

This is Kelly MacKenzie. The date is March 27, 2006 and I am interviewing Don MacKenzie, her grandfather

Q: In Hillsboro, what activities were you involved in school? Like what kind of clubs, sports, etc.?

A: In high school? Played football, belonged to the Senate Club, belonged to the Fire Club. I was a candidate for student body president. I lost by three votes. We had a traveling assembly. We exchange assemblies with other schools and I my current girlfriend at that time were co-directors of that. That pretty much of the big things.

Q: How were those clubs organized? Like the Fire Club. How did you organize that and what did you do?

A: I was just a fireman. I didn't do any of the brain work on that, but it was each guy had a job in case there was a fire. We would help the other students get out of the place safely.

Q: What were the main highlights of your years at Hilhi?

A: Oh my. Football was one. I wasn't real good, I wasn't even a starter, but I played a lot of substitute. Actually the best football was my junior year because I was captain of the JV team and I played steadily then and oh I also I was both in the junior and senior play. Neither case did I have a lead. We had Our Town was one of the ones and a bit part of that. I can't remember what the other play was. That was fun.

Q: What years did you go to Hilhi?

A: I went from 1938 to 1942.

Q: Was there a leadership class when you went to Hilhi and if no how was it run and was it a popular club to be in?

A: There was no leadership club, just leadership with the smartest and the strongest.

Q: What kinds of things were there to do in Hillsboro?

A: Well, we had a roller skating rink, which when you went roller skating was a dance hall at Schute Park. We played a lot of sports that were must make up sports. It wasn't part of the school program or anything. We would just get together and play baseball or softball and touch football and all of the athletic things. We had a wonderful library. I like to read. We had two movie houses, so there were always movies available. Portland had all sorts of things. Portland was 18 miles away and when you get to be 16 and get your driver's license and you could talk your dad out of the car, why you went to Portland to go out to dinner, go to see the Portland Beavers baseball team play. In high school we had a ski club and during the ski season they would have 30 or 40 members

and every other Saturday or Sunday a school bus would take them up to Mt. Hood, which was about an hour and a half trip. They would ski, ski, ski.

Q: Did you have May Fete at your school?

A: No. We had a lot of dances. It was right in the peak of the swing era. Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey and all the famous big bands. We had senior prom, junior prom and that sort of thing.

Q: Was it popular?

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you have any kind of themes for them? Like the themes at our school are "Under the Sea".

A: For the junior and senior prom it would have a theme and we would decorate up the gym.

Q: Do you remember any of the themes?

A: No.

Q: Were there any other things of interest on campus such art shows?

A: They had a very active art club and one of the teachers, Mrs. Deitrich was a great teacher. She was a super one.

Q: Did you have a winter court? Like Miss Merry Christmas, King Arthur court?

A: No. Not that I recall.

Q: What was homecoming like?

A: Homecoming was just a football game.

Q: Did you have a dance afterwards or a formal?

A: No.

Q: What were classes like, size, what was your favorite subject, teacher, what was focused on, things like that academically?

A: My English lit teacher. She was a good one. She was a customer of mine for a long time after I got in business. Frank Roberts was the English and speech teacher and he was also the teacher involved in running the plays. He went to become Senator

Roberts here in Salem here until just recently and just passed away. His wife was the governor and all that.

Q: What were class sizes like? Now like we have 30 or 40 kids in a class.

A: Our class sizes were all pretty much the same. I would say 25-35.

Q: Were there any main issues, like major issues that were focused on at your school?

A: When the war was declared in December of 1941, all the guys were 17 or 18, that is draft age. We had guys who dropped out of school and volunteered and went right into the Army. We had several wonderful Japanese families who the kids, really nice guys, they were all shipped off to the interment camps till the end of the war. We let loose after the war and some of them came back to Oregon. It was an unjust thing, because they lost a lot of their property. There was a guy he was in our class, he came back and he went to Oregon State and became a druggist and had a good business in Portland. I still see him every once and a while.

Q: Besides the war, do you remember any major international, national events that happened during high school?

A: I missed everything international in those days. The war was a world wide thing and many, many countries were involved in it. Most in Europe and Asia. It appeared in the headlines of the paper all of the time.

Q: How did the students deal with it?

A: I think frankly the majority of us when Pearl Harbor was attacked by Japan. We thought we would beat them in six months. A couple of years later I was over there.

Q: What were the clothes styles like? Favorite music of the time?

A: Another thing involved in the dance was I was on the dance committee and myself and a friend named Bill Yates, our job was to procure records. All of our dances were recorded music. He and I would go into Portland about once a month they would give us \$3.00, which would correspond to \$30.00 now, we would go into buy, it was a music and musical instrument store and they had all kinds of records, it was a record store and a whole instrument department. They also supplied juke boxes were the big thing in restaurants and cafes. You put in a nickel and you get a song for everybody. Also they supplied the records to all of the juke box companies and when they had been on the juke box for so long they would take them out and put newer songs on that sort of thing and they had a room in their store all lined with shelves, record after record after record of used records. And I mean the best stuff, like I say Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, and some classical stuff for a nickel a record. We would go in there and would go in there any we would buy 15 or 20 records for our \$3.00 and take them back

out and we would throw some of the ones away that everybody was tired or and some that got scratchy after a while.

Q: Is the store still there today?

A: I think it is. It is on Alder Street in Portland and the man that owned lives in the same condominium complex that I live in now. Just down the street from me.

Q: What were clothes styles like?

A: Girls for everyday, saddles, knit sweaters prints or plaids. Saddle shoes, bobbie sox.

Q: What did the guys wear?

A: Everybody wore corodory pants. Cream corodory and they never washed them. They fought with their mothers about that very much. We washed them maybe once every six to eight weeks. Long sleeved Pendleton shirts were very popular. Just regular t-shirt. I was involved in a very important experience regarding men's clothing. A friend of mine Bill Yates had a sister who was at the University of Oregon and she was engaged to the editor of the University of Oregon newspaper. Any so Bill went down one weekend to visit them and they showed him a great time, they went to a football game and they went to a dance and they got him a date. He had a great time. He came back. He told me "You know Don half of the boys the male students down there wear saddle shows just like girls." We had never heard of that. I said they do. Bill and I then made up our mine we were going to go Oregon and did. He said they bought them at Armanshaws Shoe Store on Front Street in Portland. I said well we better go down on Saturday and take a look. We went down there next Saturday and we both bought a pair of saddle shoes. They were brown and white. So Monday we both go into high school and we got kidded more than anything, but two weeks later over half of the boys were wearing them. We set the style.

Q: Were there any social norms or clicks? Were people interested in fads or things like that?

A: The farm kids versus the city kids. You always had a bunch of people that you kind of ran around with. I got along with everybody. Nobody thought they were better than anybody else. Hillsboro was only about 2000 people in those days and we didn't have a tremendous flow in high school. The biggest problem is the best athletes that we really needed on the field and to go home at 4:00 and milk the cows, so we lost their services.

Q: What kind of jobs did teens have, what were the available jobs?

A: Fruit picking, produce picking. When I was in school, I worked for my dad in the service department, washing cars and I was making 25 cents an hour. I thought that was

pretty good wages so my junior year and I was old enough to work what was considered The Birds Eye plant at 40 cents an hour. I told my dad I had to have 40 cents an hour. I did for two years the night shifts. I go to work at 6:00 p.m. and get off at 6:00 a.m. I was a pretty rich guy making 40 cents an hour. I did about 10 or 15 different jobs down there. Basically as the crops changed you work, when the strawberries are coming while your trucking strawberries in to the lines from the outside. When it was corn I was feeding corn in the corn husking machine. Things shipped in barrels. I made barrels, put barrels together.

Q: What was Hillsboro like?

A: It was about 15 blocks from east to west and about nine blocks from north to south. The town stopped and then an inch or two it was a farm.

Q: What were the rivalries against Hillsboro High School?

A: Forest Grove and Beaverton. We played Forest Grove every Thanksgiving morning at 10:00 a.m. at the Hilhi field, the next year we would play at Forest Grove at Pacific University field.

Q: Was the Hilhi field Hare field?

A: No the Hillsboro High field would be just east what is now J.B. Thomas. At the far end, I think it is still there they use it for PE now and that was the only high school at that time.

Q: What were the cheerleaders like and were there cheerleaders?

A: Yeah. Actually the cheerleaders were guys?

Q: All of them?

A: Yeah.

Q: There weren't any girl cheerleaders?

A: No. Sometimes there would be one and some times there would be two or three. They had big megaphones and they led the cheers.

Q: Did they have a persona and pretend like they were better than everybody else being cheerleaders or were they just nice people?

A: Just guys who were extroverts. During basketball and football season I was on the bench most of the time, during basketball we had cheerleaders at the home games, but we didn't have any organized, we didn't have a real big crowd of home town guys going to Tigard or to St. Helens when we were playing way. I kind of was made the voluntary

cheerleader. We had may be 14-16 people there. I would just ride over with the coach because we he was a next door neighbor. I would talk to the coach. I would ask him about University of Oregon because I wanted to go there.

Q: What were pep assemblies like?

A: Our assemblies were mostly, some of it was music put on by we had an organized marching band. We had several small units. Some instrumental. We had about 500 kids in that school and that was really considered a big school in those days.

Q: Did you have class competitions? During our pep assemblies we have class competitions, freshman, sophomores, juniors and seniors will compete against each other for a star pretty much bragging rights.

A: We used to have class competitions for a lot of things.

Q: What was the popular thing to be doing?

A: I don't have a good answer for that.

Q: What was the learning environment like? Was it nurturing, did the teachers really care if somebody was struggling?

A: Yes. The kept them after school until they got it right.

Q: And the learning environment was it positive or did you learn a lot?

A: Teachers really worked on those days. They didn't have a lot of the electronic or automated help that they current teachers do. They didn't have computers, you didn't have TV. My father got our first radio when I was about six years old. It was run off an automobile battery that put us in pretty good shape. My dad would taken them down and recharge them.

Q: Were there stresses put on students to succeed? Were you stressed out to get good grades or stressed to do well.

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