because the pink tomatoes, tomatoes tend to be color coded and the pink tomatoes are high in sugars and high in acid too, what we call the old fashioned flavor. But, I'm also very impressed by the old fashioned tommy-toes that have intense tomato flavor and modern plant breeding has given us a tomato that no longer tastes like a tomato, it tastes more like a grape. And they're called grape tomatoes. But the old fashioned tommy toes have a very intense tomato flavor. And I think it's important to keep them going as well. So, I can go by types more than I can by varieties because of the bean varieties, I like the cut short beans, the ones high in protein and thin hulls. They're very important to me. So, those are my types, my favorite types.

1:54:02 AH: Well, do you have any concluding thoughts? Anything else you want to say?

1:54:17 BB: I just hope that we get more young people that we start stressing more the importance of growing plants, edible plants as well as the decorative plants, to young people. And maybe every classroom ought to have a terrarium as well too, so the people can be aware of the natural world. I am concerned that we see too many young people walking around with electronic gear, with electronic materials in their ears and on their heads. And too many young children being introduced too early to the electronic world. Although I appreciate the electronic world. I appreciate modern technology and the way we can make plants available more quickly to people around the world. But, let us not become too overly enthused by electronics and let's give the natural world it's chance as well.

1:56:03 AH: Thank you so much, Bill.

1:56:04 BB: You're very welcome.

1:56:05 AH: for the stories.

1:56:08 [End of Interview]