

ORAL HISTORY OF

RALPH O'NEIL

COLLECTED BY BRIAN O'NEIL

BRIAN O'NEIL

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INTRODUCTION:

I interviewed my grandfather, Ralph O'Neil. He was born September 1st, 1925. He was born in Roosevelt, Utah. He presently lives in Price, Utah.

I interviewed him at his home in Price. The interview took place on April 25th, 1997.

Ralph grew up in Roosevelt and then later moved to Price.

The following pages contain some of his life and experiences.

BRIAN: What is your full name?

RALPH: Ralph O'Neil

BRIAN: Were you named after somebody?

RALPH: Well my middle name is Crapo, and that was my mothers maiden name.

BRIAN: Did you have a nickname as you were growing up?

RALPH: My nickname was Peewee.

BRIAN: How come?

RALPH: Well I only weighed ninety-five pounds in high school.

BRIAN: Where were you born?

RALPH: In Roosevelt.

BRIAN: When?

RALPH: September 1st, 1925.

BRIAN: What kind of chores did you have to do while growing up?

RALPH: Well not to much when I was little, but when we got to the sixth or seventh grade we had to get up and milk eight to twelve cows before school, come home and milk eight to twelve head of cows, and feed pigs. Then in the summer we had to hay. We didn't have much time. The only time we had to play was on Sunday and we usually went fishin' up on White Rocks River on Sunday. And if the garden wasn't cultivated we didn't go fishin' on Sunday, we cultivated garden.

BRIAN: Was there a chore that you really hated?

RALPH: The only part I really hated was milking the cows in the morning. Doing the work, I didn't mind doing the work.

BRIAN: What would you consider the most important inventions made during your life?

RALPH: Well the jet airplane, computer, and all the medical advances that's been made I think has more to do with the good of the world than all of the other inventions. The life span of people has increased thirty percent in my lifetime, and I think that's one of the major things is the medical advances.

BRIAN: How is the world different now than when you were a child?

RALPH: When I was a child we got one pair of shoes a year, we had to make it last through the school year til, get to the summer so we could go barefooted in the summer. And no television, no telephones, never had electricity in our house till 1945, never had inside plumbing until we moved to Price in 1945, no it was 1942 that we moved to Price. Kids have cars now and there's just so many advances for young people. People camp out better than they use to live.

BRIAN: Did you like to read when you were a kid?

RALPH: No, I hated it to death.

BRIAN: Do you ever remember not having enough food to eat because times were hard?

RALPH: I can remember when we had tough times, but there was always enough to eat. We didn't have fancy clothes, drove an old car, but dad never left us hungry.

BRIAN: What were your favorite childhood games?

RALPH: Well baseball probably.

BRIAN: Did you ever play on the school team or anything?

RALPH: I played third base on the Altera High baseball team for four years. I was on the basketball team those four years also.

BRIAN: What were your schools like?

RALPH: Well the whole high school class, four year high school class at Altera had less than a hundred and eighty people in it. They'd graduate about forty people a year. High school wasn't much different from grade school, everything was done by hand, you read your books and did your reports by hand, course there was typewriters but I don't think electronic typewriters were available then, I think it was all manuals. I remember the old underwoods, they stood about a foot tall, and it sounded like a threashen machine for a good secretary using them.

BRIAN: What was your favorite subject in school?

RALPH: Recess. (ha,ha,ha) I enjoyed history and mathematics, I did pretty well in math.

BRIAN: Which one was the easiest for you?

RALPH: Math was the easiest for me.

BRIAN: What was your least favorite subject?

RALPH: English.

BRIAN: Why?

RALPH: I just never could grasp making sentences and punctuation, dissecting sentences and stuff like that, it's just practically impossible for me. The only time I got a passing grade in it is when basketball and baseball season were on.
(ha,ha,ha)

BRIAN: That's because you had to huh.

RALPH: You had to have a C+ in it or you couldn't play ball.

BRIAN: Who was your favorite teacher?

RALPH: Oh I had two or three favorite teachers, but I wasn't any of theirs favorite. I guess Miss Thursbee. She was a math teacher. I don't know if we understood each other a little better than most or not. I guess she realized that I was semi-stupid and let it go at that.

BRIAN: How do your fellow classmates remember you best?

RALPH: As a loner. I didn't go with much. Never dated anybody till I was a senior.

BRIAN: How did you get to school?

RALPH: We rode a bus, we had to walk about a half a mile, up hill both directions course, but I remember in the summer, in the fall it was only two miles from our house to the high school, if I didn't want to ride the bus I would just run the two miles and beat the bus to school. I did that, oh I bet I did that five hundred times.

BRIAN: Did you and your friends have a special place where you liked to hang out?

RALPH: There wasn't that kind of place in those days, there were no "hang outs." We all lived on a farm, and everybody had a basketball banker and a place they could go play baseball and if we wanted to get together we just went to somebody's house and we got on our horses, everybody had a horse, and we'd go for a ride on our horses and go out and rope cows and calves, that kind of

stuff.

BRIAN: Were you ever given any special awards for your studies or school activities?

RALPH: No.

BRIAN: How many years of education did you complete?

RALPH: Eleven years and half of a senior year.

BRIAN: Did you have a college degree?

RALPH: No.

BRIAN: Did you get good grades?

RALPH: No.

BRIAN: Overall did you like school?

RALPH: No, I hated every day I ever spent in a school house. That's why I'm so dumb.

BRIAN: Do you remember someone saying something to you that had an impact on your life or changed your life in some way?

RALPH: No one thing that I can think of.

BRIAN: How would you describe yourself politically?

RALPH: I'm a died in the wool Democrat, not necessarily Liberal, but I'm not a Republican either.

BRIAN: What wars have been fought in your lifetime?

RALPH: Well World War II and Korean War and the Vietnam War, and all these little skirmishes, Grenada, Haiti, Panama.

BRIAN: How do you feel about them?

RALPH: I feel that most of the wars are political. I think that World War II may have been less political than the others. They seemed to have more of a valid reason for fighting in World War

II than the others. If Hitler hadn't have been stopped, and then we were forced into a war with Japan when they bombed Pearl Harbor on the seventh of December, and there wasn't much we could do than defend ourselves. So justification was there, didn't necessarily make it right, but we had to defend ourselves. This going to another country like Vietnam and Korea and like that, maybe I'm just not smart enough to realize the importance of it, but it seems that we over did both of them.

BRIAN: Did you serve in the military?

RALPH: I was in the Air Force.

BRIAN: Where and when did you serve?

RALPH: I was in a B 29 outfit on Siapan. And after I finished there I went to Iwojema. I was in the 879th Bombsquad and 499th bomb group, 73rd wing of the 20th Air Force commanded by General Curtis E. Lamay, who ended up in later years as Chief of Staff of the Air Force. At the time I was in the Air Force it was the Army Air Force. It was actually World War II that the services were separated and it became the Air Force, they were taken out of the army. But all through World War II the air force was the Army Air Force or the Navy Air Force or the Marine Corp.

BRIAN: What were your duties?

RALPH: I was a truck driver.

BRIAN: What did you haul?

RALPH: I hauled bombs from the ships to the revetments, which was a storage area. Then from the storage area to the airplanes. I drove a truck 108,000 miles on an island 7 miles wide and 11

miles long.

BRIAN: Yuck!

RALPH: Monotony was a way of life.

BRIAN: Were you ever injured?

RALPH: No.

BRIAN: What U.S. President have you admired the most and why?

RALPH: Well, Theodore Roosevelt has been my hero because he took us out of the depression. And I like John F. Kennedy. He seemed to be honest. The FBI was after him tooth and nail his whole career, but I think Kennedy was a good man.

BRIAN: As you see it, what are the biggest problems that face our nation and how do you think they could be solved?

RALPH: Well, I think the biggest problem we face right now is dishonest politicians. Everybody wanting to feather their own nest. They all jump up and down and cry for term limits until the term limits affect them, then they don't do anything. And crime is a big thing, but in the last five years crime has been on the decrease for the first time since, well, since I can remember. Crimes are on the decrease. Drugs are on the decrease. Drugs are increasing in youth, I understand, but I think all in all we may be in a downward trend, but I think lawlessness in general is a big problem.

BRIAN: Do you have any bad habits now or in the past?

RALPH: I used to smoke and drink, but I don't now.

BRIAN: Have you ever regretted your habits?

RALPH: Yes.

BRIAN: Have you ever been in a serious accident like in a car or in the mine?

RALPH: I've been in some accidents, but nothing serious.

BRIAN: Have you ever been the victim of a crime?

RALPH: Oh, I lost some pilfering at the house, but that's about all. I've never been robbed, or beaten, or mugged, or anything like that.

BRIAN: Why are you living where you live now?

RALPH: Well, the reason I came here was to get a decent paying job. I lived in Roosevelt, worked for half of what everybody else did, came out here and doubled my salary in one month. And got a retirement that I never would have had. After I fought the fire at Wilberg Mine I had asthma and my health has deteriorated, but Utah Power treated me real good, and I've lived well since then, other than my health. And that's the reason I'm here. And I particularly like to live here. There's everything I want, including my family.

BRIAN: Have you ever had an experience that you would consider to be super-natural or psychic?

RALPH: No. I don't believe in that stuff.

BRIAN: What church, if any, do you attend regularly?

RALPH: The LDS Church.

BRIAN: Do you believe in an after life?

RALPH: Yes. If I didn't I would be having a lot more fun. (Ha, ha, ha) A lot more fun and a lot less satisfaction.

BRIAN: What was your most stressful experience that you ever

lived through?

RALPH: I think the Wilberg Mine fire.

BRIAN: What helped you get through that?

RALPH: Oh, just time, I guess. The feeling that I'm lucky I wasn't one of them. And dwelling on it wasn't doing me any good, so I just finally had to put it behind me, and I did. I still think about it, but it doesn't cause me problems, loss of sleep and worry like it did for a year or two.

BRIAN: What's the scariest thing that's ever happened to you personally?

RALPH: Do you want me to tell you about an experience on Siapan?

BRIAN: If you would like to.

RALPH: We were loading bombs on a B-29 and the B-29 sat on an asphalt run. We had 4500 pound bombs scattered around settling on cradles ready to go to the airplane. And we were putting fuses in them when a Japanese soldier came out of the sugarcane armed to the tee; bayonets, machine guns, hand grenades. And me and two other guys had carbines and we started shooting at him. And I didn't want to kill him. I was so terrified that I shot at his legs, but somebody shot him in the leg. And he went down and he came up with a hand grenade in his hand. And I thought, "Oh boy, this is the end of you." Well, he didn't throw that hand grenade, he pulled the pin and put the hand grenade under his chin and let it go off. I'm almost ashamed of myself; I was relieved that it was him instead of us. But I don't believe I was ever so thoroughly frightened in my whole life as I was at

that time .

BRIAN: Would you consider yourself creative?

RALPH: Not necessarily .

BRIAN: Well, what things have you made that others enjoy?

RALPH: Well, I've made some trailers that people seem to enjoy .
I like to weld and do things like that . And I especially like
doing things for people I like . And especially my kids and
grandkids .

BRIAN: How would you describe your sense of humor?

RALPH: Pretty dull . (Ha, ha, ha)

BRIAN: What's the funniest practical joke you've ever played on
someone?

RALPH: Oh gosh, I don't know . (Ha, ha, ha) I guess about the
funniest one was when my Brother Dick and I were kids we were
building a corral by the road, the road was just a dirt road out
by Ft. Duchesne and there was two twin girls, one pair of twin
girls, lived up the road a couple of miles and they came walking
down and they were uglier than a mud fence plastered with
polliwogs . And I saw them coming and I went around and hid
behind something, I can't remember what it was, and when they got
around front I hollered, "You-who, I love you!" and they looked
up and Richard was all they could see . (Ha, ha, ha) He about
dug himself out of the ground until they got past him . And the
only thing that saved my life is I beat him to Mother, but later
on he blacked my eye for it . I think I enjoyed that practical
joke more than any other I ever did, including the black eye . It

was worth it.

BRIAN: What activities have you especially enjoyed as an adult?

RALPH: I like to spend time with my family. I like to fish and hunt. And I like the welding and stuff I do. I really enjoy that. My friends think I'm crazy; I've turned down fishing trips because I'd rather work on a trailer and do things like that. But right now, since I've got too old to play sports, that's about what I do. I played basketball until I was 55 years old. That's when we moved out here and I didn't ever start again.

BRIAN: How old were you when you started to date?

RALPH: Oh, about 18 or 19.

BRIAN: Do you remember your first date?

RALPH: Yes, but I can't remember what her name was. (Ha, ha, ha)

BRIAN: That's alright. Do you remember the circumstances?

RALPH: Yeah, we had an old International pickup and I had to go to Randalet to get her to take her to the Senior Huff in Altera. We got down there and the muffler fell off the old truck. (Ha, ha, ha) I don't know if I was more embarrassed than she was mad or not. (Ha, ha, ha) But all in all it turned out to be a terrible evening for both of us. (Ha, ha, ha)

BRIAN: What a way to start, huh?

RALPH: Yeah.

BRIAN: Name a good friend that you've known for the longest period of time.

RALPH: Tayne Clark.

BRIAN: How many years have you been friends?

RALPH: I've known him since 1933. And he still lives over by Wellington. In fact, we went to his granddaughter's wedding this winter.

BRIAN: What kind of activities did you do with him as kids?

RALPH: Well, he was a little older than I was and we didn't do much together, but we were neighbors and we fished and hunted and we played ball a little bit sometimes. I remember one time he was out of work and I was going to school and on Saturdays we would go to Roosevelt and put gilsonite roofs on top of the buildings that needed it. When you boil up gilsonite with used oil it makes one of the best roofs in the world. The old Ashton building is one we did that I can remember.

BRIAN: Has there ever been anyone in your life that you would consider your kindred spirit or soul mate?

RALPH: If I have one it's probably Ray Pabst. We can talk to each other and confide in each other and tell our troubles and I always go away with a good feeling when I talk to Ray.

BRIAN: How did you meet the person you would later marry?

RALPH: The first time I saw Norma she lived neighbors to us. And I guess I was eight years old and she was four, and I went to see who the new neighbors was and she was out in the ditch stark naked puddling in the ditch. And that's the first time I saw her. That wasn't when I decided I liked her.

BRIAN: Do you remember where you went on your first date?

RALPH: To a dance in the old bar east of Roosevelt.

BRIAN: How long did you know her before you got married?

RALPH: From 1933 to 1948.

BRIAN: Do you remember your wedding proposal?

RALPH: Yeah, well I just walked up to her and said "well should we get married or not?" She said I'll let you know, and she did in about thirty minutes.

BRIAN: When and where did you get married?

RALPH: We got married in her parents house in Ballard Ward east of Roosevelt. December 17th, 1948. Her uncle was a bishop and he performed the ceremony. Sid Rust.

BRIAN: Who was at the ceremony? Anyone in particular that you can remember?

RALPH: Well her family and my family was about it. Nobody special. No outsiders you know, just family.

BRIAN: Did you have a honeymoon?

RALPH: No.

BRIAN: How would you describe your spouse?

RALPH: You want me to get killed? (Ha,ha,ha). I don't know what I'd do without her. We have our problems. We're going almost on to 49 years, and I wouldn't want to have to train another one.

BRIAN: What do you admire most about her?

RALPH: Oh, she's good with the family, she loves her grandkids and kids and tries to do the best thing that she can for them.

BRIAN: What advice would you give your grandchild on their wedding day?

RALPH: Be good to each other and put each other first in your

life.

BRIAN: How did you find out that you were going to be a parent for the first time?

RALPH: The wife told me.

BRIAN: How many children did you have?

RALPH: I didn't have any, but Norma had four.

BRIAN: What are their names?

RALPH: Greg, Laurie, Randy, and Doug.

BRIAN: Were they all born in the same place?

RALPH: No, Greg was born in Price, Randy, Laurie, and Doug were born in Roosevelt.

BRIAN: What is one of the most unusual things that one of your children did regularly when they were small?

RALPH: Oh, Greg always threatened to run away from home, until we packed his stuff. Other than that we were just a run of the mill abnormal family.

BRIAN: What was the funniest thing one of them said or did?

RALPH: Oh, I don't know. I remember one time Doug said "Mom, you're not too fat, your just short." (Ha,ha,ha)

BRIAN: If you had it all to do over again, would you change the way you raised your family?

RALPH: Probably would. I know I made a lot of mistakes and ah the trouble is you start these things out, like raising a family, with no experience. And ah I should have read more books on how to raise a family. I was yanked up by the hair of the head, I wasn't raised, and that's what I did to my kids.

BRIAN: What did you find most difficult about raising children?

RALPH: Oh, making ends meet and giving them the things that I wanted them to have. I worked continually at that. Worked two jobs with long hours. That was my biggest concern, that they would be taken care of, the best that I could do.

BRIAN: What do you find most rewarding about being a parent?

RALPH: Oh, watching the kids grow up and get married and give us grandkids that we can enjoy. I think the most rewarding thing is the family. Especially since I've started going to church, I see things in a whole different perspective.

BRIAN: Did you find that you had to treat each of your children differently?

RALPH: I think I did treat some of them differently because they treated me differently. I don't know really how to explain it, but some kids you just deal with differently than you do others. I did anyway. Maybe it wasn't right, but that's what I did.

BRIAN: How did you first hear that you were going to be a grandparent?

RALPH: Greg came and said that Cheryl was pregnant. That was almost as happy a day as when Norma told me she was pregnant.

BRIAN: What advice do you have for your children and grandchildren?

RALPH: Well, I would admonish them to adhere to the standards of the church; morality, honesty, get an education, if possible, go on a mission, and just in general be an honest, upright citizen.

BRIAN: As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

RALPH: I never really had that kind of ambition because when I was growing up you just more or less became a farmer, or you would go to work in some kind of industry, and I always thought I would be a farmer. But I remember when I left the farm, I told dad, I said, "If you ever see me farming for a living, please help me cause I'll be damned near starved to death." (Ha, ha, ha)

BRIAN: What was your first job?

RALPH: My first job was working for a man, I worked for him from daylight 'til dark. For 75 days he gave me my lunch, and \$75.00 when it was over. I made \$1.00 a day for 10-11 hours a day hauling hay and helping him do his farming. And I thought I was the richest kid in the world. I thought I was the only kid in Altere High Shcool who had \$75.00 at one time. You know, in that 75 days, I'll bet I worked at least 750 hours; I was making about .10 an hour.

BRIAN: What kinds of jobs have you had?

RALPH: Well, other than working on a farm, I did construction a little bit, and I worked in a coal mine, I drove truck, I've worked in a Gilsonite mine, I managed the Gilsonite operations for 13 years, I was purchasing agent for a cabinet shop for 6 years, and after that I went to work at the washing plant down at Wellington and I did that for a couple of years, and went to work at the Wilberg Mine, and uh, I was in the union for about a year and they made me go company. They didn't really make me, but they cut off all my overtime, so pertnear starved me to death

'till I had to. And I did the dewatering in the Wilberg Mine for years. And after the fire, they sent me over to Deer Creek and I took care of the air supply there; stoppings and made sure the mine was ventilated. And after the fire, I just coughed and coughed so much and I went to work one morning and Earl White says, "You're on disability. We don't have anything you can handle anymore." Made me so mad I kicked his desk and broke the leg off his desk and broke my toenail off, filled my boot with blood, but it was probably the best thing they did for me because I just figured on working 'till I was gone. But he made me take disability and I was on disability until I retired in 1990. That's a short summary. I did do some work.

BRIAN: Who was the person that had the most positive influence on your life?

RALPH: Oh, probably my mother. She understood me better than anybody did. And I sometimes took some understanding. I realize that now.

BRIAN: What's the most embarrassing thing that's ever happened to you?

RALPH: When I was in about the 6th grade we had a kid in our class named Leo Riggs. And it didn't matter where or what time a day and who was there, if he wanted to fart, he just farted. But I was in the 8th grade we had to go back to Mrs. Jorgensen's class. Fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades would take an hour's music. Well, one day she cut off the music just right short and at that time Leo chose to bang one off (HA, HA, HA).

And I was sitting with a kid named Petro Farakis. We got to laughing and couldn't stop laughing and that old woman came down and grabbed us by the hair of the head and she shook our heads til I thought I'd go bald. But we didn't quit laughing. So she sent us back to the Principal's room and his name was Alvin Alwin Call. I walked in there and the first thing he said is, "Ralph, what have you done now?" And I said "Ole Leo farted!" (Ha, ha, ha) Well, he got to laughing and he couldn't quit laughing. Well, we never did have to go back to music, but we always had a few math problems to work on while they were in there.

BRIAN: Have you met any famous people?

RALPH: Well, I met Betty Grable on Siapan. And I saw Lena Horn in Kansas City. I didn't meet her, I was just at her performance there, but she did go by and say hello to everybody.

BRIAN: Describe a time and place when you remember feeling truly at peace and happy to be alive.

RALPH: Most at peace...I think when I'm in the mountains fishing. Especially when I'm on the creek fishing alone, I think I'm more at peace with my self and I catch myself singing church hymns, it's an exhilarating experience for me to be alone on a fly fishing stream. And that, I think,... I don't do it much anymore cause I fall down too much, but I think out of all the things I ever did is a solitary fishing trip on a stream with a fly rod has probably given me the most peaceful satisfaction of anything I do. This doesn't include love for family and things like that, of course. This is just things you do.

BRIAN: What is the most beautiful place you have ever visited and what was it like?

RALPH: The most beautiful place...well, I think in any other circumstances, Siapan or Tinia would be the most beautiful place. They're tropical. We used to...when I was driving truck on Siapan we'd work 18 hours a day for 9 days and then get 3 days off. We used to go up in the hills and pick pineapples and bananas. You'd have to pick the bananas green because everybody was after them, but if you'd put them under your tent for about 10 days they'd ripen up and turn yellow. And, uh, the nice tropical palms. We used to go down to the ocean and pick up shells that were called cat's paws and cat's eyes. They had a little animals in them, but if you'd throw them in an ant hill, the ants would eat the animal out and, uh, then I would make necklaces out of them. When I made these necklaces, the pilots used to have whiskey and when they would go home I'd give them one of these necklaces for a fifth of whiskey. And when the war ended I had, I think, about 18 fifths of whiskey buried under my tent. I didn't drink it, but the first one I sold for \$50.00 and the last 2 I sold for \$250.00 a piece. I sent \$2500.00 home off the whiskey that I had gotten for the necklaces I made by scrounging in the ocean.

BRIAN: What was the longest trip you've ever been on?

RALPH: The longest trip was when I went from San Diego to Siapan. I think that was about 3500 miles.

BRIAN: Is there anything you have always wanted to do, but

haven't?

RALPH: Well, I've always wanted to take a flying trip to New Zealand or to Lake Titikaka, the Andes and fish, but I know that was a blue sky dream I'd never make. And the one thing I would really get a lot of satisfaction out of is going to Alaska and killing a nice caribou.

BRIAN: What is your favorite style of music?

RALPH: Country Western.

BRIAN: Who is your favorite musical group?

RALPH: I'm not much into groups, but I can tell you what my favorite songs are.

BRIAN: That was my next question.

RALPH: My all-time favorite song is Gazelle McKensie doing The Day the Rain Came Down. And I like the Boston Pops Orchestra doing The Portuguese Washer Woman. And I like Perez Prodoce's Cherry Pink. I think of all the songs I've ever heard those 3 are my favorites.

BRIAN: Who is your favorite singer?

RALPH: Oh, probably Dean Martin was.

BRIAN: Who is your favorite movie star?

RALPH: John Wayne.

BRIAN: What is your favorite movie?

RALPH: Midway. It's just about a toss-up between Midway and the Searchers. The reason I like Midway is because I was there when a lot of it happened and I was in the area that it happened. I just feel that I know something about it.

BRIAN: Are you into poetry? Do you have a favorite poem?

RALPH: I used to read poetry quite a bit. I read the nonsense rhyme to my kids so much I knew all 44 verses of it. It goes:

"Ringlty, Jing what shall we sing some little crinkity, crankity thing that rhymes and chimes and skips sometimes, as though wound up with a kink and a spring. Krunkity grung, chunkity plung, sing a song that the bullfrog sung. Song of the soul of a mad tad pole, that met his fate in a leaky bowl."

That's enough!!!

BRIAN: You know the whole thing, huh?

RALPH: Yeah. I don't know that I could do the whole thing now, but I could for years. The kids had me read that to them every night for months it seems. That's a poem by James Witcam Riley.

BRIAN: What's your favorite TV program?

RALPH: Oh, probably Jeopardy. I like to compete with them. Sometimes I do pretty well and sometimes they make a lot of mistakes. (Ha, ha, ha,)

I would like to thank my grandpa, Ralph O'Neil for his time and support on this project. It was fun and interesting to be able to talk to my grandpa about his life and learn so much about him.

I would also like to thank Mrs. Carter for making us do this project, which helped me to become closer to my grandpa.

It's amazing what you can learn from your own family when you take time to listen.