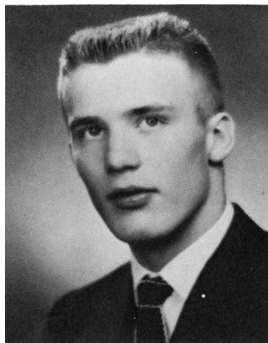




THE WAR BABIES OF WORLAND: ORAL HISTORIES FROM THE CLASS OF 1960



DEAN FREDERICK

Extended conversation after videotaping

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This transcript expands from the video due to additional conversations.

This is **Joan Walseth Purcell**. This interview is being done on August 10th, 2022. And I'm speaking to you from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Dean, let me thank you for agreeing to be recorded for the oral history collection of the Washakie Museum and Cultural Center in Worland, Wyoming.

What is your full name, and was there a nickname you had when you were growing up?

Carlton Dean Frederick: Carlton Dean Frederick – Dean.

Joan: Did you have a nickname of any kind?

Dean: Yeah, but I'm not gonna repeat it –

Joan: Okay, it was not for mixed company?

Dean: Not for mixed company. [Both smile.]

FREDERICKS MOVED TO WORLAND IN 1952

Joan: Where were you born? Were you born in Worland?

Dean: No, I was born in Hutchinson, Kansas.

Joan: And what brought your family to Worland?

Dean: Oil, my dad was in the oil business. He worked for Gulf Oil Company. He was a troubleshooter when they were drilling, and my folks lived in 19 places, in their first 20 years of marriage.

Joan: Wow! So, when they came to Worland, they were ready to put down some roots, right?

Dean: Well, it was another typical move. We had been moved to Nebraska, and then they started running into problems around Worland, so they transferred him to Worland. But, they had a little rule in the company that you couldn't have any outside income. Well, Dad had bought a water truck and then leased it to one of the contractors around town, and Gulf Oil found out about it, and walked into his office there in Worland one day and asked him if he owned that water truck. He said, "Yes." "Pack up your desk." And so 20-some-years of service with the company, and he was out like that. It was on my mom's birthday, and she said it was the best birthday present she'd ever had.

Joan: What did he do after he left Gulf Oil?

Dean: I remember he went to work for a supply company and sold – going out and hitting the rigs and selling drilling supplies, parts for a rig. Things like that. Then he bought the gas station right across from the Washakie Hotel, where Ranchito is now. It was so long ago that the station has been torn down and made into a parking lot. But then he also bought the Firestone store and ran it for quite a while.

Joan: Did your parents stay in Worland for the rest of their lives?

Dean: Yeah, Dad was in Worland when he died. He was at a New Year's Eve party, and they were playing charades. Somebody did something funny, and he went back in a horse laugh and died on the spot.

Joan: What a way to go!

Dean: One of the local veterinarians and a couple of nurses were there, and I mean, they didn't even try to get him to the hospital. He was gone. Just like that. My mom lived on for a good number of years. We moved her to Casper - oh - about 10 years before she died.

CHILDHOOD: SIGHTS, SOUNDS, SMELLS

Joan: When you lived in Worland, you lived in town, didn't you? Where did you live?

Dean: 740 South Fifteenth Street. When we moved in, it was a big boom area. They were developing houses all over the place. So, I had a playground due to piles of dirt that they had piled up around the houses from digging basements, and a couple of friends of mine and I would go over and build small roads on the hills and play with our play trucks, and things. And then scrounge around the houses and see if we could find anything that we could use that they had thrown out. The building was going on real strong.

Joan: I remember that. But I have forgotten, when did you move to Worland? When did your family move to Worland? How old were you?

Dean: As close as I can remember, it was the fifth grade. I was in the South Side School because I only lived three blocks from it. Then in the seventh grade, I switched over to Junior High.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL IN WORLAND: 1952-1954

Joan: Do you remember anything special about being in elementary school?

Dean: No, not really, just that I had a good time. We had several kids in our group, and we always had something going. They let us out for recess. Then, we would get out there, and we would get some kind of a game going. It was very nice socially. I'm trying to remember some of the kids' names, like Jim Storer.

Joan: Oh, I remember him.

Dean: When they said [on the oral history questionnaire], you know, try to remember who your friends are and everything. I had a bad situation with that. All of the people - well, the men that I grew up with and played with and went through high school with - all of them have died.

Joan: Oh, wow!

Dean: Well, the only person that I was really halfway close with who is still alive is Lowell Peterson. I was the best man at his wedding, but other than that, I mean – well, Jim Storer and I were very close and good friends. Gary Bounous and I did a lot of things together. Gary and I particularly went fishing a lot.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES: FISHING IN THE BIG HORNS

Dean: Our favorite deal was to take off Friday or Saturday night. We'd meet, and we'd head up the mountain. You'd sleep in the car until dawn came and then start fishing. Eventually, we would have caught our limit. Or, until we felt safe from game wardens when we caught a few over the limit.

Joan: Did your parents know that you were out fishing all night?

Dean: Oh, yeah, yeah.

JUNIOR HIGH: 1954-1956

Joan: That's true, that's true. What about when you moved on to junior high school? Do you remember anything, any of the teachers, or any of the activities?

Dean: Mrs. Meyers and Grant Peters. I remember Grant Peters because he brought his paddle along that he used in college in his fraternity, and he had a rule. After we'd had a test, if you wadded it up and threw it into the wastebasket, you were fine. If you missed the wastebasket, you had to step forward to get a paddle.

Joan: What?!

Dean: Yeah, so we would do it after a test, and he would hand it back. It would be a few of us who were always wanting to throw it. And yeah, he kept his word, if you missed, YOU got a paddle. It was always good fun. The whole class always got a big kick out of it.

Joan: I'm sure they did.

Dean: I remember Joe Kinlein teaching, of course, he was also my coach for football – Sonja Song's mother was the secretary at the junior high. [Sonja is a classmate.]

Joan: I didn't remember that.

Dean: Yeah, well, I did, I remember it very distinctly because – do you remember Mrs. [Hilda] Meyers? She could be a little crusty at times. Well, she was late to

class one time, and I had been sitting at my desk and some girl had dropped her pencil on the floor. I've been trying to remember who it was, but anyway, I reached down and picked up the pencil, and she came over and demanded that I give her the pencil, and I said, "Well, can't you say please?"

She said, "Give me that pencil!" And about that time, Mrs. Meyers walked in and said, "What's going on?" The girl said, "He won't give me my pencil." Mrs. Meyers immediately reached down and grabbed me by the ear, and took me out of the room. I think I had a sore ear for a couple or three days. But I'm standing out there in the hall for maybe, I don't know, 3, 4, 5 minutes, and she comes out. And she says, "Can you come in, sit down and behave now?" I couldn't figure out why, but she let me back in so quickly. I talked to a couple of kids after the class when the day was over. Turns out she asked what was going on, and somebody else explained to her that all I wanted was for the girl to say please, and she wouldn't say please.

So, I was telling Mrs. Song about it, and when I mentioned what had happened, she said, "Dean, why didn't you come down to the office? She [Mrs. Meyers] should not have done that. You should have come down to the office, and we could have done something about it." But, yeah, I got back into class quickly.

Joan: You said you played football. Did you play football in junior high?

Dean: Yes, I played football, I was in football through my senior year.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES: 1960 STATE FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

It was the state championship game in Douglas our senior year that a bunch of fans in Worland rented a train to come down to watch the game and cheer us on. My folks drove down to see the game, and then after the game was over, they picked me up, and we drove to Dallas, Texas to see my sister. My oldest sister was working down there at the time, and they decided they were going to take off to see her. So, I missed the train ride home. Everybody told me how much fun the train ride was. The celebrating that went on and everything. And I had to miss it.

Joan: Too bad. It was a big event.

Dean: Yes, it was. I can't believe that they could raise that many people to get enough money to run a train. How often do you hear about somebody renting a whole train? So it was a very memorable time. Of course, I enjoyed the game very much, too.

Joan: Yes! Winning is always fun.

JUNIOR HIGH: 1954-1956, PART 2

Joan: Were there any other activities that you remember in junior high? Besides football games?

Dean: No. All I remember is a play that we put on. I've been trying to remember who was in it.

Joan: Robbie Dee Cline. And I think Laine Bailey [DeFreece.] And I think Joannie [Culbertson Jeffres] was in it, too. Maybe. Is that right? Oh, Lowell Peterson was in it?

Dean: Oh, I just remember the play, and you know –

Joan: – and having fun.

Dean: And I can't even remember what teacher was helping with it.

Joan: I don't remember the play, but I know a lot of people remember it.

AFTER-SCHOOL JOBS: FILLING STATION

Joan: What about when you moved on to high school? Do you have any specific memories from high school?

Dean: Well, I had to follow my older sister who was valedictorian.

Joan: Oh, oh.

Dean: But I enjoyed high school. By that time, my dad had bought a service station, so I was working at the service station. It was great during football season because I didn't have to go to work after school. But after football season, I went to work at the gas station almost every night and most weekends.

Joan: What would you do at the station?

Dean: A little bit of everything. You sold gas, of course, washed windows, then checked the tires. That was standard procedure. Then I learned how to change the oil and wash vehicles. We had a wash bay in the back of the station that had high-powered hot water, so I would wash the bottoms of the trucks and the cars. So many of the oil contractors went out in the field, and they would come in, and the bottoms of their vehicles were covered in solid mud. We had the only station with a high-powered hose, so we had a lot of vehicles to wash plus, we were right

across the street from the town's most popular bar. The carwash stop cost you \$2.75.

It would take me better than an hour to do a car. We had a big jack that would hook onto the rear axle of the vehicle. It lifted it up, so I could sit there and wash down the whole bottom of the truck, and then of course, I had to wash the top side and clean the inside. It was at least an hour-long job, sometimes two. We'd get several of those vehicles in there, and I'd have to empty out the mud pit by shoveling the mud into a trailer.

Joan: Did you get paid?

Dean: Oh, yeah. I think it was about \$30 a week and a tank of gas. I was hired to help all day. It was supposed to be a buck and a quarter, or something like that for an hour, but I think I figured out one time I was making about 25 cents an hour for that \$30-a-week salary.

Joan: That's what a lot of us earned in that day, I think.

Dean: Yeah, but I also found out later that each month my dad was putting money into my savings account for college. So he was making up the pay that way.

Joan: That was a good benefit.

Dean: Yes, so I had a little bit of money when I went off to college.

IMPACT OF WORLD WAR II

Joan: Did you remember anything about World War II?

Dean: At the time, I was in Holyrood, Kansas, and we were living in an oil camp. What I remember most is that everybody in that oil camp was working 12 to 15, 16 hours a day because they were supplying oil constantly for the war effort. I remember there wasn't anybody else my age around there. There were a couple of high school boys and my older sister and younger sister. So, I had to make my own fun in this oil camp. It was the kind of oil camp that was very well laid out. They had the pipe racks and places for equipment and everything. Yeah, I remember a big shed. They had a warehouse, and it was just full of machinery and oil field parts. We were, I think, five or six miles from the closest town. Now, you could loosely call that camp a town.

Joan: Do you remember if any of the men that worked there were called to be in the military?

Dean: My dad got called, and it was right towards the end of the war. They put him on a train to Chicago for a physical and to start training. By the time he got there, the Japanese had surrendered. He got off the train, and they said, "We don't need you, we're sending you back." He got on the train and came home. I always kind of felt he did his service with the number of hours he put in getting the oil and supplying it for the armed service.

CHILDHOOD: SIGHTS, SOUNDS, SMELLS

Joan: Now, the next question. When you close your eyes, and you think about Worland and your neighborhood, what do you think of? What do you see?

Dean: Mainly, I saw houses being built because this is the time that the Evans Addition was growing, and there were houses being built all over the place. And like I said, at the time, Walt Wyman and Bob Kronke lived close by. They were a year ahead of me. But the three of us played around these houses. There was a drainage ditch down that street that goes along Washakie Avenue, and we played a lot of games down there. One time we dug a tunnel underneath the beet field on the other side of the ditch, and when the folks found out about that, they all went haywire because it threatened to cave in. So, I think they got it caved in somehow, I don't remember.

But we spent a lot of time down in that drainage canal for all the irrigation that was going on. So, we had a lot of fun down there and then played around the houses while they were being built.

Joan: I remember doing that, too. Where I grew up, there were houses being built, and playing in the mud. What do you see – what do you think about downtown? What do you remember about downtown Worland during that time?

Dean: Oh – I remember the movie theater because it had the matinees on Saturday, and I believe it was a dime or fifteen cents. So if you could talk to your folks out of a quarter, you could buy your ticket in and have enough for a bag of popcorn, Coke, or a candy bar. That was what I remember pretty consistently, in the winter, going to the theater, to the matinees. Of course, in the summer, they opened the drive-in. We had one north of Worland which lasted for quite a while, and then there was one out east of town, and it's right out there by the old Wagon Wheel, which is now an Asian restaurant, but it did not last very long, as I can remember. Just not enough business for two drive-ins in the summertime.

Joan: What about the area surrounding our town of Worland? What do you remember about that area?

Dean: Did a lot of hunting. We'd go rabbit hunting. We walked out of the house and went pheasant hunting. After you got old enough to drive and got a car, then you'd drive out to the badlands and the farm areas – the Laird farm – and hunt pheasant because it supplied some nice dinners for the family, and it was enjoyable. [Loren Laird was a classmate.] We would even cheat a little bit, and go out at night, which was not exactly kosher, but nobody caught us. So, we had our fun. We used to spend a lot of time out in the badlands messing around, especially after my dad got a jeep and I could borrow it. I'd drive around the hills– Yeah, we just had a lot of fun.

WORLAND HIGH SCHOOL PART 2

Joan: If we go back to high school — you played football. Did you play any other sports?

Dean: Well, I tried out for basketball and couldn't make the team. I guess I wasn't agile enough, and I wrestled for a while.

And then, my dad decided I needed to be spending more time at the station. He was having problems getting the help hired. One strange thing about high school. Every year, I had a study hall as the last class for the day, and so a lot of times I would sneak out of school and go to work at the station. I did that up until about the last week of school, and – I'm trying to think of the short guy who was the assistant principal – he caught me sneaking out. He'd gone along that staircase – it was up along the gymnasium and went back out to the shop area. He was sitting up there by the window watching for me and caught me leaving. I got kicked out of school. And so, I went home and laughed about it with my mom. She didn't laugh. She loaded me up and took me back to the school, and explained what I was doing. "Going to work." So, they did give me forgiveness. Let me back in back in school for the final week.

Joan: Did you get to leave early, or did you still have to go to your study hall?

Dean: I still had to go on to my study hall, but then it was the last week of school, so there wasn't much going on. I don't know how many times I skipped out and didn't get caught, but I'd learned the secret to it, which is that they had the big study hall on the first floor – If you remember, the first big room you walked in.

Joan: I remember.

Dean: And they would take roll, and if you weren't in study hall like you were supposed to be – they would send the list down to the library, and they would check you off the list if you were in the library. Well, I figured out the timing on it. And I would catch the person who was carrying the list down on the stairs and say, "Well, I'm here, you can check me off." So, they would check me off the list."

And I would take off. I got away with that, I don't know how many times. Like I said, then I would go down and go to work at the station. But it wasn't every day after school.

And then, I worked most of the weekends because by that time, I had learned how to do just about everything that needed to be done. And I was more dependable than hired help. But Dad made sure of that, he made sure I was dependable. Back in junior high, he made me a deal. He said, "I'll buy you a lawn mower when you go out and – I think – find either three or five lawns to mow and get paid for it." So, I said, "Okay." I went out, and I came back, and I had seven lawns lined up. He kept his word, and he bought me a gas lawn mower, and so for several summers, I mowed lawns.

Joan: Well, you were a good worker.

Dean: Yeah, that's one thing my dad taught, is to be a worker. And there were times during the winter I'd go out and scoop snow off sidewalks, make a little bit of extra change. Anything to make money.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES: EAGLE SCOUT

Joan: Did you belong to any youth groups or church groups or clubs?

Dean: Well, I was a Boy Scout up to high school. I got my Eagle Scout badge, which is the highest one you can get. I was really active in the troop, and during the summer, we'd go up on the mountain and camp quite a bit. The Scouts had a summer camp. It's on the Buffalo side of the mountain, and it was a very nice camp. I remember in particular, one year, the Scout Master got this hay truck with a big bed on the back. We packed the whole troop, all of our gear, everything on the back of that truck, and went up the mountain and came back down the mountain after the camp. Of course, now, you wouldn't get away with that.

Joan: You certainly would not.

Dean: Kids were sitting there right on the back of the bed of that truck, going up the mountain, of course, they wouldn't today. We had several different camps. And the Boy Scouts' cabin is still there at Deer Haven. As you go up to Deer Haven and turn on the West Ten Sleep Road, it is the first cabin off to the right. I remember that cabin being there when I was in Scouts and spending nights up there – even spending one winter night. It was a little bit chilly, and we kept the fire going very well all night. We had some good times up there. Cave exploring in the bat caves, as we called them, and they smelled really bad of bat manure, or guano, as we called it. We had fun.

YOUTH STYLES: GIRLS WORE BIG, FRILLY PETTICOATS

Joan: Do you remember anything about the clothes we wore or the fashions of the day? Hairstyles or clothing?

Dean: Jeans and t-shirts are the things I remembered the boys wearing, that's the only thing I remember. Frank Aldrich always dressed up when he came to school. He would have on a pair of slacks and a dress shirt, and we would respect it. So, when he wore jeans to school, we asked him what was going on. He just said he wanted to look nice. But it was wearing jeans for most of the boys. The girls had to wear skirts. They weren't allowed to wear slacks or anything at that point. Yeah, big, frilly skirts. If you got three of you girls walking down the hall, you'd fill the hallway.

Joan: You are right.

Dean: And then I remember the girls when they had those big, silly skirts on. If they had a low locker, the skirts came up. They bent over, and everybody got a good laugh out of that. And the skirts would get flipped – all those slips that you wore –

Joan: All those petticoats, yes.

Dean: Ladies were not allowed to wear slacks or jeans or anything like that in school.

Joan: That's right, we weren't.

Dean: On special occasions, I can't remember what they were, but there'd be occasions where they would allow it.

Joan: Yeah, maybe on football game days I think we could wear those black saddle pants.

RADIO TO TELEVISION GENERATION

Joan: Do you remember television during those days? Did you have a television?

Dean: Yes, we did. The house we bought had a basement in it, and my dad finished it. That's where my bedroom was. I had a bedroom and my own bath downstairs. That's also where the TV room was, and we had a big piano down there. The thing I remember most about the TV is that my older sister's boyfriend, Dean Harris, would come over and watch TV. He'd watch it past when everybody

else had gone to bed and just sit there and watch TV and then let himself out. Yeah, it was perfectly fine with the folks. It was just him, you know, he was a nice friend and a good boyfriend to my sister.

But I remember the TV signing off with the National Anthem, which everybody would kind of sit there and pay attention to. We only had two or three channels. One of them being Thermopolis KTHE and the other one, Casper. And how we got Casper in there, I wasn't sure, but it was all on cable TV. We had cable TV, and you had to pay for it. Basically, I think they got more channels on cable TV. But starting off, I remember just two channels. When it came on, you had a big National Anthem-type show, and the last thing at night, when it signed off, they played the National Anthem.

PARENTS' LIVES IN WORLAND

Joan: I know that you are a hard worker, and your dad was. What did your mother do while you were at school?

Dean: She worked several years at the Methodist church as a secretary. I guess she was working there while I was in school. It seems like she did something else. I can't remember what it was, but both my folks worked.

IMPACT FROM WORLAND: FREEDOM, HARD WORK, COURAGE FOR NEW LIFE

Joan: What experiences that you had growing up in Worland do you think impacted your life as an adult?

Dean: Oh, I think it was the freedom my folks gave me to go out and go hunting and go fishing. At the time, it was something I enjoyed so much. Gary Bounous and I – a lot of times... we'd take our dates home early on Saturday night and get together, drive up the mountain, sleep in the car, and get up and go fishing the next morning, at daybreak. We did that several times.

Joan: The other thing it seems to me that you learned growing up is to be a really hard worker. What did you do in your adult life? What was your work?

Dean: When I went to college, I was working part-time at a gas station, then I left school and went to Denver because my best friend, Jim Storer, was in Denver, and he could buy beer at \$4 a case. So, I loaded up, and I went to Denver. Went to work at a life insurance company in accounting. The area I was in was what they called the "unit record control area." The company was on an IBM-punched card system, and all the changes to policies had to have a balancing of some sort.

Pioneer at the Forefront of the Computer Revolution

Then the company asked me if I would take a test at IBM. That got me out of work for half a day, so I said “Fine” and went to IBM and took this test. Turns out later, I found that it was a computer programming test to see if you had the aptitude for computer programming, and I evidently did. One of my bosses told me that I passed the test with the highest score in the company. So they asked me if I wanted to go on to a computer school and explained what I'd be doing. So, I said, “Yes, I'll be happy to do it.” I walked out of the meeting, and I had my immediate boss with me. And I said, “What's a computer?” And he said, “You know, it's the IBM thing.” And I said, “Oh, okay.” So, I volunteered to go to a school for something that I didn't even know what it was.

Joan: [Laughs]

Dean: When I got into the classes, I just couldn't grasp what was stated. I just kept having problems trying to figure out what was going on. So, I went to my boss, the engineer, and told him that I just wasn't getting it. And he said, “You're going back to that, and you're toughing it out until the end of that class 'cause your score indicated that you have an aptitude for it, and you're gonna find it.” So, I went back, and all of a sudden, everything just fell into place, and I went from the bottom of the class to the top of the class, just like that. I mean – it just always amazes me to this day – how fast everything just came together.

So I started learning how to program a computer – a 1401 computer. They had 8K of memory. and it had an additional 4K. The 8K memory took up an area of about – I want to say 4-foot, 5 foot high, 3 ½ feet wide, and about 8 foot long, and then there was the additional 4K of memory. That wasn't even the card reader, it was separate. That is where all the logic and everything went on, and so we sat down and programmed how to convert the data that was in the punch card system over to information that can be sent into the computer. We worked on that for about a year or two, got the company all converted, and went from punch card to computer.

That took a lot of long hours. My boss complained one time with me getting paid overtime, I was making more money than he was. But we had a good relationship.

Then I started meeting computer people from out-of-state, going to conventions, and we converted to the system that's called CFO2 –Consolidated Functions Ordinary. There were life insurance companies all over the United States that were adapting to this new IBM system. We would go to annual conventions and learn about different ways to do things, pick up ideas from other people, and share the ideas that I liked. I'd presented a paper to the meeting. It was just a

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collection of people who were all doing the same thing, and we were giving each other ideas of problems we'd come across and how we solved them.

They had some of the meetings in Dallas and some other towns, but I can't remember where. This was back in the early sixties when businesses started using computers, and it grew from there. Basically, I worked with one of the fellows who developed the IBM system.

We had a consulting firm, and then I decided I wanted to go out on my own. I had my business in Texas, although I did move to Chicago for a year and work for a life insurance company. They had gotten into some problems and needed someone to get them out of it. I had enough experience, and I was able to solve their major problems, and get them on the right track.

I ended up moving to Casper and setting up a computer business there – this was back when the independent long-distance companies were starting – where they'd hire a long-distance company to do their long-distance calls. To explain: Because it was so expensive with the traditional phone company – I remember the rates being like 10 to 15 cents a minute to make a long-distance call – the sales team would go out and make a deal with the phone companies for so much time. Then they would go out and sell the time to the individuals, and then the individuals could make phone calls cheaper. But the phone company had to have a way of keeping track of these calls and doing the billing. So, I developed a system on the computers for collecting the calls and getting them tied to the right person. You'd have to have a master record for everyone choosing the phone service, and then at the end of the month, doing the billing.

I did that for a few years, and then I developed a back problem and a couple of other problems and had to quit working. The body just gave out after a while. So I quit working and went on retirement. And from there on, I did part-time work and just got to the point where I am now retired. But it was a very interesting time then.

Joan: Sounds like it, sounds like you were in on the real beginning of the conversion to computers.

Dean: Oh, it was a lot of fun, a lot of long hours. I remember one weekend when I worked about 35 hours. Then the next week, I worked about the normal 40 hours. Then the following weekend, I worked 47 hours straight through. You could only get time on the computer when it was available. I was helping somebody solve problems, and sometimes when you solved the problem, you'd have to run your entire master file. That could take several hours, and you had to stay around in case something went wrong and the program blew up because if the program blew up, then it would just shut everything down.

Joan: What do you think of the fact that that big computer you had back then is less powerful than the one you're using right now?

Dean: That computer we had then is less powerful than this right here. [Holds up his smartphone.] Actually, they say now that there is more power in a smartphone than there was in the computers that we used to send the man to the moon on.

The computer easily went from the 1400 series to the 360 series. And they brought out the 370, and that's when it started getting speeds up to match what they have today. It was quite a lot of fun watching the growth of the change in the industry. What the future holds is anybody's guess.

Joan: I'm sure, especially since you have so much knowledge about how computers have changed – and changed our lives.

RETURN TO WORLAND

Joan: Tell me, what brought you full circle back to Worland?

Dean: I enjoyed Wyoming more than I liked Texas. I didn't like the heat, for one thing, and I missed skiing. Well, I moved back to Casper. Casper had skiing, and I like to snowmobile and like to water ski. I'd go out to Alcova Lake by Casper, even after I put in for the disability retirement. Then I bought an RV park in Casper and ran it for a couple or three years and built it up. I mean, when I bought it, it was basically abandoned. I fixed it up. I built the business up. Sold it. It was wearing me out. I was getting older by that time, and the long hours just got to be too much for me. So, I sold it.

I met a young lady from Worland online. So, I came to Worland and lived with her for a while. And then we split up, so now I just kind of hang around in Worland and head down to Yuma, Arizona, the first part of October and spend the winter down there.

I got a lady friend down there that I met. We see each other. But one of these days, I'm gonna have to settle down and make a decision – I'm getting too old for back and forth in the spring and the fall, but I enjoy just being in different places. And it just has been an interesting life.

LOOKING BACK: WE HAD SO MUCH MORE WE COULD DO HERE

Joan: Is there anything else you'd like to talk about or mention before we end our interview?

Dean: Oh – just how much I enjoyed growing up in Worland. I didn't realize it until later. Some of the things that we could do, oh, for example, carry guns in our car, you couldn't do that in the city. Yeah, we'd get out of school and go hunting, get out of school and go fishing. Growing up, I'd say that there was nothing to do in Worland. And then I went off to college. I started talking to some of these kids that had not ever gone out hunting, never gone rabbit hunting, never gone pheasant hunting, never gone fishing, never gone snowmobiling up in the mountains. There was no skiing, and they'd never water skied. They lived in the big city, and their main entertainment was the youth centers, where they had to pay to get in.

We had so much more we could do around Worland, and so much of it was free, I mean, we had to save money for gas and things like that. And then, look at all the dances we had. There were so many things like that that we had in Worland when we were growing up that so many other kids that I talked to when I got to college didn't have.

Joan: Yeah, dances.

WORLAND SLOWLY COMING OUT OF THE COVID PANDEMIC (STARTED IN 2020)

Dean: Oh, yeah, it was a lot of fun times, I enjoyed growing up there in Worland, and I like coming back here now, and except with the COVID, it just shut everything down. Worland is slowly trying to come out of it. But unfortunately, it's kind of a dying city. You know we used to have 20-some gas stations here. Now there are three or four. So many of the businesses downtown have closed down. It's such a shame because people are doing – and I'm guilty of it – doing so much by mail, Amazon, and things like that. There's not even a men's clothing store in town anymore. And I'm not sure that there's even a women's clothing store, Main Street has just changed dramatically from what it was. I remember Saturday night, dragging Main. Well, now, you go down there, and you could just shoot a shotgun down Main Street on Saturday night and not hit anything. It's really too bad, watching the town kind of die off, but people are still coming to town –

Joan: Then we can all keep our fingers crossed that something will happen to bring a little more life back to town.

Dean: I think what's so funny is there are very few homes available for sale. You'd think with things dying off like they are, people would be moving out. But I understand that there are a lot of people who have been moving in who work from their homes. And the school system is good, we've got a very low crime rate. As far as the facts, we've got five times more police than we had when we were

The War Babies of Worland: Oral Histories from the Class of 1960

growing up, and Worland's got maybe a quarter percent more population. I remember we had three cops in town – I think they've got 13 or 14 now.

You don't hear about any problems or anything like that. Not much crime there in Worland. Cops are all watching out for speeding. They say there is somewhat of a drug problem in Worland. If there is, I haven't seen any sign of it.

THANK YOU ON BEHALF OF THE WASHAKIE MUSEUM

Joan: Well, that's good. Dean, I'm going to say thank you for sharing with us and sharing for generations to come. They may listen to your story about your years in Worland and your life and enjoy hearing what things were like in those days.

Dean: I want to thank you all for getting it all together. I know you all put a lot of work in on this.