

# Orleans County Historical Association

Table of Contents: KENNETH C. BURROUGHS Interview

## SUBJECTS

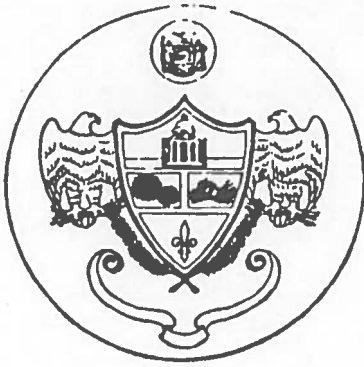
HEP Dog Food developed  
dogs, diets,  
Shredded Wheat for dogs  
Woods & Sprague Milling Co.  
Holley Four Mill  
Bemis Bag Company  
Gaines Dog Food Company  
John Hopkins University  
first electric chain saw  
trees cut  
Simonds S. Company  
surplus military equipment  
lumbering business  
Harrison Radiator, General M.  
Albion Produce Company  
Pete Roth's Sawmill  
Marti's Restaurant, Albion  
prohibition days, Orleans Co.  
State Trooper  
bootleggers  
bath-tub gin  
speakeasies  
government red-tape  
worm ranch/farm  
pyramid promotion scheme  
Seeing Eye Dog  
Hearing Ear Dog  
Lions Club sponsor  
Alcan Highway, Alaska  
steel worker  
fat bears, Alaska  
The Truman Committee  
Yellow Cab Taxi, Brazil  
railroad engine purchased  
Caracas, Venezuela  
Constam Saw Mill Company  
gold mine, Mexico  
Spanish language

## NAMES

Charles Henry Burroughs, father  
Delia Matson Burroughs, mother  
Luther Burroughs, brother  
Ambrose Matson Burroughs, brother  
Rachel Burroughs, sister  
Dorothy Crull Burroughs, wife  
Robert Burroughs, son  
Bill Burroughs, son  
Robert Crull  
Serafin Crull  
Helen Coveny  
Edward Crull  
Tom Pullen, Gasport  
Marc Cole  
Bill Crandall  
Doctor Burbank  
Hiram (Harm) Knickerbocker  
Frank Carselli  
Charles Jackson, ranch manager  
Nelson Rockefeller  
Paul Whiteman  
Duke Ellington

## SUBJECTS & NAMES

Gaines Congregational Church  
Albion schools  
cobblestone schoolhouse, Gaines  
transportation to school  
big freeze of 1944-1945  
Murray Dailey  
Palais Royale, New York City  
poisoned arrows: Indians !!  
San Blas Mountains



# Orleans County Historical Association

## ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The purpose of this project is to collect information about the historical development of Orleans County by means of tape-recorded conversations with people whose experiences reflect the county's growth.

These tapes and transcriptions will be preserved as educational resources and possible publication (all or in part).

I hereby release this tape and transcription to the Orleans County Historical Association.

Kim C. Burroughs

Signed

11-29-79

Date

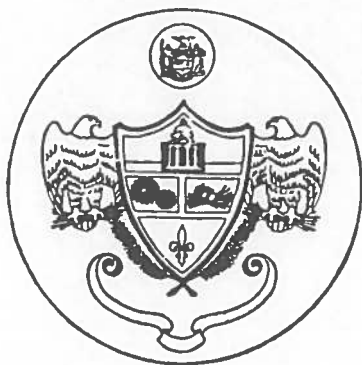
Understood and agreed to:

Lucy P. Burroughs

INTERVIEWER

11-29-79

Date



# Orleans County Historical Association

## ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

Mr. Kenneth C. Burroughs  
San Andreas, California  
(formerly of Albion, New York)

Kenneth C. Burroughs was born February 25, 1903.

Kenneth Burroughs was interviewed by his brother, Luther, while  
visiting in California, 1979.

K. BURROUGHS 1

This is an oral tape interview with Kennetn Burroughs by his brotner, Luther, for the Orleans County Historical Association. November 29, 1979.

Well when - when did you come to Orleans County, Ken?

I came to Orleans County in 1904 when I was a year old. I had been born Februrary twentyfifth, 1903 in Columbus, N. Y. My father, Charles Henry Burroughs was - had moved to become the minister of the Congregational Church in Gaines and we lived in the parsonage on the Ridge - the corner of the Ridge Road and the main road going from Albion to Lakeside. And I went to school in the cobblestone schoolhouse which was directly across the road from the parsonage. And then after getting out of grade school, I went to school in Albion New York, which was three miles distant. And we would drive horse and buggy during the summer and in winter of course the horse and the cutter. And we used to take some of the other students who lived on the Ridge Road - eh - to school. And in 1917 my father bought his first car which was a Model T Ford touring car and after that we sorta had a taxi service and took the people that didn't have transportation back and forth to school.

At one time you made and sold Dog food. Would you tell us why you started to do that and what interested you in it and some of the things that happened during that period.

K. BURROUGHS 2

Well, yes. I started in with two hunting dogs, two bird dogs and because they had been very good stock I decided to raise dogs and in a short time I had seventeen dogs. And food was a big problem to get and buying it in the - eh - gunny sacks as we used to call it from various feed stores and mills. It finally dawned on me that I should try to develop a dog food that I could sell myself. So I started in using the waste from the triscuits of the Shredded Wheat plant in Niagara Falls, which they had a problem in getting rid of. And because it contained a very high amount of cocanut butter, everyone noticed that the coats on my dogs and the people who had purchased it became very glossy and it eliminated mange, which at that time was a big problem in the old days. So I got Woods and Sprague Milling Company to make the food up in my formula, which they did for a while and when they found it was too much of a break in their production thing to stop and maybe make three or four tons at a time they - I had to look for other areas to have it done. There was an old Flour Mill in Holley, New York. So I got permission to go ahead and use that at a very small rent and Frankie Carselli, who was very mechanically minded, and a good mechanic, set up a production process for me there in Holley. And I then began to realize that other people were interested in the dog food with the cocanut oil or cocanut butter. And I had Bemis Bag make some cellophane inside containers with with heavy outside paper and my five pound bags of dog food were the first bulk dog food that was carried in any of the grocery stores. Then because of the production that was too much for the little Holley

K. BURROUGHS 3

plant, I made a contract with the Gaines Food Company in Sherbourne, N. Y. and they manufactured for me for nearly a year. And then they advised me that they were no longer able to do so, so this made me again start out almost as a hand operation. And about three months after the notification, I saw their Gaines Dog Food in five pound packages and took some and had it analysed in Johns Hopkins Hosp. where I knew some of the doctors anfortn because ONE of my sons was born there. They advised me that the formulas were almost identical. However, because of the size of Gaines and me being nothing, I was unable to do anything about it so was knocked out completely of the HEP Dog Food that I made.

Now in this, when you originally started I think you told me that you experimented or had people test it. Was it the University of Michigan? Can you tell us about that.

That was - no it was Johns Hopkins University in Maryland because I had met these doctors and so forth when I was down there and they had done some work on me - on my formula early and so I took it back to Johns Hopkins in Baltimore. They told me that it was an excellent food because of the oil and for that reason there was less mange and less dry hair on the - especially the long haired dogs who were outdoors and hunting.

Did this, beside the trisket leavings, did this have much meat in it at that time?

It had about twenty per cent of dehydrated meat, about five per cent of dehydrated fish and about five percent of bone meal, plus the three per cent of cocanut oil.

Of course you see on television all the time about such and such Dog Food. It's all meat and it's so and so and do you believe from your experience at that time that any dog food would be good - eh - unless it has more than one ingredient in it.

It is the same as the fibre that is being shown all the time as beneficial to the - to the human body. Er - any dog that has been brought up for a number of three, four, five or six years on canned dog food that would be 100 per cent meat, would be very much undernourished in spite of the fact that he might be fat and - and not have the usual trouble in - in - with - in his diet except it would be a very unbalanced diet. Probably, in spite of the advertising, probably very very few people keep their dog on meat alone. Canned dog food meat or raw meat because it would be impossible to keep a healthy dog with just that as their diet.

Another thing that effected Orleans County, I believe it was the winter of 1944 or 1945 there was a big freeze that destroyed a number of orchards, the apple orchards, the peach orchards, the pear orchards. Can you tell us a little about that?

Yes. At that time of the big frost, the farmers wanted to remove their trees because there was no way that they would be bearing again. And several of the farmers in the immediate area of Gaines had come to me to see if I would be interested in

hauling out their orchards as I had a crawler tractor at that time. And after I started on this I heard of a Tom Pullen in Gasport who had an electric saw with a generator that he carried around. And he was buying the boles, or the trunks of apple trees, for the Simonds Saw Company. At that time all saw handles were made from apple wood. I found out where I could get this electric saw with generator which was an Allis-Chalmers. And I bought one and hauled it around on a small trailer. And with this saw I was able to cut through a tree in a matter of minutes where right up to this time I'd had to cut all of the trees with crosscut saws and axes by hand. And of course it opened up an entirely new picture with this, one of the first electric chain saws, that was brought in to that area in New York State.

Now this saw was - this power was what we call 180 cycles. Ordinary cycle is 60 cycle. Practically everyone has that now. Can you explain just how that generated that and how it transferred itself to the - the motors.

Well because of the higher, the 160 cycles - the 180 cycles, it meant that we could have a five horsepower electric motor which would be light weight, whereas under 60 cycles five horse motor you couldn't carry around. And even for the big, the big butts and so forth, we were - we had a ten horse hand held electric motor. It was because of the high cycles and actually it transferred it to a 25 cycle. So it was not a big bulky generator but it was very complicated and one of the first electrical unit that was portable that had done this.

How long a cord did the - did this have? Do you remember?

Yes. We could reach - we could go down through the ordi-



nary apple or peach orchard and hit three rows. In other words we had about 160 feet of cable coming from the generator to the saw.

I came over in 1945, in the fall, to work with you. At that time you had a winch truck that the saw was mounted on. Can you tell us about that?

Yes. I had gone to a war assets auction in Rome, N. Y. and bought one of the surplus military trucks with a winch on it so that I was able to have an A-frame so I could use the winch to pick up the logs to load them on the other trucks. And by mounting the generator on the 6 by 6 military truck, I wasn't all the time getting stuck by having it on a home made trailer that was rather awkward to handle and hard to get around through orchards and through wet and damp places.

This developed, after I came over, into a business that went into the woods. You had a contract with Harrison Radiator. Will you tell us about that.

Well, at this time the radiators made by Harrison were of course all copper radiators and in those days they had no heavy corrugated paper that ~~they~~ could ~~ship in~~, be shipped in, so that all radiators shipped to General Motor plants all over the United States were put in wooden crates. And it had to be soft wood so that there were many farm woods around where they had wanted their woods thinned out or had soft maple and - the - this opened up a sure and continuous outlet for soft woods. I went into that with the General Motors Company or with Harrison Radiator Company for General Motors.

With the acquisition of the winch truck and the machine

for loading logs, you were able to go into other factors of the lumbering business, weren't you?

Yes. The winch truck was very versatile, I might say. And Murray Dailey who was a good friend of mine was building a sauerkraut factory at the Albion Produce Company and needed some big timbers for bracing this very good sized building. And he wanted to know if I would be able to get him thirteen beams that were 16 feet long and 16 inches square. So this quite an order because of course logs of that size had to be almost virgin timber. So there were no woods big enough that I could get them out of one place. So I was able to get twelve -

Birch.

Yes. Birch.

Beech.

Beech that were that size and I had to get one Elm. So after I felled these trees, I took them to Pete Roth's sawmill on the Ridge Road and had them squared. Then we took them down and because it was inside the building that we had to put them, we had to rig up hoists and pulleys and block and tackle as we called them so as to get these beams up high enough so they could be laid on the - on the walls. And to my knowledge those beams are still there, still good and still servicable.

Now there was another thing you did, not in the woods end of it, in laying the rafters.

Oh, that was when Marti's Restaurant was built, they had to have some steel I-beams. And again there were no cranes or derricks in that immediate vicinity to put them up. So again we took the winch truck, extended the A-frame so that we could raise them high enough to go across the

K. BURROUGHS 8

outside walls. And this was quite a feat because we - we had not done any ironworking at that time. (Chuckle). However, we did get it up but for years and every time I go up Albion now and go into Marti's, I always take pains to sit somewhere beside under the great big steel beam that we put up at that time because I didn't quite have confidence in the contractor who was putting that beam up.

Would you tell us about your brothers and sister?

Yes. I had two older brothers, Ambrose Matson, who was commonly called Matson at all times and Luther and a sister, Rachel, who died in infancy. And I had gone to the grade school, the one room grade school where I had listened to my older brothers and so it made a very easy schooling for me because I heard the same thing all through all of the grades while I was there. And later went on to Albion High School. And my oldest brother was a flier in WWI and was later an Assistant Professor of Pomology at the University of Missouri at Columbia. And Luther went on to college at Hamilton, N. Y. and became a schoolteacher for a short time. And I finished High School at Albion and then got into the other activities locally.

You married a local Albion Girl and - can you tell us about.

Yes. I was married in 1928 to Dorothy Crull, a sister of Robert Crull who had been highly decorated during WWI. And we had - her father was Serafin Crull who had come from Belgium and her mother was Helen Coveny. And Edward Crull was an older brother of Dorothy's. And we had two sons; Robert Burroughs

who is now a - is now the head of the English Department of the University of California-Humbolt, and Bill who is with the Southern Bell Telephone Company in Atlanta, Georgia. And Bill has three daughters. Bob has four daughters and a son.

Since you were married in 1928, you must have be' around Orleans County during prohibition days. Can you - do you have any recollection of that period?

Yes. I - Marc Cole - I had been very friendly with the whole Cole family. They stayed at our house some and I stayed up there a great deal. And Marc Cole who had been quite a political figure in Albany. Er - I wanted to become a state trooper and even though I was only twenty, Marc was able to get me in to the state troopers. You were supposed to be twenty one. I was stationed on the border, up in the Niagara Falls, Buffalo area. And of course in those days in the winter time we had to ride horses so we couldn't do too much as far as the bootleggers were concerned in winter weather. But in summer with the Harley-Davidson motorcycle, we could spend a great deal of time trying to pick up the bootleggers from Rochester and Syracuse going east and it was quite an exciting time. And of course there was some shooting but it was pretty hard to hit somebody on a motorcycle who knows enough to stay out of rifle range, (Chuckle) or shotgun range. And we had a great many funny experiences and a few that were a little dangerous but nothing like the movies that they show of the bootleg days and.. after I was married and gotten out of the troopers, after I was married, because Dorothy was very friendly with some of the more prominent in Albion and they still wanted their special brand, of Scotch and so forth, I used to be sort of an

errand boy for some of those prominent people, and would go to several places in Albion and Williamsville, and places where I knew there would be bathtub gin, as they called it in those days. So, it was quite an experience for someone to be enforcing the law for awhile and then be errand boy for people that didn't believe the law should be there anyway.

Well, what about the so-called speakeasies in Albion, or in Orleans County. You should know where they were. You don't have to mention names, but locations would do alright.

Well, without mentioning any names, I can mention the streets. Of course there are many people that are familiar with those streets. On West Academy Street was the surest place, and he had the best bootleg, possibly, in that area. I used to go up on Academy Street and along the railroad track there were several sources. It always seemed to be available. There were two very good merchandisers in the Holley and Clarendon area. So, it was quite a daring thing to be doing in one way, but it was something that everyone was doing so it didn't seem that it was breaking the law.

You spoke about surplus trucks and equipment awhile ago. Do you remember the incident where one of our men ("Wasio"), a veteran wanted to buy a truck?

Yes I do. I recall that. So I told him that we could help him because he seemed to get no help from inquiring at various places that they said they were available. So we drove on into Buffalo, New York where they were accepting the applications for equipment for the boys who qualified, and went into the government office. As we went into this great auditorium, there were around twenty to twenty-five men and

in one line and fully that many in another line and other people sitting around. And so I went up to the information desk because we really didn't have time. It would be hopeless to get in line and fill out their blanks. So there was a man sitting up on sort of a podium that seemed to be - he had secretaries around and I asked the receptionist who that was and she said that was Harold Someone who was the head man there, So Luther and our man, our veteran, went on down stairs and went in to a tavern and had two or three beers and talked it over. So I got on the pay phone there in the tavern and called for the head man. When he came on I said, This is Ken Burroughs and I have one of my <sup>men</sup> here who is a veteran and is entitled to surplus property but he is getting nowhere. And a friend of mine in Washington, Fulton Lewis, Jr. had told me when I came up to contact you and you could possibly help. So he said how soon could you be there and I said in about fifteen or twenty minutes. So we went on up and walked over to the receptionist and she send word up and one of his secretaries met us. We went up and he had the forms and very quickly asked circumstances and to produce his veteran's papers and his eligibility, which he did and I would say that within a matter of fifteen minutes we were walking out of the auditorium with the papers in hand for the truck for this veteran. And I can remember one man jumped and said; "What did you do? How did you do that?" I said I just called up and made an appointment. He says you know I have been here two days and haven't been able to see anybody as yet. This is one of the things that happen when you know the ropes and

K. BURROUGHS 12

don't have to go through all the red tape of the - that the government throws at veterans and senior citizens and everyone else.

Now I want to get back a minute to some of your days in -in Gaines. Bill Crandall was a special friend of yours and you and he did some experimenting. Would you tell us about that.

Yes. Even in those days, and I am sure in these days he still has the greatest ideas there are, inventions and everything else. But he would come down to the Ridge Road where his grandfather's doctor's office was and we would play around in there. There were - he had oh, possibly twenty different size mag - magniscopes and magnifying glasses and some medical prisims that ne used. So we started out with a pretty good magnifying glass in the fall and we got out in the sun and made ourselves a pile of leaves and much to both of our joys we found that we could set the leaves on fire with the sun. So Bill always thinking in bigger thoughts, we rummaged around again in Dr. Burbank's office and found some prisms that were out of a microscope and were really thick and heavy. So we went down just a little ways on the Ridge and got ourselves comfortable by a telephone pole and were able to set it on fire which was a big event and did create quite a sensation for a while until they found out what we were doing and started to stop us. (Chuckle).

There is one more thing in Gaines. You have a - a - incident with Harm Knickerbocker, or Hiram Knickerbocker, Harm is what they called him. Do you remember that? the shoes?

Yes. Because I was the youngest boy in the family, I

guess I must have been six years old at the time. And it always - I had nothing but hand-me-down things but as fall came on and I was to go back to school, there were no shoes that were good at all that I could wear. So my mother took me to the store and in this store, Hiram Knickerbocker had this line of copper toed boots and I had never had a pair. I think both my older brothers had but they'd worn them out because when you had a pair of copper toed boots you just wore them day and night and forever. But I wanted them and tried them on but I believe the copper toed boots were about a dollar ninety five or two and a quarter and the shoes, that my mother went in to buy for me, were around a dollar and a half. So she was very sorry and kept explaining why she couldn't buy them for me. And at the time it so impressed me with Hiram Knickerbocker, because I forget exactly whether he sold the copper toed boots that sold for around two dollars for around a dollar or whether he just made a present. I remember I was very impressed. This is one of the things I cherished for years and I even wore them after they had to be broken out so my toes wouldn't curl up in them.

We are sitting now in the Black Bart Inn in San Andreas, California. Right on top of the San Andreas fault and about ten miles from here is Sutter's Mill where the gold strike was in 1949. This little village here has some of the old buildings that were in back in those days. Across the street from us you can see the Odd Fellows Hall built in 1854. Now X - you are living here now and I understand that at your age, you will be seventy seven next year, you are going in to a new undertaking. That is you are going to be caretaker of a worm



K. BURROUGHS 14

farm of all things. Now could you tell us about that.

Yes. And because you are not familiar with the worm farms, of course everything here is a ranch. So this is a worm ranch, not a worm farm. And there are approximately somewhere between a hundred and two hundred million worms in these worm frames. Some of them are as long as an eighth of a mile and about seven or eight feet wide. And they have to be watered twice a week. And the purpose of these worms and why this particular place is so big, that they recycle all kinds of waste. Cattle, goats and garbage waste and everything except tin cans. By feeding them these disposal wastes, the garbage waste, the cattle waste and so forth, twice a week, laying them on top of the bed, the worms come up from about eight inches in the bed and work their way on up and recycle all of this. And as they recycle, even with the manures, within three days from the time they have recycled this feeding, within three days you can reach in with your hand and pick up the castings, as they call them, from the worm and there is no odor, there is nothing, but there is a rich - a rich vitamin and a plant growth fertilizer, really, that for indoor plants and starting plants outdoors is better than any known brands of fertilizer. Mixed with peat moss and several other things, almost no chemicals, just purifying chemicals which are non injurious and then these are put in anywhere from two pounds to eight pound plastic bags and are sold for people to do their house plants and if they have little greenhouses they use it for starting. And some of the senior citizen in this part of the country, they put them in little plastic baskets and don't

K. BURROUGHS 15

have to worry about the getting a quick growth and the plastic finally falls away and they raise tomato plants from this worm casting from peat moss.

Did - who - who had this idea originally and - is there any story connected with that? How the worms were gathered?

Yes. Its like the stories you read about the Holiday - er - Magic Cosmetics, Glen Turner with his great Coscot Cosmetics and like Cape Coral and other real estate things. It was a pyramid. A man in this part of the country started in with, probably two hundred thousand worms. He ran ads in Home magazines and weekly newspapers around, telling people if they would buy two racks of worms which would come to two hundred and fifty dollars, in six months they would have as many as ten racks. And he would be able to buy the castings from the worms. In fact, he also would be able to buy from them worms for fishing and up in the mountainous areas, rivers and streams and lakes. Of course this was a big thing and - but at the end of six months or so, the people would say they had so much to bring and he would put them off and he'd tell them however that the market would be up. And if they would get another batch to make it worth while, he would send his pick-up trucks out and pick these castings up or the bait worms. And however, he also would tell them any one that they got to buy and original rack at \$250, he would give them \$100 and for every one he could get. And of course this went on and was what became known as a pyramid promotion whereby the people who bought the worms almost never were able to sell them except that they could go to the little marinas and sell a few worms. And

finally the Attorney General of the State of California clamped down and closed the man out entirely.

Then he had to sell the business to these people that have it now.

Yes. He - because he was not allowed to do this. It's like being on probation but he was to get out of this business entirely and could no longer run a pyramid sale of worms. However, we all in this area now, I am new here, believe that he has got something very similar but of course not with worms.

There is another thing. You learn something every day. Day before yesterday you and I went to a luncheon in Arcata, California. And we found something that we had never heard of. A project is starting up and it seems that it might in several years grow to quite a thing. Now can you explain what that was?

Yes. This is sponsored by bingo games from the ~~Vets Club~~ and it is known

Lions Club.

Lions Club and it is known as the Hearing Ear Dog. And they now have placed through the parent company in Oregon, they have now placed forty of these dogs. And it is of course similar to the Seeing-Eye Dog. They do not have to be big dogs because they do - they are on the leash and they have the right to take the people - to take the dog in the restaurant and go on the airplanes with them the same as the Seeing-eye dog. But these dogs are from the pounds and from little dogs on up because these people who can see their dogs would prefer maybe a small cocker spaniel or some other but the biggest dogs are shown in this area was about a cross between a small

labrador and possibly a hunting dog. But they are taught just exactly what the deaf person cannot hear. Number one is some one ringing their doorbell. Number two, some one knocking and if the doorbell rings, the Hearing\*Ear Dog goes over to the master, presses against him, gets up and that gets the attention and lead them right out to the door. Now even in such a thing as cooking, people may put something in the oven who can't hear the buzzer when it goes on, so another thing, another noise they are trained to is the buzzer on an oven or any thing cooking that has a certain period and they go and take them to that buzzer. And one of the most amazing things is with persons who can't hear sirens, fire engines - I mean sirens or telephones and so forth. In the smoke alert, the fire alert, these dogs, of course they are taught to take them to the buzz. And people can see, so as soon as the dog approaches them and wakes them up, gets in bed and wakes them up, they take them right to where the smoke alarm buzzer is on the wall and so they know what it is. Then too they are trained to all kinds of alarm clocks so that a-deaf person is of course unable to hear the alarm clock so these dogs are trained and they jump up on the bed and usually lick their master's face or neck to waken them. And they also will answer the - when the telephone rings they take them right to the telephone. People who are very - can't hear at all on the telephone, there is a new instrument that this same group is developing that they hang the receiver on the cradle of the machine and as a person talks, the machine prints out what is being said and it comes out on the tape. And if it is someone that they're, because these people do keep in contact, who can't hear and

K. BURROUGHS 18

they each have one of these machines, they can talk to each other. Otherwise they take it out and it is printed and they can read it.

Well what is going to be the expense of this proposition per dog compared to the Seeing-Eye Dog?

Well. Because the Seeing-Eye Dogs are all bred by the Seeing-Eye Company and - they to get the proper temperament and the size and so forth, it takes about two and a half years to train the dog and when the dog is sent out as a Seeing-Eye Dog, the price of that dog is something like \$26,000. and where the Seeing - the Hearing-Ear Dogs are taken out of the pound and they are kept for six months and all these tests are made as to how alert they are and how easily they are trained. They can do this with their staff and these dogs go into these homes for \$2600. It seems like a lot of money but the dogs because they are well cared for in the homes and they aren't subject to being hit by cars and eating outside where they get something that is bad for them, they are good for about ten years, So it isn't such a big thing. And in the forty dogs they have trained and put out, they have only - their only loss of a dog they start to train and he doesn't come up to it is about three percent. The Seeing-Eye Dogs even with their careful breeding but that runs sometimes as high as twenty percent out of a thousand dogs they will have as many as two hundred that they are not able to train. So that's what makes it so very, very expensive for the Seeing-Eye Dog.

Now as long as we are going back and forth, I believe in the late 1930's you had gone up to Alaska to work as a steel

worker on the Alcan Highway. At that time you saw a number of things. Could you tell us what you did, what happened and what the results were?

Yes. I went up to the Whitehorse and Yukon Territory eh - and actually they did not have enough steel for the - for the buildings, some of the buildings. And they were bulldozing great big spruce and fir trees, so they had about eleven big sawmills along that highway. But they weren't getting production out of more than three of them. So the - the - so little steel came through for the steel workers and they finally decided they would use this timber for everything. But the mills weren't running and one of the things I found that the government had sent up as the head man of the - of the sawmilling operations, a master, a master cabinet maker from Brooklyn, N. Y. who had never been in the woods in his life and had never seen a saw much bigger than a - a band saw much bigger than two feet. And here he was up there with band saws that he knew nothing of and this was the army way to do things. He was sent up there because of some politician. He had a friend who had contacts. I don't know what it was. This was very badly run and the second thing when I got to Fairbanks, that I resented, we all did. We had more butter and steaks and everything than we possibly could ever use and throwing so much of it out that the natives said that in all the years they had lived there, the bears always hibernated at a certain temperature and time. But the bears were so fat all along that Alcan Highway that they just didn't care to hibernate. They were eating sirloin steak and butter, butter, butter and of course in the States, I finally reported some of those things.

K. BURROUGHS 20

But the thing that made the biggest impression was, the government was sending - eh - eighteen and twentyfour inch pipe by boat up to Skagway and it was being shipped out on the narrow guage railroad of Skagway to the north end of the Alcan Highway. And then they were trucking, with great big trucks, eighteen and twentyfour inch pipes out of Whitehorse and the Yukon Territory. It was the same size pipe. It was for the same purpose and oh for weeks and months these haulers. One would be going south and another would be going north. And no one - they would send stuff from Skagway almost down to - on the Snake River. And they were sending stuff from the United States by truck and rail as far as it would go and sending it way up above Fairbanks. So the thing was so bad that I finally wrote a letter to ~~the~~ the Truman Committee enumerating ~~the number of~~ the number of trucks that were meeting each other at the location where I was in Whitehorse at that time, over a period of two weeks. And of course, talking to the drivers, I knew where they got their loads. I knew what kind of pipe it was. So I wrote to the Truman Committee and included the bears getting fat, and the tires, and the fact that the fuel, the gasoline. When it got cold weather they'd drain their gasoline tanks and just start a fire. They'd take their Diesel oil and burn that because it was easier than going out and chop green wood. So I listed about twenty things that I saw going on, and I finally received a telegram through the Air Force Telegraph office there, to contact them at once. So I sent them a tela - they asked me to contact by telegram and

K. BURROUGHS 21

I did. And that had to go through the Air Force. And there were about three telegrams back and forth each way. But the Air Force sent them so they had copies. And when Senator Truman's Committee sent air transportation for me to come back to Washington to appear before the committee, the Air Force refused to fly me out. So that I had to come out by boat through the Aleutians to get into Seattle so I could get on a plane to go to Washington. So I appeared two different days before the Truman Committee. Of course I was not at all popular with the powers that be in Alaska after appearing. So this shows that even today the same things are going on and if you do something and its bad enough, they either shut-you-up, kick you out, or promote you. But with me, they just sort of shut me up.

Of course we know those things happen. Now as long as we are going on that kind of - of - of thing. I think it was 1945, you went to Brazil. Could you tell us a little about what you found out - why you went and what you found out when you went down there.

I went down - I went to Brazil for a - a banking company. And they were interested in buying war asset equipment to sell to businesses and so forth. I went down on this trip and also because of the - the experience I have had in cutting just a little wood and so forth. I went down to look into that and the first person I met when I got down there was the head of the - Yellow Cab of Brazil which was in Rio De Janiero. And of course during the war they couldn't get any automobiles or anything so he wanted some fifty or a hundred Yellow Cabs,



And my next contact was with a railroad - with a government railroad and they wanted Diesel switching locomotives. That was a government deal but the taxi deal was an individual deal. So the taxi owner and his wife made arrangements or I made arrangements through the banking company to have them flown to New York and I went to - I came up and I went to a war assets auction and bought these twelve passenger elongated Chevrolets that the government had. And the taxi owner came up and of course was very thrilled about it. And I shipped them. And of course I just didn't know what to do with the government order - the railroad - but I did handle that through a Wall Street firm. They got letters of credit and I knew nothing of a Diesel switching engine but went to the Rome Surplus Depot there and found one. And they started it up and ~~backed~~ backed it up and ran it ahead and let me back it up and run it ahead. So I sold that deal.

We have been to Canada and Alaska and Brazil. Now suppose we - what were you doing in Venezuela?

I was sent down to Venezuela by the - by a banking firm ~~out of Wall Street~~ out of Wall Street. And primarily to look at some timber land and before I went ~~through~~ - through a friend of mine, I was told that the Rockefellers had the EPEC Corporation headquartered in Caracas. I went over to the EBEC Corporation and saw Nelson Rockefeller and he gave me Charles Jackson, their Venezuela ranch manager. So when I got to Venezuela, I was taken over there to look at some timber that they had. And then I went back into Caracas and was sent out to Badigy, which is a little town just south of Lake Maicibo where all of the oil wells were out in the lake. And

from there, I went down to the - down the Orinoco to Ciudad Bolivar. Up the river for about two hundred miles. And when we went up in the river boat from Ciudad Bolivar, we had to have screens on the boat because we got - in getting close to the shore to see some of the trees and some of the terrain, the Indians would shoot from the banks, Would shoot poisoned arrows! Of course with the all the screens it didn't have much effect. And I went back in to Bedigy for the Constam Saw Mill Company, which was a Swedish organization, to try to convince some of the larger milling companies that they would do better with the Swedish saws than they would with the German saws they had. So it made a sort of a three-way-round-circle for me to look at two projects pertaining to wood and then spend about four months doing a selling job in the same woods, or near the same woods, where I had been working.

Now was your family with you any of these times or were you all alone?

When I was in Caracas, during the Easter holidays, the company flew the - my son Bill down and he liked it so well that he came back down in the summer for a while to work on a - to drive a bulldozer. Because although he was only about seventeen at the time, they were paying six dollars and a half an hour for anybody that could drive a bulldozer. And he stayed however, only about three weeks and didn't especially like the country. And in fact I was kind of glad he went back, because he - the only thing he could eat was filet mignon and he wanted it for breakfast and for lunch and for dinner. And it was about nine dollars a meal so he just couldn't

get comfortable there even though he was making quite a bit of money.

What about the language in Brazil and in Venezuela. Did that give you any difficulty?

No, the - some of the people in Albion, when they first heard I was going to Brazil, one of the business mensaid; "What the hell are you going down to Brazil for? You can't speak Spanish." So I told him, "Well, neither can the Brazilians." He said, "What do you mean?" Of course they speak Portugese in Brazil, And Spanish in most of the South and Central America. But Spanish is really a little easier. It's a softer language. Portugese is quite similar to Dutch and German.

Then your next country, that you would go into would be Mexico. You were in there for a while not too many years ago. What were you doing in Mexico?

Well, when Bill finished at Georgia Tech, he said he didn't want to get lost in General Electric or General Motors. And because I had been in Mexico and Venezuela and knew my way around pretty well down there. Bill said why don't we go down to Mexico and prospect for gold? So we went down in about 1956, I think it was. And started a gold mine in the San Blas Mountains. And Bill and I ran it for about six months and Bill was flying back and forth from Mexico to Atlanta met an Eastern Airline stewardess. And his next vacation, he didn't come back and he didn't come back. And finally he said he couldn't bring Jean down to the mining town. Which he couldn't because it

was twentyseven miles from a store or water or anything else. I operated for about another year , trying to do it. But it took two people and when I had a Mexican mining manager, it didn't go too well. And then I gat an American manager to help and that was even worse. So I finally got out with a very small payment. But it had been a pretty profitable two years, two and a half years of operation.

Well now this is - is running to a close. There are a couple of incidents. These are <sup>during</sup> ~~prohibition~~ prohibition. I'd like to bring up and see if you remember them. The first one was in New York City at the Palais Royale where we listened to Paul Whiteman. The second incident was ten years later in Syracuse where we listened to Duke Ellington. Would you give us the two stories as you remember them?

Well I remember that I had been fortunate enough to be in New York, it must have been around 1923. I forget the date. And I saw that - at Carnegie Hall I saw a sign thet First in Carnegie Hall - Paul Whiteman playing the Rhapsody in Blue by George Gershwin and I was able to get a seat. Of course I thoroughly enjoyed it. It was George Gershwin playing the piano. And so later, this time that you mention, it was ( I had forgotten that it was the Palaise Royale) I remember going there and when we were in Syracuse and talked to and were with Duke Ellington. I remember that that also was quite a thrill.

Well both of these were during prohibition. And it's one thing I mentioned it now. If you remember the price of lemonade at the Palaise Royale in those days, in 1921.

No. But I think the lemonade was as much as the bathtub gin and the - the Scotch and so forth. But it was - I was ~~was~~

not too impressed. I can't remember, but I do know that it wasn't what it is today.

Well we weren't, at least I wasn't drinking too much at the time but we had a lemonade that was seventyfive cents. Seventyfive cents for lemonade in those days was about like seven dollars and a half now. And then the incident I was trying to get out in Syracuse with Duke Ellington and his orchestra was the fact that you had asked him if any of his boys drank gin. And so he said, "Well if they can get it." And so you suggested that you go out and bring back some for intermission. We went in the back room and some people like his trumpet player, Cootie Williams and I forget some and Duke himself, they had quite a session. Maybe the fact that I am more interested in music than you are in those days. It probably impressed me more than it did you.

I do remember it because I had a man who worked with me there by the name of Millard, ~~and his~~

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This interview was conducted by Luther Burroughs  
and  
transcribed by Luther Burroughs, Albion, New York.

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