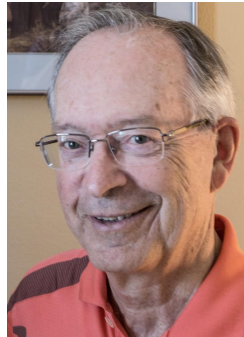




THE WAR BABIES OF WORLAND: ORAL HISTORIES FROM THE CLASS OF 1960



RICK HAKE

Extended conversation after videotaping

Interviewers: Cathy Healy

Proofreader: Peggy Steele Porter

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This transcript expands from the video due to additional conversations.

Rick Hake, a rocket scientist who managed some of President Ronald Reagan's most essential Star Wars projects, was named to the [Warrior Wall of Fame](#) in 2020.

This is **Cathy Healy** on October 9th, at about 1:20 PM in Washington, DC. Please let me thank you, Rick, for agreeing to be recorded for the oral history collection of the Washakie Museum and Cultural Center in Worland, Wyoming.

We have two goals. First, our class of 1960 tells what life was like for kids and teenagers in Worland from about 1941 to 1960. The second goal is that we share how growing up in Worland impacted our adult lives. What is your full name and was there any nickname you were known by when you were in your Worland days and where are you making this recording?

Richard Hake: My full name is Richard Danforth Hake, Jr., and I was known as Rickie in school until I reached college and managed to change it to Rick. I'm recording this from Menlo Park, California, which is one of the two places we're living right now. The other is Palm Desert. So we're true Californians.

HAKE SR. MOVED TO WORLAND IN 1905, DANFORTH GRANDMOTHER FIRST VISITED C. 1908

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

Rick: I was born in San Luis Obispo, California, which is where my father was stationed during the early days of World War II with my mother. After he deployed to the Pacific, we moved back to Worland when I was six months old, where I grew up, and stayed until I went to college.

Cathy: Tell me about what brought your family to Worland.

Rick: My grandfather, Ray, was actually a cowboy. He came out from Ohio and took over a herd of cows that his father had bought up on Nowater Creek, south of Worland, and ran them for a while until he got tired of eating out in the cold and wet and moved into town. He started a number of businesses, and during that phase, he met my grandmother, Lucille Danforth, who was a teacher who came out from Iowa. He courted her in Worland, and they were married back in Iowa. His first business was a hardware store, then he moved into banking and finally into insurance, which is what my father did during his life.

Cathy: We think of Worland's oil boom as something from when we were growing up in the 40s and 50s, but some of the early residents in Worland, like your grandfather and Loren Laird's grandfather, got lucky when the test wells that they helped fund struck oil in the '20s and '30s. My grandfather Omenson couldn't resist hoping for a gusher. Mother used to tell him that he should paper his office with all the stock certificates from dry wells to remind him not to throw away his money. What do you remember about your grandfather and the oil?

Rick: I remember driving around with him and my father in the oil fields in which he had invested and having him point out the geology that made Wyoming oil possible. It started my interest in geology which has lasted my entire life.

Cathy: Where were those oil fields?

Rick: I don't remember for certain. Probably in the Grass Creek fields.

CHILDHOOD: SIGHTS, SOUNDS, SMELLS

Cathy: You and I both spent a lot of time with our grandfathers and grandmothers –

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

Rick: Our first house was on Coburn, where my grandparents lived. Then, after my father came back from the war and the family started to grow, we moved to Howell Avenue and then to Park Avenue, where I spent most of my growing-up time.

And you had asked what I remember about the sights and the sounds and the smells in the neighborhood. One of the strong memories I have is of the lilacs of Sanders Park, where I spent a lot of time trapping bees and bringing them home, to the great dismay of my mother. With that lilac strong smell, we had those in our backyard as well. The other memory I have is a sound, the cry of the nighthawks in the evening, in summer, when we were either just out walking in the twilight, or we were playing kick-the-can in the neighborhood. There were a great number of us children of the same age, and many nights during the summer, we played kick-the-can, and the sound of that can hitting the street, and the sound of the nighthawks crying overhead is a strong memory of growing up in Worland.

Cathy: Let me interrupt you for just a second. How do you play kick-the-can? I just remember hiding in the dark and being scared to be found.

Rick: kick-the-can is a game where an empty can is placed somewhere with a group of upwards of three people. Someone is "it," and he has the job of guarding the can and finding all the other people. So he starts the game by allowing them to go and hide, and then he goes out searching for them, and if he finds them and runs back to the can before anyone gets there, they are caught, and they have to go to jail, where they stay until the end of the game. Unless one of the people he is hunting for, while he was out hunting, comes back in and kicks the can, and he frees all of the people in jail. And then the "it" person has to start all over again. So it's a great, great game of, I don't know, athletics and joy when you kick the can and free the people in jail, or the frustration of having someone kick it when you're out hunting for them.

Cathy: Oh, yeah. That's how the game worked. I remember how much fun we had, there were a whole gang of us about the same age. Were you allowed to play kick-the-can in the fall after school started?

Rick: I don't think so. I mean, there was always homework, and it was much stricter in the fall. Another sound I remember is in the summer, my father whistling for us to come home when it was time to go to bed, and he somehow managed to whistle through his teeth, which could be heard all over the neighborhood. I never mastered that and envied him all these many years.

Cathy: What time was your bedtime?

Rick: Oh, I don't remember. It wasn't relevant.

Cathy: I still had a bedtime when I was a junior in high school. That's because my parents said that I would stay up too late if I didn't have a bedtime – that I had no good sense about when to go to bed. I just hated to miss anything. Still do. FOMO, the kids call it, Fear Of Missing Out. Anyway, those are great memories of the sounds. I'd forgotten the sound of the nighthawks. What do you remember about sights, sounds, smells, whatever, about downtown Worland?

Rick: I don't remember anything about the smell, a Worland smell. The sounds were cars going through, but the sights were that every store was filled. It was a very vibrant place. It was a story of a growing town, and so you could go down there, and there was wonder in every store. Especially the dime store, where you could go in, and browse, and think of all the things it would be nice to buy if you had a dime. So it's mainly the vibrance of the downtown that I remember.

Cathy: How involved were you outside of the city limits of Worland? Because we had the Badlands, we had the Big Horns 30 miles to the east, we had the Absarokas 50 miles to the west, and Thermopolis 30 miles south.

Rick: Well, that varied, of course, with age because when I grew up and started exploring on my own and was driving, I would drive quite a ways, but early on, my involvement was mainly in the summer when we had a cabin in the Big Horn Mountains that my father dearly loved. When he came back after the war, he started taking us up there.

Almost every weekend in the summer, we would go up to the cabin, and I would have a fishing pole thrust in my hand whether I liked it or not and was told to go out and catch dinner. And so I did that, but I would really rather have been sitting on the couch in the cabin reading comics, but there was no choice about going fishing. So it wasn't until much later in life that I really learned how enjoyable going out and fishing is.

To get to the cabin, of course, you had to drive through the Badlands, which were pretty much an annoyance to me because they were pretty bad. No one wanted to do anything there. I learned later in life that they have a beauty all of their own. And to an adult coming back through now, they're really a wondrous thing.

One other thing we used to do, or we did a couple of times when I was in high school, is that a band of us would go out through the Badlands armed with .22s, and we would form a skirmish line, and walk across the Badlands, plinking rabbits off as we saw them, just leaving them there. Which is not a very nice thing for an animal lover to do. But, to us, it was great joy, scaring a rabbit and knowing you had the skill to hit them and bring them down. So there would be four, or five, of us marching through. We probably killed 50 rabbits in one afternoon and thought nothing of it. Of course, there were tens of thousands of

rabbits out there, so it made no difference to the Badlands, and the vultures loved us. So, that was an acquaintance with the Badlands.

Cathy: Who would you do that with?

Rick: Oh, Gary Diehl, Tommy Fujikawa, I think, Decker Nomura. I don't remember exactly who it was, but classmates that I knew.

IMPACT OF WORLD WAR II

Cathy: How did World War II impact your life?

Rick: Well, my father was deployed at the time, and we lived with my grandparents. He stayed overseas the entire duration of the war. So we had letters from him. I later found that out, but I pretty much didn't know the war was going on. It wasn't discussed. It had played no role in my life, as young as I was from age six months up to three or four. So, it was a very nice growing-up life. I didn't know that people usually had fathers until my father came back at the end of the war.

And that was one of the largest changes of the war. When my father came back, I learned that there was more to a family than loving grandparents and a mother. So, then life got stricter, and there became chores. We started going to the cabin. It was a big change when he came home. He brought a jeep with him, and it was fun riding in that. But he didn't talk about the war much, so there were no war stories. And I really never learned what his life was like at that time until much later.

Cathy: And what did you learn later about his experience in the war?

Rick: I learned how hard life was at the time. He was a captain in the Field Artillery. I learned some of the things that he did that one naturally does in the war, such as one of his duties was to choose the person to go out for the forward-advance observing position, who had a high likelihood of getting killed when they went out there. So, that weighed heavily on him. He came back a much more strict person than he went away. It was a physically hard life. He came back, sort of skin and bones. Learned to hate spam. He would never eat spam in his life again. And I think spam is sort of fun. But we didn't have it.

Cathy: My dad hated Vienna sausages. That's all they had in Foggia, Italy, where he was stationed. I learned later that was where the Army Air Force had their bases to send bombers to Germany. He was a captain in the Quartermasters, so I guess he was distributing tons of Vienna sausages. He liked spam, though. He always kept spam in his emergency box in his ranch vehicles. I hate spam, myself.

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

Rick, Your dad, and my dad were best friends from the time that my father's family moved over the Big Horns from Buffalo. My father said that your father was in five, first-wave landings on islands in the Pacific, that the army figured if you were experienced in first landings, they kept you there, in the most dangerous positions of all.

Rick: Yeah, I heard nothing of that. He didn't talk of the war. It was sort of – you didn't go there. I don't know. Maybe after I left home, he might have talked about that some with my brothers and sisters, but that is true. We have his papers that show that he was there. He was in the field artillery, which generally was not the first wave. In Kwajalein, for example, he was bombarding the main island from an island that was one island away, so it was reasonably safe. In Alaska, he was on Attu and was one of those who was affected by the banzai charge there. So he had sort of bad memories of that.

One of the things that I am grateful to him for is that he let me grow up with no feeling of the anger that he felt toward the Japanese when he was in the Pacific. Some of my best friends, even now, are Japanese, and to me, they are Americans first and happen to have, you know, a different background. So, I'm grateful to him for leaving that behind when he left the army.

Cathy: I was always really impressed with that, and I was really very aware of your Dad's attitude by the time we were in junior high. It must have helped that he grew up with Japanese-Americans–like Grant's dad, Tom Ujifusa, who graduated from high school with our dads. And my Dad, who was in Italy, had German-American business partners when he came home. We never thought about it. We were all from Worland.

Interesting to look back on how some aftermaths of the war that were just part of our lives. Remember when we were kids, how we'd raked piles of leaves and then jump in them and yell, "Bombs away over Tokyo." Did you do that?

Rick: No, I didn't do that. You had more leaves than we did.

Cathy: [Laughs] Well, that's true, but only when we lived at 809 Culbertson Avenue, which was lined with the original cottonwoods, but not when we moved into our new house at 711 South 8th St. The only trees we had there were the little saplings that my parents planted.

Back to the impact of World War II on our lives. We were kids whose fathers were overseas in the army who were used to giving orders, and they came back to their only children, about age four, who had been raised by their mother and grandparents.

Rick: Right.

Cathy: Another friend of ours from Buffalo, John Knepper, whose father was close friends with my dad, had the same situation. My observation was that the fathers treated you and John very, very strictly. You were absolutely expected to say, "Yes, sir" about everything, whereas I got over-protection. My dad was extremely cautious about dangers. Remember the time – we joke about – when you were with your family in a boat on Meadowlark Lake, and you wanted to go swimming? Your family pointed out that you didn't know how to swim. You said, "I've read about it, I've seen it done, I can do it."

When we went out in our boat on Meadowlark Lake, we had to have our life preservers on, we had to sit still, and we could feel Dad's nervousness. The only things he said about the war were Vienna sausages, his troop ship voyage to Italy, fears of German submarines and the depth charges in the bay in Naples, and picking up pieces of bodies when the bombers coming back from Germany crashed. To this day, it gives me the willies to think about taking a cruise.

So I had my own difficulties coming out of a pre-Dad life where my grandmother Omenson was a registered nurse so just took care of the scrapes and bruises and let me play freely. I don't ever remember anyone saying "no" to me back then. I knew what the rules were, and I obeyed the rules. I wasn't a rebellious child, but I don't remember anyone saying, "No, you can't do that", until my dad came home."

Rick: Well, I have that same memory. I mean that you know, chores started. I had never had a spanking until my father came home. I think he lightened up later.

Cathy: We know our fathers lightened up because we got to watch with your youngest sibs - same with John. And mine also.

Rick: Yes.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: 1947-1954

Cathy: Anyway, let's go on about elementary school. First of all, how was it that you and I, and a couple of others, Rick Williams, and I don't know who else got to start school after the cutoff date of the end of August?

Rick: I have no personal memory of that. I'm told that there was a culling process. There were a number of kids who could have gone into starting school. And we were somehow assessed as to our readiness for school, and I guess, I don't know, there was a hard cut-off age. I was actually never conscious of that, and I certainly don't remember it now. I just know my mother said, "It's time to go to school." And off we went. So we ended up being the youngest in our class, which in some ways was a disadvantage, but I certainly enjoyed the people in our class enough that I'm happy that I ended up in the class that I ended up in. And our class, we

have realized, was highly unusual and highly capable in many ways, so I'm happy for that.

Cathy: [Laughs] You know me. I have thought about it. Sometime in my '50s, I started thinking about why is it that I have so many friends that are born within a few weeks of each other, and then I counted back. Oh, Pearl Harbor! December 7, 1941. We were all conceived immediately after Pearl Harbor, as soon as the moms could get pregnant. You are 13 days older than I am, Judy Van Buskirk [Roger and Edna Van Buskirk's oldest daughter] is about a month older than you.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: 1949 - 1954

I heard that the fathers came back – like your dad and my dad and Roger Van and several others who grew up in Worland and whose parents still had businesses there – and they said, “What do you mean our kids can't start first grade? They're really smart kids.” And Frank Watson, who was the superintendent of elementary education, said, “No, it's better to hold them back a year because it's better for their self-confidence and their emotional growth.”

I think now that he was right, we should have waited a year. But our parents – our dads? – were so insistent that Mr. Watson gave a test. It didn't prove who was smart enough to start and who wasn't. Some kids passed, and some didn't. One who didn't, Mother said, was so nervous that she was shaking. She turned out to be one of the smartest people in Worland schools. She passed her CPA exams when she was still in university. She took Trig for a fun elective in college. But I heard that's why we started school early.

Rick: Yeah, I would believe that. I mean, I was read to by my mother. The other thing is that we had no kindergarten, so there was no opportunity to develop the way you know some of the things, some of the skills you need for school.

Cathy: There was a kindergarten. Mrs. Cannon had a private kindergarten in her basement, and we learned to count and we learned our letters. I think we learned some early reading

Rick: Did I go to that?

Cathy: I don't know.

Rick: I don't remember.

Cathy: Bruce Kimsey did. He's the only one I remember there. Joannie Culbertson Jeffres, in her oral history, talked about going there.

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

Rick: I don't think I went, and it wasn't a part of the structured school system, as far as I know.

Cathy: No, it wasn't part of the school system; in fact, it was the opposite. Apparently, all the teachers hated that it existed because they would have half the kids come in not knowing how to read, and then these other kids that could read, or at least read somewhat, so that was hard for them. Do you remember first grade?

Rick: I don't have many memories back there. I have the feeling of it; of course, it was in the high school. We were one class of first graders in a basement room in the high school, and there are pictures of us on the steps. I remember being there. I remember that the windows were very high. I don't remember if I ever climbed in or out, but for a first-grader or six-year-old the windows were pretty high. I don't remember being afraid of the kids in high school. There were these big monsters walking around, so we had very little to do with them, but it was an unusual place to have first grade. The teacher there was Mrs. Dyer. I really admired her, and throughout the rest of my life, she was encouraging and rewarding. She is perhaps the only elementary teacher that I remember being stuck in my memory. So first grade was fun.

Cathy: Some of the others that we've interviewed for the oral history remember climbing up on your desk to climb out the open window for the fire drills.

Rick: Well, that could be what I remember, too. But I mean, I don't remember that explicitly, but I do remember a feeling of looking up at the windows.

Cathy: And Sharon Chagnon remembered Mrs. Dyer getting stuck in the window. I don't.

Rick: She was a large person, but she was active enough to keep us learning and happy and under control.

Cathy: I must have liked her a lot. In the picture of the class where we're standing on the front steps of the high school, I'm snuggled up next to her. What are some other memories you have about elementary school in the late forties, or early fifties? What was it like for kids going to school in Worland?

Rick: Well, the second grade, we went over, I think, to the Watson building, and I had second grade there. Then we moved to the Emmett Building. There we had third and fourth grades. So, I remember changing classes. I remember there were some teachers who were exceedingly strict, smacking kids' hands with rubber hoses, and I was very grateful I did not have that particular teacher.

Cathy: I did. That's when I started having "stomach aches" and trying to be sick, so I wouldn't have to go to school. Mother canceled that with threats of cod liver oil.

Rick: Well, you have my sentiments. So, and then third and fourth grades there. And then for fifth and sixth, we moved to the South Side elementary school, and so I went to four elementary schools, from the first to sixth grade, and it became sort of a natural thing to do. You change school year, you change schools. So, I started adapting to change and growth, which is one of the themes that I noticed as I was looking back through all of these questions: Worland was very much a growing town at the time we were there, and the growth was a very good thing. People came in with hope. There were new kids coming in all the time. It was sort of fun to get to know them. So, that was a feature of elementary school. And the schools were all close enough for me to walk. I never got to take the bus like some of the kids on the farms. So, I almost regretted that, but not really.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES: CHURCH > ALTAR BOY FOR 500 MASSES

One of the other questions on the questionnaire was, "What did you do with your spare time during your elementary school days?" We were a very religious family through my mother, so I spent a lot of time in church activities. I was an altar boy and achieved the goal of having served at 500 masses, and have a little trophy to show for it. So, there was a lot of that. I was in Cub Scouts. And that was a fun thing. I think, in elementary school, I could have advanced to being a Boy Scout, but toward the end of it, I realized that there was a lot of structure and activities, and I was interested in other things. So, I never moved into Boy Scouting. Cub Scouts I remember being in the pack meetings, which were in the High School auditorium at the time, which later became a study hall, and I remember sitting in there with probably eight boys in our den. And there were probably 70 or 80, all told in the pack. That was a big group. And there were kids from all around Worland – even the farm kids came in. So that was my first meeting with a large, diverse group of the entire Worlandites. And getting to stand up on the stage and lead the pledge of allegiance. And so it was a fun activity.

JUNIOR HIGH: 1954-1956

Cathy: How about junior high? Do you remember moving into junior high and changing classes?

Rick: Well, the only thing that struck me about going into junior high was the difference of changing rooms to go to different classes. That was a novel thing, but we generally stayed with our same classes, so we still had the same 30 kids we were moving around the school with. So that was the novelty. A couple of

teachers in junior high that I remember strongly, one was Mr. Stroud, who was the science teacher, and he made science fun, and he was the one that started my lifelong love of science – and really, the life path that I've taken into science and engineering. I also remember Mrs. Watson, strangely enough, and I remember standing up at the blackboard and diagramming sentences and learning that even the most complex sentence could be laid into a structure. So, that was one of the things that started me realizing there was a structure to life that you could break down and understand.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES: WORLAND JUNIOR HIGH MARCHING BAND

Rick: The final teacher I remember is Mr. Broadbent, who was the band teacher, and that started a lifelong love of music in many ways. And the most fun thing with Mr. Broadbent was the marching band, where, especially in the summer, we would practice our marching. This group of 60 or 70 kids going out on the city streets. And taking our instruments and playing. And marching through the city streets and then warm summer evenings and the cars just better watch out for us because we were marching. After all that marching, we got good enough to go to parades, and we had uniforms. So we went to places like Sheridan, or Greybull, or Cody. I think we even went to Casper one time. So I enjoyed marching in the band, playing in the band, and competing with people for positions in the instrument. David Schlothauer, who was a class above us, was always the envy of Grant Ujifusa and me, who played saxophones because Schlothauer was always the first chair in saxophones. So we enjoyed the band all through junior high.

Cathy: This just came to me as you were talking – I think Basil Broadbent gave us a strong sense of excellence that you work and work and practice and practice, and then you get accolades in public because it was really thrilling to be marching in parades and doing all these cute dance-step tricks all over the State.

Rick: Yeah, he did.

Cathy: And somehow, he gave you a feeling that you and all of those around you were excellent, that we've had a good organization that we should be proud of. I remember hearing that this was the best junior high band in the state, and we believed it was. So did the whole town.

Rick: Maybe.

Cathy: We felt so proud about that. Maybe we were the only junior high band in the State that went out in public. I don't know. Because otherwise, you just heard about high school bands or the UW band.

Rick: Right. So he, you know, he is one of the guys that I think contributed to my life through a love of music.

[**Cathy:** Perhaps we should add here that my father, Dan Healy, and Basil Broadbent eventually formed a partnership and opened the Broadbent and Healy Music Store on Main Street. It expanded to a bigger store in Casper, and Basil moved there to run the store.]

YOUTH ACTIVITIES: BASEBALL AND FOOTBALL

Rick: Other things I did when I was in junior high, in the summers, we played little league baseball where we all got T-shirts, and went out and got to throw balls, and try and hit the balls, and run around, and I enjoyed that. I also started playing football in the eighth grade. And I got my first football injury when I tackled someone and came up with a dislocated little finger. The coach drove me to a doctor who set it, and I came back and played some more. So I learned that you can struggle through injuries. It gave me a lot of help through a love of sports that I have. So that was good. That's about all I remember from junior high.

WORLAND HIGH SCHOOL: 1956-1960

Cathy: How about high school?

Rick: Well, high school. I remember quite a bit. I was just talking about football. I continued playing football in high school on the freshman team and learned that I could compete, but that was not my best skill, and I ended up giving that up through the rest of high school. But I actually made the traveling team one time because of the tackle I made in one of the games that our freshman team had. One of our big tackles was unable to travel, so I got his jersey, went up to Greybull, and sat the entire game, hoping that they did not put me in. Football was fun as an activity, and it was just that I was not one of the better ones at it. I had better things to do.

One of the questions that you asked about high school was teachers. The teacher that I remember was Mr. MacDonald, our math teacher, who made math rewarding. Took him four years, I think, working up from Algebra to Trig, and succeeding at all of them, and having him lead us into that in a gentle enough way that I could take them and succeed at them.

I remember Mr. Swartz, the chemistry teacher, who showed us that chemistry was amazing and mainly said that you could take these foaming messes that you could make, and there were actually equations that described what was going to

happen. So he helped me develop a feeling for understanding the world in terms of a scientific view of what's going on.

He also sponsored me to go to a summer science camp after my junior year at Colorado College, where we spent a month and a half or so in a dorm down there doing special topics and learning chemistry essentially at the early college level. That made it easier for me to understand chemistry when I hit college. There were kids from all over the nation; from New York, from private schools there, and interacting with those kids, and learning that I could understand them and sit and learn and participate at the same level they had going to Exeter and places like that, some of the New York schools, gave me a lot of confidence for life. So, Mr. Swartz gave me a lot of confidence there.

The Famous Rocketeers

Mr. Swartz also happened to be the main sponsor of our Rocketeers Club. What started the original idea was Grant Ujifusa. After we read a science article in *Scientific American*, he said, "We can do this." So, we went to Mr. Swartz, and he said, "Yeah, I'll buy you the zinc dust and sulfur that you need for your fuel in next year's order." So he bought it, and five of us put together some rockets, went out into the Badlands, and launched them. This was right after Russia sent its Sputnik up, so we were feeling like it was, you know, we were helping the US's science effort. It was fun as well to build these things that belched fire and roared into the sky. Mr. Swartz was integral to that. [See more about Sputnik and its emotional impact on us farther down.]

I remember Mrs. Fansler, who came along when I was a senior and taught us a German class. I can remember her enthusiasm and excitement at teaching people a foreign language, and I had the same reaction. And took other classes in German in college and graduate school and qualified as someone who could read scientific literature in German for my Ph.D. requirements. Mrs. Fansler was a good teacher. Mrs. White, our English teacher, instilled in me some idea of the rewards of literature, and I remember her for that.

One other thing I remember about high school is not a teacher but the fact that in the library, they ordered something called the Traveling Science Library, which was a bookcase that could be folded up and sent from school to school, about three feet by three feet. That was the thing that finally cemented my love of science and really inspired me to get into physics in my later life. So, let's see, what else is there about high school?

AFTER-SCHOOL JOBS: GAS STATION

Cathy: Did you have any jobs?

Rick: I started working right after eighth grade. I had a job during the summer as a gas station attendant at the Standard Station on the road in from Ten Sleep and participated in selling gas to the tourists who came through. Interestingly enough, that was a time when Worland and Greybull were competing for the tourist trade over our Highway 16 and their Highway 14. And we had signs up out in the desert, saying that the Big Horns were best to cross through Ten Sleep Canyon, and they said, "No, try the Shell Canyon, it's greater." I think we beat them. I think we got more and more of the tourist trade than Greybull did.

So, I was at the gas station, working with Myron Davis. He was a high school guy who was a great tackle on our team. He treated me great and showed me how to change the oil in a car and grease a car. So, I felt very, very lucky to have that job. That was the first job that I had. Then, later on I had summer jobs at Van's Candy and Tobacco, doing various things for Roger Van Buskirk.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES: PLAYS, CHORUS, DEBATE, BOYS STATE

Rick: So as far as other memories of high school, I was involved in plays and in chorus, and went to speech meets. I was on the debate team and learned that it is possible to argue the case for something that you don't believe in if you just can construct the arguments. So that enabled me to learn how to argue more forcefully for things that I do believe in. I mentioned science camp. I went to Boys' State also after my junior year, and that was an honor.

Cathy: What was Boys' State?

Rick: Well, Boys' State is where students from each high school in the state were selected in the summer after their junior year to go to – I'm not sure whether it was held in Cheyenne or Laramie.

Cathy: We girls were in Laramie at UW.. You guys were in Cheyenne.

Rick: It was a five-day event sponsored by the American Legion, where there were three kids from each town and from all of Wyoming. And so there were maybe 200 of us or so, and you participated as if we were the State government. You composed bills, elected a governor, elected all the state officers, and just participated in an event that showed you how a legislature really worked. You made up bills in the house to which you were assigned and voted for them. So, it was a good experience. Turns out, Grant Ujifusa was elected governor of our Boys' State, which was a great kudo for the town of Worland. Then he ended up going to Boys' Nation, which I think started him on his path with politics. So that was a fun activity.

Cathy: What did Grant end up doing with politics?

Rick: Well, he was never a politician. But he went into publishing and ended up inventing a study of every politician in the House and the Senate, which he put together a book that gives their characteristics and what they're in favor of, where they come from, what their constituency is like. He collected enough facts about people that even the people themselves, the Senators and Representatives, use that book as information about the rest of their constituents, the rest of the people in their House. And it went nationwide as well. And it has lasted, I think to the present day.

Cathy: Yes, *The Almanac of American Politics*. I can remember Grant out on our screen porch one summer, talking about what he and his two partners were creating.

Rick: Right, so I think that was his main foray into politics, and it enabled him to be very influential in some of the things that he's done for the restitution for the Japanese who were in the camps. He actually persuaded President Reagan to sign that bill. So it was a feather in his cap.

AFTER-SCHOOL JOBS, PART 2

Rick: What else did I do? Let's see. Oh, I was working in a grocery store for a while and learned to hate bagging because my sense of order is so high that it took me forever to put together the items that someone had purchased in a bag. I slowed down the line, so they would send me to the back and told me to stock the shelves instead of bagging. That job didn't last very long.

Cathy: Was it still Van's grocery store then? Or we had become Jon's by the time we graduated from high school?

Rick: It was still Van's. [Harold Van Buskirk was the founder and owner. His son Roger, had a regional and then state-wide distribution called "Van's Candy & Tobacco, and his son, Leonard, was part-owner of Triangle Packing Company.]

Cathy: You might mention, when you're talking about working for Van's Candy & Tobacco, that we played Kick-the-Can, at Judy Van's house on Park Avenue, Roger and Edna's daughter our age. The Van's lived next door to your grandparents, and you lived next door to them.

Rick: Van's house was the center for Kick-the-Can. Right, right.

Cathy: And I don't know if it was because her father sold candy. [Grins]

Rick: I don't recall seeing him at all, but I really learned to know his backyard very well by hiding out there.

IMPACT FROM WORLAND: WENT OUT FOR VARSITY FOOTBALL AT CALTECH

Cathy: Before you look back and consider more about life in Worland, there's a story that amuses me a lot about football and how, when you went to Caltech, your freshman year, you played on the Varsity team.

Rick: Well, I signed up for the Varsity team. I started practicing with them and learned right away there were other things at Caltech that I needed to do more than play football. So, I think I played football for probably a couple of weeks and then went off to study.

Cathy: Oh. But didn't you play a home game in the Rose Bowl?!

Rick: No, I never played there, but we often went to watch Caltech football games in the Rose Bowl. When I was a senior, we set the record for the number of fumbles in one play. The Rose Bowl seats 100,000 people. There were probably 200 of us watching Caltech – 100 of the opponents on the other side. They didn't even turn on all of the lights. These were night games in the Rose Bowl, and just the lights in the center illuminated the field. There was one play that we had where there were five fumbles before the play was blown dead. I think we gained five yards on that. Caltech was not a strong athletic team.

Cathy: I thought freshman year in college when several families invited our classmates for a Christmas party at the country club, I thought you told Sonny Shearer that you had played in the Rose Bowl. Sonny was such a brilliant star Worland football player and went to UW on a football scholarship. He was shocked.

Rick: I don't remember that.

Cathy: Oh, no! That's been one of my favorite memories forever. No! I hate to give up that story..

Rick: I maybe told him I had been in the Rose Bowl and our team played in the Rose Bowl, which they did. It was the Caltech home field because we were probably half or a mile away. It was the only thing close enough for us to use. And it wasn't being used on the nights when we could play football.

Cathy: [Laughs] Remember the game I went to with you when the CalTech Beavers played the Pomona Sagehens? We were the Whittier Poets. The summer before I transferred there, I looked up Whittier College in the World Almanac. I thought their name, "Poets" for sports teams, was a typo. It wasn't. [Laughs]

Rick: The other thing that I carried from high school into college was my love of marching. It turned out I liked marching band well enough that when I got to college, I signed up for Air Force ROTC so that I could get into the drill team. I got into the drill team and went off to Phoenix or Tucson one time for an air show. Our drill team marched in that, but I dropped that after four or five weeks because I realized there were other things I wanted to do also.

Cathy: You guys at Caltech were studying all the time – I remember because I transferred to Whittier College my junior year, and our schools were close enough that I got to visit you a lot. There were hair-raising stories about how hard the courses were.

Rick: Yeah, yeah, I mean it was. There was a lot of catching up to do. Turns out, the math Mr. MacDonald taught us was very solid in everything up to the level at which he ended. At that time, Worland High School had nothing to do with calculus. The first thing you get into at college is calculus, and in the first lecture they drew something on the board that I didn't understand. They were using language that I did not understand, and it was a very hard first month or so until I learned the vocabulary, learned what these things meant, and actually ended up doing very well in the math class in my freshman year.

IMPACT FROM GROWING UP DURING THE SPUTNIK CRISIS

Cathy: So let's look at the questions about turning 80 years old and looking back and considering our lives.

Rick: Sputnik was launched in 1958, and that was a great change in things, I don't know that it affected anything that was going on in Worland, but it certainly has affected me. That was one of the things I thought about.

Cathy: What was Sputnik? In 2050, nobody will know what it was or its emotional impact on us.

Rick: Okay, Sputnik was the very first Earth satellite that was launched by mankind; it was a small basketball-sized radio satellite put up by the Soviet Union that went around the Earth, and every 90 minutes, it broadcast a beep, beep, beep, beep that you could hear when you turned on the radio. So it was impressive and somewhat unnerving to hear something coming over you that was launched by the Soviet Union, with whom we were engaged in a cold war at the time, and they were a sworn enemy. So it was like they could come over and do to us as they wished, as they exhibited with Sputnik.

So, we started the space race, and we caught up quite quickly after that and eventually surpassed them in our abilities. But it was a real threat at the time, and it emphasized the role of science and the need for more science and engineering

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

in the United States. That was a weather change in what was going on in the world.

The other thing that I think back on is growing up. Worland was growing at the time, and many things were changing. I got used to seeing new houses around. I was expecting to see that. I got used to new kids coming in. I was expecting to meet new kids all of the time and did not worry about it. It was not a threat, it was an opportunity. So the feeling of growth was there. I also learned to talk to people with whom I would disagree and find out that we could all get along. Religion was a very strong thing in Worland at the time and the type of religion. Maybe it still is. But I was Catholic. Most of the class was Protestant. The Mormon religion was in there, too, and somehow we all got along. I knew that if I went to church on Sunday at a Protestant church, I would be committing a very large sin and would have to confess about it, so I never did. Up to this day, I am reluctant to go to a Protestant service, but I've had no ill feelings for that and got along with all of the kids, so that was a good thing.

I learned that generally, people were good people and trustworthy, so we lived our lives without locking the front door or locking our cars when we went someplace. So it was a real shock to get out to the outside world, where you had to lock everything. I don't know how it is now, but that was a shock. Let's see. What else am I thinking of? Hmm. Oh, I had many jobs. I learned that I should expect to work. I worked at summer jobs. Can't think of anything else.

GRANDPARENTS, PARENTS' LIVES IN WORLAND

Cathy: Your grandparents and my grandparents were friends. They built cabins in the mountains right next to each other and were active in the community. What kinds of things did your parents do in the community?

Rick: Right. My mother was active in the church groups, and my parents had a circle of friends. They liked to play bridge. So one of the big events was dinner bridge, where, maybe, I don't know, eight couples or so, would go over to one person's house and set up a couple of tables, and hosting would rotate through that group. There was a group of friends that included your parents and the Van Buskirks – Roger and Edna and Leonard and Bunny.

And we spent a lot of time at the cabin. And going to the cabin every weekend continued throughout my high school days. Can't think of anything else that I remember

Cathy: Are there family traditions that you continue to celebrate?

Rick: Not really. We celebrated all of the holidays. Inviting a large family over for Thanksgiving is a tradition. It's not that unusual. There weren't any special family kinds of traditions.

LOOKING BACK: WHAT DO YOU WISH WE'D KNOWN

Cathy: Were there learning opportunities that you wish you'd had looking back – or that you wish that everybody in general could have had?

Rick: Well, one of the things that I realize thinking back is that I was given a love of science which I still have. But, as it turns out, I am a much more skilled engineer than I am a scientist, and there were no engineering classes taught in the high school. It took me probably 15 or 20 years out of high school to learn I was really an engineer. In the latter part of my career, I engaged in the engineering of satellites at Lockheed Martin. I am much, much better at practical things than doing pure science. So I never had a desire to be a university professor, and never had a desire to look into the deeper degrees of physics.

As it turns out, one of the guys who just got a Nobel prize this year, John Clauser, was a member of my graduating class at Caltech, and he went into the things that Caltech taught about in particle physics. With those, you can't touch them, you can't engineer them to do much, and so I ended up not liking that when I came out of college. I had to go to Westinghouse, where they built fluorescent light bulbs that used a kind of science that you could see and feel and was practical. I ended up interacting with many scientists, but not going in that direction, I went the engineering direction.

Cathy: Do you still keep in touch with your childhood friends?

Rick: Well, very much, I mean a few of them, like yourself and Grant Ujifusa, I am in touch with him, and I've attended several reunions and had a great time talking to everyone that I meet there, including many of the people that I hardly talked to when I was in school, because I was looking elsewhere, doing different things. So I enjoyed the class that I was with, and I'm happy that we had those guys, those people, guys and gals.

IMPACT OF BEING RAISED WITH GRANDPARENTS

Cathy: You were raised in your early years by your grandparents. How did that impact your role as a grandparent?

Rick: I was an active grandparent with our grandchildren. Still am but that seemed more a natural thing to do than, something that my grandparents were involved in, I mean, maybe it's built-in, and I don't recognize it.

Cathy: Because you had your grandchildren live with you. For how many years? So it was practical, but it happened.

Rick: Yeah. It was about three years. They lived downstairs, and one of the children was born while they were there, so I don't think that any of that came from me being with my grandparents other than that the role of the grandparents being actively involved was something I accepted, yeah, and enjoyed.

WISDOM FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Cathy: Do you have some wisdom to pass on to your grandchildren's grandchildren?

Rick: There is beauty in everything. If you stop to consider things, you will find out that it is worth your while. But there are also far too many things that you can consider, so you have to narrow your focus in some ways. Alright. That's about it, I guess

Cathy: Oh, when you speak about music, you and Bernie [Rick's wife] are in; how many choruses and choirs and singing? You sing a lot. This is one of the key ways you are spending your retirement – playing competitive golf and performance music.

Rick: I didn't mention singing in high school, but I was in the high school chorus. I think the junior high chorus as well, and enjoyed singing, and it's a growth of the music that I got in high school. I think at one time Bernie and I were in about – we live in two places – and there were three choirs in each place. So over the course of the year, there were six choirs that we're in. There's a civic choir, a church choir, and a residence choir. We live in Sun City, and there is a Sun City choir that we sing in too. Some of those we aren't doing right now, but at one time, we were doing them all, and we enjoyed them all.

Cathy: Did you have to memorize the songs?

Rick: Some you memorize, and some you don't. As I've gotten older, memorizing songs has become more and more of a bother. And I'm thinking of dropping out of one of the choirs just because of the problem of how much time it takes me to memorize the songs, when I would rather be doing something else.

Cathy: — Rick, beware of instant Alzheimer's If you're memorizing, you are inoculating your memory. [Smiles.]

Rick: Yeah, I will take that as advice.

Cathy: Notice that I'm not in any choirs memorizing anything. Tone deaf - the choirs are lucky they've missed me. But, you'll remember me long after I remember you, I fear. [Laughs]

Rick: Yeah, yeah. [Laughs]

THANK YOU ON BEHALF OF THE WASHAKIE MUSEUM

Cathy: Thank you for all the thought you put into this, because I know you spent time preparing, and thank you for agreeing to do a public recording for the Washakie Museum's oral history collection.

Rick: You're welcome, Cathy, and I would thank you for your stewardship of this whole effort.

Cathy: It's been joyous – every single conversation. I run the Zoom room and listen to others on the team do the interviews. You are one of the two people that I've interviewed. I've gotten to hear all of the interviews – 17 so far – and each one is fascinating. You learn so much from each person, It's just been great. So thank you.

Rick: You are welcome.