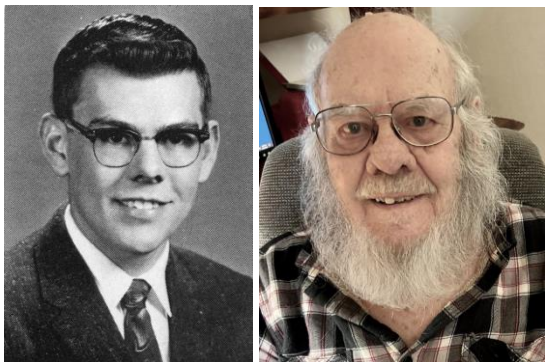




THE WAR BABIES OF WORLAND: ORAL HISTORIES FROM THE CLASS OF 1960



DENNIS BOWER

Extended conversation after videotaping

Interviewers: Joanne Culbertson Jeffres & Cathy Healy

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This transcript expands from the video due to additional conversations.

This is **Joanne Culbertson Jeffres**, on June 27, 2022, at approximately 9:45 am Mountain time. Dennis, 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?

Dennis: Dennis Leroy Bower.

Joanne: Was there any other name or nickname that you were known by when you were in Worland?

Dennis: Well, yes, a few nicknames that some of the high school kids put on me, but they're not ones that I would like to talk about on this recording.

Joanne: Where are you now as we make this recording?

Dennis: I'm at my residence in Worland. I'm in my living room.

RJ BOWER MOVED TO WORLAND IN 1916, ALBERT FAMILY (MOTHER) IN 1914

Joanne: If you weren't born in Worland, how old were you when your family arrived, and when did they leave?

Dennis: I was born in Worland. I'm not sure whether I was born in the old hospital where the old library used to be or whether it was at the farmhouse near Worland. But I have lived in Worland all my life.

Joanne: Did you live out on the farm?

Dennis: Just for one year

Joanne: Then your family moved to town.

Dennis: Yes.

FAMILY HISTORY IN WORLAND

Note: The Bowers, originally from a farm near Urbana, Missouri, are one of the foundational families in Worland. Dennis arranged for us to have the history of the Bowers written in 2002 by his older brother, Warren. It focuses on their father, Rollin James, also known as RJ. [Warren's history of the Bower family](#)

In Brief: RJ's older twin brothers, Earl and Ray, moved to Wyoming in 1911, his parents visited in 1915 to see whether to move West and claim homesteads on new land that had opened up with irrigation. Their names were Elijah Vernon and Margaret Jane McDowell Bower.

RJ, who probably had been home in Missouri running the family farm, moved to Worland with his parents and four sisters in 1916. Rollin married Beulah Dorothy Albert in 1922. [Additional note from Dennis: "The Albert family moved near Worland to Neiber in 1914 as sharecroppers from Loveland, Co. There were three boys and three girls in the family. Our classmate, Kathy Albert, was my cousin. Her father was Ray Albert."]

As you listen to Dennis's interview, you'll see how much he takes after his father.

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1. RJ played on his high school baseball team and stayed active with baseball in Worland.
2. RJ was fascinated with machinery. He loved plowing and was very interested in replacing horses with tractors. He won a U.S. drawing for a homestead near Frannie– about 85 miles north of Worland. He drove a steel-wheeled tractor there to clear the land, put it into production, and then sold it.
3. RJ bought a thrashing machine as early as 1930 and continued to thrash for many farmers in the area, even after he stopped farming and moved to Worland in 1942. That was when Dennis was about a year old. One week, Rollin and his son Warren – 17 years older than Dennis – spent a week rebuilding one of his thrashing machines.
4. RJ never wanted to hurt anyone's feelings.

IMPACT OF WORLD WAR II: FATHER IN WWI, OLDER BROTHER IN NAVY IN WWII

Joanne: Dennis, did World War II affect your life? If so, how?

Dennis: No, because my father was also a rancher, and my mother planted vegetables and things for us to eat that were possibly rationed. So, it didn't affect me at all in that way. My father had been drafted into the army during World War I, just two months to the day before the war ended. He was still in training as a radio operator. I do not believe that farmers and ranchers were exempt from serving their country during WWI. To my knowledge, WWII changed exemption status for many occupations.

My brother, Warren, was 17 years older than I am. He enlisted in the Navy in World War II. When he would come home to visit, my mother liked to take pictures. So, she bought me a small Navy uniform so we could have our pictures taken together. After I grew out of that uniform, it was passed on to Warren's oldest son, Jack, and he had his pictures taken in the same uniform. When Jack got married, the Navy suit became his so he could have his kids' pictures taken with it. Grandfather Warren may have been in those pictures because his Navy uniform still fit after all those years. I still have that little uniform here at the house now. I think my kids had their picture taken in it too.

Joanne: What a family keepsake! You'll have to have it framed and a little story put with it for generations to come.

CHILDHOOD: REMARKABLE MEMORY!! WHO LIVED WHERE SOUTH OF MAIN

Joanne: What was your neighborhood like, Dennis?

Dennis: When we moved to Worland, we lived at 608 Grace Avenue. When I started to be aware of the surroundings, there were no houses beyond Grace Avenue. It was Grace Avenue, the alley, and then the fields. And then I remember lots of new buildings being built, probably after World War II, just on my street. Starting down Grace Avenue, they built some veteran's apartments for the vets coming home, or at least that's what they called them, and that's where Dennis Smith lived. Then coming up the street, going east, my uncle, Elmo Graff, lived on Grace.

It's hard to believe that I can picture so many houses in town back then, and who lived in them, especially where there were kids my age or relatives and friends of my parents.

In his original video interview, Dennis pinpointed who lived where, mostly south of Main Street, the side of town where he lived. We have inserted a conversation about Dragging Main and cars later in this essay.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: 1947-1954: FIRST GRADE AT WORLAND HIGH

Joanne: What do you remember about first grade?

Dennis: I remember when I went to the first grade, we were the only class that went to the high school building in first grade, and they used to bus us over to the Emmet building and the Watson building for noon lunch. I think Cathy walked home and had lunch. I don't know what you did Joannie. I don't know if you rode the bus over there or not.

Joanne: I was close enough that I walked home part of the time, I was only like two or three blocks.

Dennis: Right. I remember that this was funny. There were three Dennis' in the first grade, Dennis Smith, Dennis Yule, and Dennis Bower. And there was Rick Hake, Gary Diehl, and Dick Largent. I'd have to get the picture out to remember some of the other ones. Of course, Cathy and Bonnie Bailey were there at the high school for first grade, and you, Joannie, and I guess Ann Marton was in our class, wasn't she?

Joanne: Who was our teacher? Do you remember?

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Dennis: Sure. It was Mrs. Dyer. Her husband was a shoe repairman. That's back when they used to repair shoes instead of throwing them away. Dyer's Shoe Repair was on 7th, just off of Main Street, next to Velte's Paint shop, across from Showalter's Studio.

Joanne: Right, oh, I'd forgotten that.

Dennis: Did Joan Showalter go to first grade with us? Everybody from Big Horn Ave. south went to the high school for first grade, I think.

Joanne: Now, Dennis, you mentioned the Emmett and Watson buildings. Where were they located?

Dennis: They were located about two blocks north of Main Street on 10th Street. I don't know when they were built, probably 1910, or so I would think.

Joanne: They were older buildings. They're about where IGA Grocery was located. [Currently the Pit Stop Convenience Store.] The schools had adjoining playgrounds.

Dennis: Yes, and do you remember it? No grass – gravel!

Joanne: We had the monkey bars, teeter totters with different heights, and we had those rotary swings where you had several handles hanging from chains that you hung onto and propelled yourself around and around. We also had the big merry-go-round out there.

Dennis: Right, I remember that.

Joanne: I believe that teachers would come out to supervise us. The playground was quite different from today's school grounds.

Dennis: I think we had 33 people in our first-grade class, if I remember correctly. [There were several different first-grade classes taught by different teachers, but the others were at the Watson Building.]

Joanne: I think that our entire class, from the time we were in kindergarten or first grade up, was one of the larger classes in Worland, as I recall. We were a very large class. One of the largest at that time.

Dennis: Yes, at that time.

Joanne: And I think even bigger than today's classes too. I don't know how many they're graduating now in Worland, but I think they've diminished.

Dennis: We had quite a few more people graduate in 1960 than they did this year.

Joanne: Looking back at the education that we received in high school, we got more than a classroom education. It was well-rounded.

Dennis: I think I remember that they let us out of school whenever Worland played Thermopolis in football. They dismissed classes at about two in the afternoon so we could go over to the high school and watch them play.

Joanne: And the town's people all came out to most of the activities to support the students, because one of the main priorities at that time was the kids.

Dennis: Yes. I remember going to the new South Side School before we were over to the Junior High. The only teacher I remember then was Mr. Ball.

Joanne: Mr. Don Ball, I remember him, Dennis. It was unusual to have a man as a teacher in the elementary or the lower grades at that time.

JUNIOR HIGH: 1954-1956

Joanne: What do you remember, Dennis, about the seventh and eighth grades, like from September of 1954 and 1956? What about the clubs, possibly activities at school that you enjoyed?

Dennis: Well, I remember back then we used to have spelling bees at school, and I was very good, not as good as a lot of the kids. I was also a Cub Scout and Boy Scout with Troop 45. We met at the LDS church. And then we got a new neighbor on Grace Avenue. I think you might all remember him! His name was Scott Putnam, and he had a bad arm. I don't remember him graduating from 8th grade with us. I don't know if he moved or what.

Joanne: I don't have any idea. Do you remember anything about your high school days, from 1956 to 1960, possibly any activities you did or how you filled your time on the weekends and in the summer?

YOUTH ACTIVITIES: SCOUTS, SPORTS – ESPECIALLY BASEBALL

Dennis: Yes, I played basketball. Well, in my freshman year, I played football. I found that was too tough of a game for me, so I quit that. And about that time, Roger Youtz came to Worland to coach basketball. So, I played basketball. I never made it to the varsity team, though. And I remember at lunch hour, Gary Bounous, myself, and Frank Aldrich would play basketball on the court between

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the Junior High and the High School. We never did eat lunch, and then in the summertime, it was baseball time, which I dearly loved.

Joanne: What position did you play in baseball?

Dennis: Well, before high school, I played shortstop, and then in high school, I was a pitcher.

Joanne: Did you ever watch the Worland teams that we had there? Remember the Worland Indians.

Dennis: Yes, I watched them. In fact, for two years, I was an assistant batboy along with Bill Cameron. I don't know whether you remember him or not. He lived with his aunt up near Sanders Park, next to Foster Song. [Foster's daughter, Sonja, was a classmate.]

RADIO TO TELEVISION GENERATION

Joanne: With all the activities that you were involved in, Dennis, did you ever have an opportunity to watch television? And what programs did you really like?

Dennis: Well, as I remember it, I think we bought a television, and it was all snowy, and then they put a booster up outside out by the airport to improve that condition. I don't remember ever getting more than one channel out of Casper. And then Roy Bliss, who owned the Culligan Soft Water Company, started the cable company here in Worland, and I think it cost \$150 for the installation, and I'm not sure what it was per month. But we only got one channel there, but it was much, much clearer.

Joanne: Did having television in your home change the dynamics at all or what you and your parents did? I know you said that they had played cards. Did the television change any of that?

Dennis: Not really. I think they got the TV just for me. Shows I remember were Hop-A-Long Cassidy, Ed Sullivan, and American Bandstand, with Dick Clark as MC. Our Miss Brooks and Red Skelton were two other TV shows.

AFTER-SCHOOL JOBS: APPRENTICED IN BODYWORK ON CARS

Joanne: What experience of growing up in Worland created the most impact on your life. For example, your choice of occupation, your hobbies, place to live, etc. What have you been doing, or have you been doing anything for your livelihood or your pleasure that you dreamed about when you were growing up in Worland?

Dennis: I got interested in cars about my sophomore year in high school when I went to work part-time in the summer for Bill Lopp, who took over Bob's Smith's Body shop on Tenth Street. I learned how to do a little painting and a little bodywork from them. And then, later on, when I decided to get married, I worked for Western Motors as a lube [I greased all the necessary u-joints] and wash person. But my boss knew that I knew how to do some of this bodywork. An older gentleman by the name of John Knight worked with us but didn't like to paint. So besides doing the car washing, moving the cars, and other basic duties, I would help in the paint shop. When John retired, I took over the body shop and worked there at Western Motors until 1969. Then I went to work for Harry Swing and worked for him for 25 years running the body shop in his shop. [His nephew, Larry, was a classmate.]

Harry Swing owned a Texaco Gas Station at 423 North 10th St. He did mechanic and bodywork on vehicles, both pickups and cars. He started a trucking business hauling oilfield equipment, moving pipes, drilling rigs, and all things relating to the oilfield. Harry had a partner when he started his business. It was Jerilyn Thom's [classmate] father, A.C. Thom. When I went to work for Harry, A.C. was no longer there. When Harry went into the oilfield work, he shut down the filling station and worked strictly with the trucking business. About 1994 or '95, the building burned down, so he moved the trucking business about one mile north of Worland on the west side of the highway. After Harry passed away, his grandson, Danny Bertsch, took over the business and is still running it today.

Joanne: I did not know that. That's interesting, Dennis. Where was Harry Swing's shop located?

Dennis: Do you remember where the old Foodland was? Foodland was one of our main grocery stores in Worland. It was located north of Main Street on Bonine Avenue and 10th. Well, you go, Foodland, Slurp and Burp, and then Harry Swing's was on the corner. It was not exactly across from the motel Tom Gee owned – the Sun Valley Motel, which currently is the Days Inn.

Joanne: Is Foodland still in business today?

Dennis: No. Swing Trucking is still in business, but it is currently located north of Worland on Highway 20 across from where Lloyd's Drive-In was. Lloyd's Drive-In was also owned by the Kirby family, which had the Kirby Theater downtown.

CARS!!!! POINTED FINS, CURVED FINS, SCOOPED-OUT FINS

Joan Walseth Purcell (Philadelphia) spoke by phone to Dennis Bower in Worland about the Cars!!!! in our lives on February 14 at 9 a.m. Mountain time. [A few

minute questions turned into an insightful conversation, which, unfortunately, we don't have on video.]

Dragging Main — The Main Thing to Do

Joan: Why did we drag Main, anyway? Dave Scheuerman says he did it a couple of times and thought it was a waste of time and gas, but Sharon Chagnon Frisbee said she sometimes put 46 miles on her dad's car dragging Main. Ray Gotfredson said he and some other guys would drag Main backwards – how bored can you be?! Why did we do it, Dennis, because we sure did!

Dennis: I guess we did it to see others and to be seen. I just did it because everyone else did it. We would go out on a date, and then at the end of the evening, we would head to Main Street to see who was there. We would see who was with who and who was riding in whose car, maybe even who had a date and who didn't. It was convenient that Main Street "dead-ended" just before the railroad tracks then, so we had a perfect place to turn around and cruise back down the street.

There wasn't a lot for teenagers to do in those days besides going to high school games. The whole town would attend the games. They still do.

Joan: I remember there often would be dances in the high school gym after sporting events. These were very simple events where someone would bring a record player and some 45 rpm records. There were no refreshments. I don't remember any chaperons, but there may have been some. Seems like dragging Main was kind of an "end of the evening" activity that happened when other activities had ended. Everyone turned their car radios to KOMA, Oklahoma City, and headed to Main Street. I remember Lucky Lager Time, too, from possibly New Mexico.

Dennis: I don't remember Lucky Lager Time.

Joan: Besides the games, we had the Kirby Movie Theater in town, and in the summer, the Kirby family closed their theater in town and opened Lloyd's Drive-in north of town – the owner's name was Lloyd Kirby.

Dennis: They opened a second one, too, out by the Wagon Wheel Club east of town, but it wasn't open for very many years.

Joan: I remember talking with teenagers from larger cities about drive-ins and how it was an insult for them to be asked out to a drive-in movie. Most of the girls were not allowed to go to drive-ins. The feeling was the boys didn't respect the girls they would ask to go to a drive-in movie. I feel that in Worland, if you weren't at the drive-in on summer evenings, you were probably out "parked" someplace more private and that it was better to be at the drive-in.

I remember a game we played occasionally while dragging Main. This was when the driver would stop the car, and everyone would jump out, run around the car, then climb back in, and the driver would take off again. I don't remember what this was called.

Dennis: Chinese Fire Drills. I remember another activity that we did in the winter when the roads were snow-packed and icy. It was called "Hooking" or "Bobbing." When a car stopped or slowed down, we would grab the bumper and catch a ride, sliding on our shoes. You were in trouble if you hit a patch of dry pavement. This was definitely a winter activity. I remember dragging Main more in the summer.

Joan: Do you think kids in the surrounding towns did something similar to dragging Main?

Dennis: I think they may have. It was good entertainment for us. For about a dollar's worth of gas, you had an evening of fun. I can remember some people putting a by-product of the oil production process into their cars for fuel – Lowell's dad worked for Mobil Oil. It was out by the Banjo Ranch. Lowell would go out there and get that drip gas.

Joan: Was that good for the cars?

Dennis: [Laughs] No, it was terrible. You would hear a knocking sound, and when you went to turn the car off, the engine would keep going for a while. But it was free!

Joan: Dennis, you have always enjoyed cars. I know that you started working on cars in high school. Do you think showing off cars was a reason to Drag Main?

The Fun Was in The Fix

Dennis: There were some of us who enjoyed working on our cars, and dragging Main was a great way to show off our work. My first car was a 1955 Chevy. It was turquoise and white. I painted it black because I thought black was cooler.

Joan: Did you do the work yourself?

Dennis: I did all of the prep. Then I went to work for Bill Lopp, who was renting out Bob Smith's body shop. They had a spray booth that I could use. Bob Smith's daughter was Sharon Smith, who was our classmate.

Joan: Was that when you really got into cars?

Dennis: I kept my '55 Chevy for three or four years. By then, I was working at Western Motors in the paint department, and I changed the black to a kind of purple, and then maroon and sold it to Jack Iversen, one of our classmates.

My next car, a 1965 Pontiac Tempest, was turquoise with a black vinyl top. That's when I was married, and my wife, Susie (Tibbs) liked turquoise. I didn't paint that one. I didn't collect cars, I just liked fixing up cars. Once I fixed them, I sold them because the challenge was over. I bought a 1934 Ford, a two-door sedan. I fixed that one except for the motor. Bill Austin – our classmate Mary Ann Austin's older brother, did the motor for me. I sold a 1934 Ford to Ellwood Meader.

I didn't work on any cars for a number of years, but then I found a 1954 Oldsmobile in Grand Isle, Nebraska. I had to go and get it. I actually was hunting for a '57 Chevy but couldn't find any. I saw this one in *Auto Trader* magazine. Jack Miller was a year behind us and liked cars too. Jack had a truck, and we borrowed a trailer, and off we went to collect the Oldsmobile. It took me three years to restore it. Now I only drive it to parties and show it off at local car shows. I think, at some point, I'll give it to my oldest son in North Carolina. Mike is a mechanic and will be able to take care of it.

Guys Dolled Up Their (Affordable) Old Chevys

Joan: Cars were really exciting in the 1950s. Today most cars look kind of alike, and they are black, white, silver, and red, but when we were growing up, each one of the different car brands would come up with a new, flashy, colorful design every year. We could hardly wait to see what Detroit would come up with next. Those cars were like sculptures on wheels. A lot of guys bought their own cars — I don't think they could afford the new ones.

Dennis: Probably the most common cars my friends had were two-door Chevy's from 1949 to 1951. Lowell Peterson, Dick Largent, Larry Swing, and Duane Marquardt – he was a year ahead of us – we all had Chevy's. Those cars were about four to seven years old and were relatively affordable at the time. Compared to current cars, they were simple machines. High school boys could learn to tinker with them and do some of their routine maintenance, change oil, grease them.

There were some adjustments that were popular at the time. One was to split the manifold on a six-cylinder engine to make a dual exhaust system. This made the car sound really cool. Loud might be another description of the sound. [Laughs] And it might make it challenging to sneak home after curfew. [Laughs harder.]

How Low Can You Go? Without Leaving Parts on the Road Behind You!

Dennis: Another cool thing that people did to their cars at the time was called “lowering” the car. This could be done to either the front of the car or the back of the car. To lower the back of the car, you would get a 2x2 or a 2x4 block of iron and attach it to the rear axle. The back end of the car would react by sinking closer to the ground. Most people only did this to the back end of the car. You had to be careful when roads were rough or had any bumps, or you would hear a scraping sound when the back of the car dragged over the bump or the pavement. “Lowering” the front of the car was done by heating up the front springs until they collapsed.

I lowered both the front and the back of my '55 Chevy. It was so low that you couldn't put a package of cigarettes between the bottom of my car and the street. I couldn't drive to any place where the street wasn't absolutely smooth.

Joan: How did you drive anywhere in Worland, Dennis? Most of the streets had dips to carry away stormwater.

Dennis: Joan, do you remember down from your house on Circle Road, they had that big dip about a block or two to the West? You'd just go really slow – you still do, even if your car isn't lowered. With that Chevy of mine, you'd have to angle the car so all four wheels would hit the dip at different times. You would go slower than slow.

Darrell Schneider's dad, Jake, had a machine shop on Railway at the end of Washakie Ave. that he bought with Mr. Piel, I don't remember his first name. Darrell was a year ahead of us. I used to go with his younger sister, Kathy. All my friends used Darrell for help with their cars because he had access to the shop.

What Cars Did the Girls Buy? Um...

Dennis: Do you remember if any of the girls in our class had cars?

Joan: I didn't have a car, and as I think about it, I don't think any of the girls I knew had cars. It's possible that maybe Jacque Hampton [Herrod] did, or maybe they had an extra one. She lived out in the country, north of town. That is a very interesting observation, Dennis. Girls drove their parents' car.

Dennis: I didn't think any girls had their own cars.

Joan: Plus, we had bikes, or we could walk any place in town. It wasn't like we needed a car.

WHEN WE WERE 80 - STILL DRAGGING MAIN

Joanne: When was the last time that you drove the '54 Oldsmobile that you restored?

Dennis: At our class reunion in May 2022.

Joanne: What did you do with it at the class reunion?

Dennis: We all dragged Main –

Joanne: And we all were to follow you.

Dennis: Yeah, it kind of petered out. I went up and down Main twice, and some of them only went once. Then they went out to South Flat Road to the Country Club for our dinner.

Joanne: I think we lost track of where everybody went because of the stop lights, and you can't turn a U at the railroad tracks. We didn't feel we should run the stop lights, and we just lost you. It was a good idea, but, anyway, it's so nice that you have that car and that we could share it with you at the reunion.

LOOKING BACK - GROWING UP IN A BOOM TOWN

Joanne: Worland was the sixth largest city in Wyoming when we grew up. Its population more than doubled because of the oil boom. What are your memories of our small town? Do you remember how it kept growing and adding new businesses?

Dennis: I remember that when the oil boom came, Worland started to grow south. The first house that I remember being built was built by Jerry Shryack's dad. He built two houses across from us on Grace Avenue, and then Lundgren's built a house next to that, and going west from there, Margaret Chastain built a house with her two sons, Ken and Calvin. Next door to that, the Iversen twins' parents built a house. [Jack and Judy Iversen were in our Class of '60.]

Then, further down the street, Bruce Kimzey's folks built a house. [Bruce was another classmate.] Next to their home was the Worland Greenhouse where Leslie Hunt lived. [Leslie was also in our class of '60.] Going east on Grace Avenue and one block south, Veiles' built a house on Obie Sue Avenue. [Pat Veile, class of '57 and David Veile, class of '61] Sharon Kleinschmidt [class of '61] lived across from Sanders Park. Her father was in the wool business. He had a warehouse right next to the railroad that bought wool from the ranchers and shipped it to market by rail. Then many more homes were built in this area. We had a lot of classmates and other friends in this neighborhood.

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With the boom, buildings just kept moving east and south. I remember playing baseball on vacant lots on 8th and Howell Avenue, kind of kitty-corner from where George Coutis had his big brick house, over where the Cote twins lived [Marilyn and Mary Lea, twin sisters that were classmates] and then, somewhere along the line, Dan Healy had some land. [Cathy, our classmate is Dan's daughter]

[Cathy: My father bought a wheat field that ended at Washakie Avenue. That was the south end of Worland. Dad sold four or five lots by Washakie Avenue, and he kept the land closest to Park Avenue for our family. We moved into our house in February 1951.]

Dennis: My brother, Warren, lived on Park Avenue as well as Rick Hake. During our fifth-grade year, Peggy Steele moved to Worland from Gering, Nebraska. I think she lived on Thomas Avenue, just off 8th Street, close to Washakie Avenue. Jacque Jolly [our classmate] and his sister Lynn, also lived on 8th Street. I believe that the Christies also lived on 8th Street. {Dave, Bill and Pat Christie were in high school with us, but in different classes}. The other end of the block was called the Decker Addition. Do you remember Dennis Decker? He was a year ahead of us.

Joanne: Oh, yes.

Dennis: Okay, he left Worland after the eighth grade when they moved to Powell. The Evans Addition was built on the other side of the Hanover Canal, just south of Sanders Park. Dean Frederick lived over there, and Delores Seaman lived over there by the ice-skating rink where the new hospital was built. I remember that my father used to herd sheep down 15th Street before there were any houses out there and then down Washakie Avenue to the sale barn. The sale barn was called Worland Livestock Auction, and they sold cattle, sheep, and hogs for the area ranchers. It is located on South Flat Road, just south of the sugar factory.

Joanne: You have a fantastic memory, Dennis. I thank you for sharing all of that.

FAMILY TRADITIONS

Joanne: Earlier, you had alluded to the sailor suit that you've passed through your family, which has become a tradition. Do you have any other traditions that you and your family still celebrate that your parents used to?

Dennis: Well, I know at Christmas time, I got to open one present on Christmas Eve, and then I passed that tradition on to my kids because I only let them open one on Christmas Eve.

Joanne: We did the same thing. I just opened one package on Christmas Eve. It was usually from our grandparents. And then Santa would come for Christmas morning and all the rest of it. That's a wonderful tradition.

Dennis: Well, my mother made something that my dad liked called Missouri gravy. It was a lot thinner than most gravy. It was nothing that I really cared about. We used to have Thanksgiving with the McKameys and the Fritzlers, who were my dad's sisters.

Joanne: Was there any traditional food that you had at Thanksgiving that you still like to have?

Dennis: Oh, all the traditional things, turkey, gravy, dressing, cranberries.

Joanne: As you're sitting around chatting with your friends, do you remember all the happy times or any particular person in Worland? Do you still keep in touch with any of your friends that you had from your childhood and any memories?

Dennis: I keep in touch with Burt McDonald. I haven't been in touch with Dick Largent for probably two years now, I guess. Bert and I used to play a lot of golf together. After I graduated, I learned that I love golf as much as I loved baseball when I was young.

Joanne: Do you still play golf?

Dennis: No, I haven't played regularly because of my back and a few things. But I wish I was.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES: 4TH OF JULY IN TEN SLEEP, SWIMMING IN THE CANAL

Joanne: We also had a lot of friends in Worland that had places in Ten Sleep or friends in Ten Sleep. We just went back and forth from Ten Sleep. It was like an extension to Worland.

Dennis: Yes, we always used to go over there for the 4th of July. We still do that to see the parade. I haven't mentioned one other thing. Before Worland had a swimming pool, we used to go swimming in the canal. I don't know whether any of you did.

Joanne: That's where I learned to swim, in the Washakie canal.

Dennis: Yeah, that's where we swam, too. We swam in a place they called First Check. It was just down on the end of 15th Street.

Joanne: Yes.

Dennis: And then the other one was Second Check, which is behind Newell Sergeant Park.

Joanne: Yes, we swam at First Check. The swimming pool made quite a difference, didn't it? Do you remember when the pool came in?

Dennis: No, I really don't.

Joanne: I think it was about our freshman or sophomore year, something like that. I could be wrong. But I was thinking it was, like, '54, '55 somewhere in there.

Dennis: I think you are pretty close.

Joanne: Where was it located?

Dennis: It was located at the south end of Sanders Park, on the southeast end.

Joanne: Do you remember how long it was active? I know it's closed.

Dennis: I think it was probably a good 15 years. I know the new one wasn't built until the new high school was built in 1966. So, I guess 10 years, probably.

Joanne: The old pool served its purpose, but the new pool at the high school made a positive impact on the town.

WISDOM FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Joanne: Dennis, in closing, for generations to come that may listen to your story, are there any words of wisdom that you would like to pass on to them?

Dennis: Well, I don't know if I can impart any wisdom to today's generation. They kind of have a mind of their own. I would just tell them to follow their dreams and make sure they go to school, and if they can afford it, go to college and get a good education. And if they want to pursue being a bodyman or a mechanic or a carpenter, go to a trade school, or go to work, and somebody will teach you how to do that.

Joanne: Dennis, you followed your dream, and I think that's a wonderful thing! Coming generations may come to follow their dreams, as you did!

WASHAKIE MUSEUM THANKS YOU FOR YOUR INTERVIEW,

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

Joanne: Thank you so much for sharing everything with us about growing up in Worland. We really appreciate your time.

Dennis: You are more than welcome.

Note: A few additional memories about school are at the end of the video.