

Oral Memoirs
of
John Louis Salsbury

An Interview Conducted by

Joseph Morris

September 9, 2011

Linda McKnight Batman Oral History Project

Historical Society of Central Florida

Museum of Seminole County History

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Interview Histories

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The recordings and transcripts of the interview were processed in the offices of the Museum of Seminole County History, Sanford, Florida.

Legal Status

Scholarly use of the recording and transcript of the interview with John Louis Salsbury is unrestricted. The interview agreement was signed on September 9, 2011.

Abstract

Oral history of John Louis Salsbury, conducted by Joseph Morris on September 9, 2011. Salsbury was born in Tampa, Florida, but he has spent much of his life in Sanford. In the interview, Salsbury also discusses his family's history, Port Tampa during the Spanish-American War, his service in the U.S. Air Force, photographing space shuttle launches and astronauts, how Sanford has changed over time, and the Florida Aviation Historical Society.

John Louis Salsbury

Oral History Memoir

Interviewed by Joseph Morris

September 9, 2011

Sanford, Florida

0:00:00

Introduction

Morris

This is an interview with John [Louis] Salsbury. This interview is being conducted on the 9th of September, 2011, at the Museum of Seminole County History. The interviewer is Joseph Morris, representing the Linda McKnight Batman Oral History Project for the Historical Society of Central Florida. Mr. Salsbury, could you tell us your name?

0:00:21

Family history

Salsbury

Yes. I would like to do this as a means of preservation of my family history, and I hope I can do a good job. Anyway, I'd like to start with the year of 1893, when my great-grandparents and my grandfather moved here from Portsmouth, Ohio, by train. My great-grandfather was a master carpenter, and he lived here – the family lived here – on the corner of [West] Ninth Street and [South] Park Avenue – the southwest corner – for about two years. My grandfather [Louis Salsbury] was 19 years old, and he was employed as a railroad telegrapher at the Sanford Railroad Station on the west end of Ninth Street. In 1895, which was the year they moved away, my grandfather participated in a professional bicycle race – a 25-mile race that began in Downtown Orlando, when Orange Avenue was a dirt road, and ended there. My grandfather won the race.

0:01:52

Port Tampa and the Spanish-American War

Salsbury

And after that they moved to Port Tampa, where my great-grandfather became a building contractor and was commissioned by Henry [B.] Plant to build a passenger terminal at the end of the railroad line there in Port Tampa, near Tampa. And steamships – the *Mascotte* and the *Olivette* – transported passengers from South America and Cuba to the United States. And they ported – they landed there at the docks. And the terminal building that my great-grandfather built was in use up until that passenger line ceased to operate, but the building remained to 1955.

Also, just a year or two before the building was commenced, that terminal, Teddy [Theodore] Roosevelt, his Rough Riders [1st U.S. Volunteer Calvary] and officers, were among the soldiers and troops that were encamped in the Port Tampa area en route to the Spanish-American War. Teddy Roosevelt and his officers were hosted and remained in my doctor's – in the Salsbury family doctor's – home, which was located about a block from my grandparents' home,

and where my great-grandfather built. My grandfather joined the Army and participated in the Spanish-American War, and following that war, my great-grandfather was commissioned to also build a very famous wooden hotel in Bartow-Clearwater area, over near Clearwater. It's still in use. It's the Belleview Biltmore Resort. It's a large wooden hotel, and it's still in use today.

0:04:15

Family history

Salsbury

Okay, after that, my grandfather married – and he was a telegrapher – and on the west coast at Palm Harbor, Florida, near the Gulf [of Mexico], and between Clearwater and Tarpon Springs, he married Rose Tinny – Rosalind Tinny. And my father [John Wright Salsbury, Jr.] was born in Port Tampa. My great-grandfather had built three homes there, and after my father graduated from high school in the year 1926, he found this moonshiner's shoe. It was uncovered by a fire that had burnt some palmettos. My father found that – and they determined it belonged to the moonshiner. His name was Herndon, who was killed by the troops when he tried to steal corn from the soldiers encamped there for the Spanish-American War. Well, anyway, the left shoe that I have in my possession is in the Smithsonian Institution, and this right shoe I still retain.¹

Okay, in 1914, just before this – at the age of 12 – my father and his sister, Mary, at age of five, flew on the world's first passenger, scheduled passenger airline from St. Petersburg to Tampa. As a member of the Florida Aviation Historical Society, I've been through a lot of this and photographed a lot. I'm their photographer. Well, anyway, in 1914, my father and my aunt flew with Tony Janus, or the line pilot, from St. Petersburg to Tampa. This airline was in operation for three months and flew 1,205 passengers, and is actually on record as being the world's first scheduled airline.

My dad moved to – my dad and my mother – I was born in 1931 in Tampa, and my father and mother separated in '41, and in 1941 we moved to Sanford and have resided in Sanford since. At least I have. My father was a railroad engineer with the Atlantic Coast Line [Railroad]. He had roomed with Cara Stenstrom, the mother of Douglas and Julian and Frank and Herb and Ruth Stenstrom – my stepbrothers and sister. Well, that year, or year around that time, the early 1940s, I recall having met Red Barber, the famous sports announcer's father, there on the front porch. Okay, Red Barber, who actually went to school in Sanford and graduated from Sanford High School, went on to become the most famous sports announcer in baseball, football.

0:08:17

Serving in the Air Force

Salsbury

All right. I went into the Air Force in 1949, upon graduating from the Seminole High School. I was a radar operator, and while in the service, I served in Alaska, Newfoundland, Iceland, and West Germany. But some of the highlights of my

¹ Note: These are "over shoes." Two wooden shaped cow hooves attached to a metal base that would appear to leave cow hoof prints.

service, while I was – after I returned from Alaska in 1951, I was able – stationed in Norton Air Force Base in the Air Defense Control Center there. I was able to see many movie stars: Marilyn Monroe, Lucille Ball, Lana Turner, Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis, Gregory Peck. I really enjoyed my time there at Norton, because I met all these people, and not only that, I made sure that I worked within the Air Control Center – gave me a ride, or I flew as the co-pilot in a twin-engine bomber trainer called a T-11. And while we were in operations, he was filing his flight plan – I was standing next to a tall gentleman at the counter, where he was filing a flight plan, and on this parachute he had draped over his shoulder was the word “Yeager. So I actually got a chance to see the famous Chuck Yeager, who broke the speed, the sound barrier. And outside was an experimental jet bomber, XB-43, – I remember they called it – and he was probably flying that at the time.

Anyway, after we took off in this T-11, the major took control of the aircraft ‘til we went over Edward’s restricted area, or Edwards Air Force Base. And then he showed me how to use the radio compass, and I honed it in on Palmdale, where the space shuttles were built. Well, anyway, I took control, and he let me fly the T-11 up over L.A. – Los Angeles – Laguna Beach, Long Beach, all along the coast. And then, when he said we had to go back, he asked me if I thought I could find my way back, and I said, “I believe so.” So I honed in on the mountains there – San Bernardino right there at Norton – and headed back to Norton. And that was one of the most memorable flights I’ve ever taken. I really enjoyed that. All right, uh, upon – you may pause it just for a second.

0:11:31

RECORDING CUTS OFF

0:11:32

President Richard M. Nixon

Morris

Good to go, sir.

Salsbury

Okie doke. Another thing I’d like to comment on about an experience I had while in the Air Force, stationed in Iceland, President [Richard M.] Nixon stopped over there on the way to Russia, in Keflavík Air Field [Naval Air Station (NAS) Keflavík] in Iceland, and being in radar, I knew about it. So I was down there with my camera – my movie camera – and was able to get some shots of Admiral [Hyman G.] Rickover as he walked out of the plane – walked by. Nixon didn’t get out of the plane, nor did his wife [Pat Nixon].

Okay, then, when stationed – before my retirement in 1969, I was stationed at Homestead Air [Reserve] Base in South Florida, in radar again. I was electronic warfare NCOIC [Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge], and President Nixon was inaugurated and flew right into Homestead AFB [Homestead ARB] the next day, and I took my son and my daughter over to see him. Well, lo and behold, we were only, right at the front of the fence there at the tarmac there at Homestead, and the President walked directly to us and shook our hands, and it appeared on the front page of *The Miami Herald* the next morning. So I had a – we had a wonderful experience of meeting Richard Nixon and shaking hands with him. And then I retired shortly after Neil Armstrong put foot on the moon.

0:13:28

Moving to Sanford and photographing shuttle launches

Salsbury

And I came – we moved back to Sanford, and bought a new home here in Sanford, and I became employed as a postal clerk over in Orlando for one year in the sectional center, and then transferred to Sanford, where for 16 years I was a letter-carrier. Riding a bicycle and a jeep, carrying mail in Sanford.

Well, while in Sanford as a letter-carrier, I had been taking pictures of the first space shuttle launch from Titusville and the ones following that, and I was taking my film to Eckerd's drugstore to have it processed. Through a questionnaire that I filled out, the Eckerd's marketing management and headquarters in Clearwater called me one day. They asked if I would appear in a TV – television commercial for them. And from that, I was titled "The Shuttle Photographer," and Eckerd's produced and ran for a year and a half a commercial introducing their one-hour photo service. That helped me, in a way, get my foot in the door as becoming a press photographer at [John F.] Kennedy Space Center, to shoot the space shuttle launches up close. So from the end of '91, I was credited as a press photographer with *The Sanford Herald* editor sponsoring me. And throughout the shuttle program, I served as a press photographer at the Space Center, covering the 30-year shuttle program.

Just recently, in July – in July the 21st – the [Space] Shuttle *Atlantis* landed, and I was there on the end of the runway, and I captured the landing and the tow back of the space shuttle for the last time of *Atlantis*. *Atlantis* just happens to be a particular launch vehicle that I took in 1994, November the 3rd, that turned out to be my most successful space shuttle photograph. It hangs in the NASA [National Aeronautics and Space Administration] Media [Resource] Center. A 30 x 40. It hangs in the Viera VA [Veterans Affairs] Hospital entrance. It hangs in museums, and it's been purchased by a number of people over the years. So the STS-66 launch turned out to be my most successful space shuttle picture.

And now that the shuttle program has ended, I devote my future photography *Endeavors* towards shooting wildlife. And here in Lake Mary – close to Sanford – I have some blinds set up, and I have wood duck nesting boxes, and I have been very successful in photographing Florida birds here, and will continue doing so. Thank you, Joe.

Morris

Oh, thank you very much, Mr. Salsbury. I have a few more questions if that is okay.

Salsbury

Fire away.

0:17:17

Moonshiner's shoe

Morris

Okay, Mr. Salsbury. Earlier you mentioned about the shoe that your family member had found previously?

Salsbury

Right. That was my father.

Morris Could you describe that? Yes, your father, sir. Could you tell – could you describe that for us? And then tell us what purpose that shoe was being used for?

Salsbury Well, sure. I'd be glad to.

Morris Thank you, sir.

Salsbury Joe, this shoe that I'm showing you has a tin foundation, or a base, to it, and nailed to the bottom of this piece of tin are two wooden replicas of cows' hooves, out of wood, carved by this moonshiner. And what the moonshiner would do – he – he was able to attach this to his shoes and conceal his tracks as he went to and from his still, which was located near my family home in Port Tampa, Florida, Hillsborough County. And a fire had really exposed this to my father. It was wrapped – the shoes, the pair of shoes – were wrapped up in a newspaper and was charred, but was exposed when the fire burnt these palmettos along the roadway, which is now in Trask Avenue in Tampa, Florida. T-R-A-S-K. Anyway, when my father opened the package up, here was this pair of overshoes used by moonshiner by the name of Herndon in Port Tampa, to go to and from his still. This moonshiner was later shot to death when he attempted to steal grain – sacks of grain – from the soldiers camped in the area, or en route to the Spanish-American War from Port Tampa to Cuba, where they embarked from Port Tampa. They determined – they found out they were having sacks of grain stolen from them, or missing, so they set up a trap. And actually they caught the guy, and they shot him. But apparently he wasn't wearing these shoes, and he had these hidden just to go to and from his still. And that's how come I ended up – the right shoe I have, and I'm showing you at this time. The left shoe, in 1926, was given to the Smithsonian Institution and appeared in *The St. Louis [Post-]Dispatch* with a picture of it telling that it's in the museum. I have been unable to locate that copy of *The St. Louis Dispatch* that I had. I don't know what happened to it. But anyway, I do know that one shoe was in the Smithsonian Institution.

Morris Well, thank you. That's a very interesting piece you have there, sir.

Salsbury Thank you.

0:20:22 **Moving to Sanford**

Morris Another question I have is – you said 1941² you moved to Sanford?

Salsbury 1941.³

Morris Who did you move with, sir?

Salsbury My father, my sister, Rosemary [Salsbury], and I. The three of us.

Morris Okay, sir. And your sister, is she currently living in Sanford, or...

² Correction: 1942.

³ ³ Correction: 1942.

Salsbury No, she lives on the west coast, over near Tarpon Springs.

0:20:46 **Photographing space shuttles and astronauts**

Morris Okay, sir. And you said, you were describing earlier your experiences working as a press photographer for *The Sanford Herald*.

Salsbury Right.

Morris Do you have any more experiences that you'd like to share about that, any kind of experiences working at the – as opposed to just taking photographs...

Salsbury The only experiences I have – and one is very interesting 'cause it deals with Seminole County. As a press photographer, I was given quite a lot of extra photo possibilities. There was a launch of [Space Shuttle] *Endeavor* – and I don't recall just what mission it was at the time – but when I boarded the bus to go with an escort to go there to photograph it with my telescope, she handed out a sheet of paper that listed the dignitaries – the important events that was gonna be there at this event site that I had wanted to shoot from. One of them was Alan Shepard, who was the first American astronaut to go into space. All right. She told – I asked her if she'd point him out to me or help me find him. I wanted to get a picture of him. She said, "I could do better than that. I could have your picture taken with him." So she did that, and they used my camera. And I sent the photo to Houston[, Texas] – to him – and he autographed it and returned it to me, and in turn I gave – I left one with him.

But I told him in the letter something very interesting that I found out. My classmate in 1949, Bettye Ball [Deadman] from Lake Mary, lived a short distance from Alan Shepard's grandparents. Alan Shepard used to spend his summer vacations from Connecticut or New Hampshire in Lake Mary. He spent him out there, in his vacations, and his grandparents. One day he was missing, and they couldn't find him. He was found on the Ball – Bettye, my classmate's family's – dining room table eating a banana. And so I told him about this in the letter, and he got a charge out of it.

But anyway, my stepbrother, Doug Strenstrom – Douglas Stenstrom – is the one that told me first that Alan Shepard had a connection with Lake Mary and Seminole County. And then, when I found that out, I was talking to Bettye Ball and she told me about the banana incident. And so, it so happens that Alan Shepard enjoyed a lot of his school summers, if not most of them, right here in Lake Mary, Seminole County. So, anyway, I got a chance to meet him.

Not only that – another thing I want to tell you, an interesting thing happened. I wasn't a press photographer at the time but I had an eight-inch telescope, and I took this with me to shoot from Titusville the first launch of the space shuttle – STS-1 [Space Shuttle] *Columbia*. And the picture I took, turned out I shot into the sun, but I got a fairly good picture. For a color picture, it turned out black and white. But anyway, I got a good picture. Well, *The Orlando Sentinel* team saw me,

and they took a picture of me with my nephew, Troy Hickson, from Lake Mary, as we were photographing with my telescope. And this was published and in *The Sentinel*.

Well, there was a time when I wasn't—later on, when I wasn't a press photographer, but I was shooting from the NASA Causeway with my telescope, and the gentleman told me I needed press credentials to get up close and get better pictures. So little wheels started turning in my head as to how I could bring this about. First thing I thought about doing was calling this photographer that had photographed me at the first launch over in Titusville at *The Sentinel* in Orlando. So I called, and they couldn't use me in Orlando on the team, but he suggested something that really did it for me. And he suggested that I get a hold of the public affairs people at NASA, at Kennedy, and request a freelance pass—a pass as a freelance photographer. Well, I did this, and that allowed me to start getting passes to put my camera up remotely. I'd put my camera out right next to the shuttle, and using another man's trigger at first—and finally I knew how to do it and I finally bought the equipment and did it on my own. But anyway, the sound after the solid rockets are fired triggers your camera, and you're nowhere near it. You're sitting there anchored down, but it's up close to it. So that's how I got my best pictures was in that manner.

Okay, after that first launch on the 12th of April of 1981, there was an air show. It went to Sanford Airport. And I took my son out there, and I had my camera along to shoot the show. And a friend of mine who had a shoe store in Sanford, Donald Knight—well known in Sanford—and he was a flight instructor and a pilot, and he was at front of operations prepping a Cessna for flight. And I walked up and commenced talking to him this day. This is after the launch of the shuttle. And he said, "Do you know whose plane that is next to me?" And I said, "No." He said, "That's Neil Armstrong." I waited until Neil Armstrong came out and his family came out of the operations and got in their plane, and took pictures of this, and got some good pictures of Neil Armstrong. He left there and nobody, of all these people there—the thousands of people at the air show—knew he was there, I think. He taxied out and took off before the air show. So I got pictures of Neil Armstrong.

Another incident, having been with press credentials and having put my remote cameras out for the launch of John Glenn—STS-95—I was able to get a picture and he posed for me. And this was Buzz Aldrin, who stepped on the moon. And I also got pictures of several of the other astronauts, the one in STS-13—I mean not STS-13—the Apollo 13. And Gordon Cooper.

Now, not only that, over the years, I was able to meet and become friends with different astronauts, but one of the highlights of my time over there too took place when I was working part-time at [Walt] Disney World, [Disney-]MGM Studios.⁴ I purchased a little lapel pin of Buzz Lightyear. Well, I had a taken a nice shot of the STS-61 launch of [Space Shuttle] *Endeavor*, that Story Musgrave

⁴ Salsbury worked at Disney-MGM Studios from 1995 to 2000.

was mission specialist of, and did a spacewalk to repair the Hubble [Space] Telescope. Well, my pictures came out so good. I made Christmas cards out of them, put "Merry Christmas," "Happy New Year," and all that on them, and I sent them to each one of the crew members in Houston, so when they landed, they would get Christmas card greetings at their launch. Well, I got responses from Kathy Thornton and different ones with autographed pictures of all of them and all that.

But six months later, I get a telephone call from Story Musgrave – Dr. Story Musgrave – who did the spacewalk repair on the Hubble telescope and was on the mission. He commented to me, he said, "That's the best night launch picture I've seen. Would you make transparencies for me so I can use them in my lectures?" And he called me back later and asked me how much it was and all that. He wanted to pay for it. I didn't want him to pay for it, but he sent me a check and paid for it. I asked him, I said, "Story, would you take a little Buzz Lightyear pin in space for me in your next mission coming up in September?" Or November. And that was STS-80. He called me back later and said, "Send it on." He had room. He could take it. So Story Musgrave took a little Buzz Lightyear pin for me on the STS-80 mission of *Columbia* that ended up being the longest space shuttle mission flown, 17 days. When they returned, it took me two years to get it back. But I got it back, and it was still packaged and in the plastic, and it was accompanied by a certificate of authentication signed by Story Musgrave, telling that "this space," – oh, "this lapel pin of Buzz Lightyear," – or something to this effect – "was carried aboard *Columbia* for John Salisbury," and so on. So I got this wonderful document to see that by.

So that kind of sums up some of the most important things that I remember as highlights doing my space shuttle photography over 30 years. I was able to meet a lot of the good ones, and one of them was Tom Jones, and I'm still in touch with him. Most, many of these pictures I have, like the one of STS-96 – it shows shooting into the rising sun and everything, Rick Husband, who was killed when the *Columbia* exploded, he was the pilot of that one. And I've got a beautiful picture of that, autographed by the pilot, Kent Romminger. So, a lot of my pictures, even the one with John Glenn's launch, turned out. I sent it to him. He autographed it for me. I've got the picture of John Glenn going up autographed. I've got all these autographs on my pictures over there. And my room looks like a museum itself.

Morris Sir, that's impressive.

Salsbury Thank you. But that's about it, in a nutshell, I think.

0:32:49 **Family history**

Morris Well, sir, could you tell me a little bit about your family?

Salsbury Well, I think I told you, let me, my great-grandfather's name was John Wright Salisbury I. He was married to Addie – A-D-D-I-E – Burke Salisbury, and they

moved here with their son, my grandfather – later grandfather – Louis Salsbury, to Sanford in 1893, as I mentioned earlier. My dad moved up here upon my mother and father's separation in 1941. We moved to Sanford from Port Tampa, and that's when I joined the Stenstrom-Salsbury family, or we were joined, and of course, Douglas and Julian are well-documented in their contributions here in Seminole County. And Frank, he married Henry Took – Harry [Patricia] Took – excuse me, who was a millionaire that owned a lot of groves. And he took care of the groves, my stepbrother did, Frankie.

And then Herb was a realtor. He was the other stepbrother, and Herb passed away a young man due to lung cancer. But he married Carolyn Patrick, and the Patricks own a packing – a fruit business of citrus and citrus-packing groves and so forth.

And my stepsister, Ruth, she married a young man that was – became a – he was an umpire in baseball – professional games, but then later became a – they moved to Cocoa Beach and he was on the City Council and he was a postmaster over there at Cocoa Beach, about the time when the Apollo program was going on. And Ruth – no, Julian, was a sports announcer and writer for [*The Sanford Herald*], he announced for Red WTRR Sanford, a radio station, and he wrote for the columns for *The Sanford Herald*. And he wrote a lot of them about “Way Back Then” – they titled it – and I have copies of those. He had a wonderful memory and recall of sports. He mentioned – he brought a light that Buddy Lake from Lake Monroe, in Sanford – and Lake Mary, in the Sanford area – a ball player, ended up in the hall of fame from Julian's efforts. He found out that Buddy had led hitting and pitching at one time, and this was something that hadn't been done before. This was back when he played for Florida State League. And Julian also brought out the fact that Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier here in Sanford at the Sanford ballpark when he was playing for the [Brooklyn] Dodgers.

Julian and I – well, Julian became an official in the Southern Baptist brotherhood out in California, in Bakersfield, and I was stationed at Norton Air Force Base in the '50s. He and I attended a professional spring training ballgame between the Cincinnati Reds and another team I don't recall. And Julian and I were sitting on the third base bleacher line there in the stands, and I was sitting maybe ten feet away from a gentleman with a cigar in his mouth. And Julian asked me if I knew who that was. He said, “That's Branch Rickey.” So Branch Rickey is one of the two people that Red Barber dedicated his book, *Walking in the Spirit*, to. A great book. It's in the museum in Sanford. It was given to Julian by Douglas. Anyway, Red Barber mentions – no, Julian wrote an article about Red Barber that I have as well too, and it was published in the Sanford paper, telling about Red Barber's ball playing and his living here in Sanford. So, I can't think right offhand of a lot of the highlights that Julian brought out. But anyway, they're well-documented and covered in articles he wrote for the paper while he was there.

Oh, another thing, myself and my younger stepbrother, Frank, and my classmates, John Keeling and Richard McNab – Keeling just passed away and he was a retired colonel in the Army. Worked in the Pentagon. And Richard McNab – retired colonel – Lieutenant Colonel in the Air Force, who flew B-47 reconnaissance aircraft. He's living in Ocean Springs right now. And we all were on the American Legion baseball team in 1948. On March the 16th of 1948, Babe Ruth came to Sanford. Julian was the announcer, the master of ceremonies. Carl Hubble was there, John Krider, and Julian, and the mayor, Mayor Williams. Julian introduce a number of the people there, but the mayor actually introduced Babe Ruth. And I was there, and my other members played on the American Legion we had at the time. Babe Ruth signed baseballs for all of us, and we were given these baseballs signed by Babe Ruth. Well, anyway, the wonderful thing happened was that Julian and all of the commentary and all the narration or the talking that was done, even Babe Ruth's voice, was recorded on a recorder – on a platter, a record, by someone. Well, Julian, my stepbrother, ended up having a copy of that, and he found it before passing away. And we transferred that over to an audio tape, from there to a VHS tape, and now I have it on DVD. We have Babe Ruth's actual voice, which was eight months to the day before he died, when he was here in Sanford and honored in Sanford. So that about covers everything, Joe.

Morris How about your immediate family?

Salsbury Oh, I'm sorry. I have two children. My wife was from Lake Mary. Her name was Yvonne Eubanks, and she passed away five years ago today, on September 9, 2006, here in Sanford Hospital. She had diabetes and her kidneys gave out on her.

We have two children. My son is a lieutenant in the fire department, Lake Mary, and my daughter has moved to Tennessee. She was married to Bill Von Herbulis and had a daughter then. And her daughter, Jessica [Frana], well, anyway, later married. But before that my daughter remarried Steve Frana. His father's friend owned Tube Tech. It's a stainless steel plant here in Sanford. And there's a connection. My son-in-law, Steve, actually made all the space shuttle hinges for their payload doors right here in Sanford. So it goes back to the space program.

But anyway, Steve's father's passed on now, but my daughter and Jessica – her daughter by her first husband – they all moved to Tennessee, and have a 45-acre farm up in Tennessee, real nice farm. And Steve had already had four children, two boys and two girls. So then – well, anyway, the total grandchildren I have now are nine, seven by my daughter and two by my son, and I have four great-grandchildren up in Tennessee. And, well, I'm living alone now. And in my latter years, I'm trying to get my family history together, and what we're doing today, Joe, will help out very much.

Morris Well, we definitely appreciate it, sir.

Salsbury Thank you.

Morris Just one final question, just 'cause we're greedy for history.

Salsbury Did I mention my daughter's name?

Morris Ah, just in case, repeat, sir.

Salsbury I don't think I did. My son's name was Terrence Wade Salsbury. He's the Lieutenant in the Lake Mary fire department. My daughter's name is Gale – G-A-L-E, not G-A-I-L, but G-A-L-E – Salsbury Frana – F-R-A-N-A. And, oh, one thing I failed to mention is very important. My daughter's first child, Jessica, she's graduated from Wake Forest [University] and from University of Tennessee. She married a Pete Exline, who was a captain in the U.S. Army. Pete was a graduate of [The United States Military Academy at] West Point. His home was Jacksonville. Pete was sent to Iraq for a year, and upon returning from Iraq, he was put in the university, or Georgia Tech [Georgia Institute of Technology], for nuclear physics training, schooling. And from there and today, he has already started. He is an instructor at West Point, instructing nuclear physics. So my grandson-in-law, whatever, my grandson is teaching nuclear physics at West Point right now. So now you got my end of it. *[laughs]*

0:45:10 **How Sanford has changed over time**

Morris I do, sir. Can you describe the differences from Sanford and the local area now, than it was when you saw it in your earlier days, sir?

Salsbury Well, from what I remember mostly, you couldn't go to a restaurant or practically anywhere without running into people you knew. It was a tight area here, and we knew so many people. And I enjoyed growing up here in Sanford. Throughout my life, oh – there is something I want to mention.

Morris Okay.

0:45:54 **Grandparents and great-grandparents**

Salsbury My grandmother – her great-great-grandfather – now because she married, her father was a Tinny in Clearwater, and they were very wealthy, and the family had owned most of what is Downtown Clearwater right now, at the time. Well anyway, her mother was a daughter of a Anna Frank Bellamy. Now, her grandfather was a William Bellamy, the son of Abraham Bellamy, who was one of the first legislators of the state of Florida when it became a state. He was on the committee that wrote the first Florida constitution, and is a signatory of the first Florida constitution, which was, hell. And my grandmother's uncle, who was a Bellamy – John Bellamy – he paved a road between Tallahassee and St. Augustine, and parts of it is still there with his name on it. And one of the Bellamys also had paved the way for the first railroad line between Port St. Joe in Tallahassee before the other railroad lines in Florida. And the Bellamys owned a plantation. Plantations were among the wealthiest people in the state of Florida

at the time, and Madison County, up near Tallahassee, is where they're buried. But the Bellamys are distant ancestors of mine through my grandmother.

Morris Wow, sir.

Salsbury I didn't want to miss that because I wanted to get that in there somewhere. But my grandmother's – one of my grandmother's sisters – well, I'll go a little further. One of my grandmother's sisters, she was blind in her old age, but she married a Leslie Evie. Her name was Ebie Evie, and she was a Ebie Tinny Evie. Anyway, she and her husband owned what ended up to be a sort of a hotel later, but it was a boarding house and a post office and a waiver point for ships going down the west coast of Florida. And they stopped in there for provisions and so forth – before Tampa was a Tampa, before St. Petersburg was a St. Petersburg. Back in those days, it was one of the big stops along the way. So my aunt – my great-aunt, Ebie – she even hosted a Russian hierarchy woman that was in the hierarchy of the Russian – in the Russians.

Anyway – but when she was a little girl. They were born – my aunt, grandmother, and her sisters, my great-aunts – they were born in a log cabin at Curlew, on Curlew Creek right there next to Dunedin, between Clearwater and Tarpon Springs in a little town called Dunedin. Curlew's where they were born in a log cabin. Well, as a young girl, my grandmother's sister was farmed out to live with a surgeon at Fort Brook in Tampa – before there was a Tampa – the fort there. So this surgeon and his wife raised Ebie as a little girl there, before she got married, anyway, for a number of years. So Fort Brook, in now-Tampa, was involved in all this.

And then, another sister of my grandmother's, who was a Tinny – born over there at that log cabin, Ira Wood. Ira Wood was her name, after her married name – Ira Tinny Wood. She and Ebie are two people that are very dear to my memory, because I would spend my school years in Sanford, all my summers over there swimming and scalloping and fishing at my grandparents' there in Ozona, where they lived. And I spent an awful lot of time at their house. My Aunt Ira, her kitchen always smelled like a bakery, or had smell of those cookies, or something baked in there. I'll never forget it. And then Ebie, she always sat on the front porch at 1981 High Alder, right by their house, and she'd sit on the porch since she was blind. But so many people, and I'm one of them, enjoyed just sitting there talking to her on that screened porch over the years.

And, now, Aunt Ira, who was one of the sisters I was telling you about, of my grandmother, she had a son named Duane – William Duane Wood. That was the name of her husband, but this was William Duane II, and we called him Duane. He and my father were very close, and they grew up together, and he was a naval pilot in World War II. And after he got out of the Navy, he wasn't a fighter pilot, but he was in the Navy, and he gave me a ride in a Piper Cub he had with floats, there in Ozona. Gave me my first sea plane ride. But anyway, he was hired by the Department of Interior – United States Department of Interior – to oversee Sanibel, the island down there. He lived by the lighthouse, and they provided

him an airplane and a launch, and he protected the island from the turtles that, you know, nested there, and different things. He flew up and down the coast and provided samples of water. Anyway, before he died – and I was with him when he passed away over in Tarpon Springs, with my aunt – now that was my aunt that flew in the first airline. But anyway, my uncle⁵, Duane Wood, he contributed and helped build the flying model, the Benoist model XIV, which was the air boat that Tony Janus flew in 1914.

And then our president – remember I'm in the Florida Aviation Historical Society – and our president's gone now, but he flew in 1984, he flew over the same route – this re-model, flying model of the original airplane that flew back in 1914. He flew it over that route, and it's all documented. And afterwards, it ended up in a museum near Clearwater, and Russell [St.] Arnold, who was a director in the Florida Aviation Historical Society and the primary person responsible for building this flying replica, is the one that gave me my membership and introduced me. I happened to be over showing some videotapes of air shows at Daytona and around to my uncle, Duane, while he was bedridden in Tarpon Springs before he died. Russell [St.] Arnold was there, called him over, and I was able to meet him. And I found out that Duane was instrumental in helping build, or contributing money, contributing something, I don't what he contributed to the building of this air boat.

Now, in 1991 – I think it was, '90 or '91 – before he died, Russell [St.] Arnold invited myself and my aunt to go see this flying model in the museum. And it was sitting on the floor at the time, and Russ said, "John, get in." I said, "I can't do that. That's a museum piece." He said, "Well, it's mine. I guess you can!" I got in there, and he took a photograph of me standing next to it with my aunt standing beside it, and I have a good picture of that. So now, today, the model – that flying model of the Benoist model XIV flying boat – hangs in the museum in St. Petersburg, at the million dollar pier right there at their historical museum, and they've got mannequins in the cockpit up there.

But not long ago, a Nicole Stott, who was from Clearwater, flew on the space shuttle as a mission specialist. She carried the banner that flew on the first Benoist model XIV, or on that flight – first flight – with Tony Janus in 1914. She took that aboard the space shuttle, and it's been returned, and now, if you looked at the airplane hanging in the museum, you'll see that banner up there that she flew in the space shuttle. Not only that, there's another connection if you want to hear it, about that.

Morris Of course, sir.

Salsbury Okay. I didn't know it, but being a member of the Florida Aviation Historical Society, I knew Ed Hoffman[, Sr.], who was a man that started our society, and was instrumental in building this too, and all that with our president. He passed on here a while back, the day before he was supposed to be inducted into Florida

⁵ Correction: cousin.

Aviation's hall of fame. And, anyway, his son, Eddie [Hoffman] – Ed was an architect in San – uh, Tarpon Springs. And he did the interior decoration for the famous – world-famous – Pappas [Riverside] Restaurant. It was over at Tarpon Springs. But anyway, his son, Eddie, is a pilot and he has his own plane, and he's an architect, and he and I are in communication with each other. And he sent me an e-mail a while back. And it so happened that Nicole Stott and her father – or at least the family – were friends of the Hoffmans – my friends. And Nicole Stott's father was an aerobatic pilot. He liked flying aerobatics. Well, he took up one of the Hoffman's flying boots[?], and somehow it crashed into a seawall and he drowned sometime back. And so, uh, that was a tragic ending there. But Nicole Stott, his daughter, ended up being a, uh, shuttle mission specialist, and flying a mission – a few missions back. So I just wanted to mention that.

0:58:02

Closing remarks

Morris Ah. Thank you very much, sir. Do you have anything else you'd like to discuss before we wrap things up?

Salsbury You know, things were out of context and not chronologically spoken. But I'm glad I remembered the things that I did, and I only want to close by saying that photography has meant so much to me now, and I'm enjoying my days now using a digital Nikon camera that I use for the shuttle and getting wonderful wildlife pictures here in Seminole County.

Morris Thank you so much for coming today, sir.

Salsbury Okay.

Morris Really appreciate that.

Salsbury Thank you.

0:58:37

RECORDING CUTS OFF

0:58:38

Florida Aviation Historical Society

Morris Okay, go ahead.

Salsbury Okay. Something I want to add. In early 1994, Florida Aviation Historical Society's president, Ed Hoffman, Sr., asked me to get together photographs of the Cape [Canaveral] area – Kennedy, Cape Kennedy – to go in Florida Aviation History in Pictures. It's going to be made into an exhibit for the Florida Aviation Museum [Florida Air Museum] in Lakeland. And he gave me the assignment of handling the Cape. So, I had contacted Washington[, D.C.] and Houston and obtained the transparencies I needed to have prints made.

And I – well, later – and this was on April the 11th of '94 – the SUN 'n FUN air show was going on, and they closed the museum there at Lakeland [Linder

Regional] Airport to have a dedication ceremony for our exhibit that the Florida Aviation Historical Society put on – Florida Aviation in Pictures. And so, I attended that, and I had my camera, and I was photographing our president, Hoffman, as he was at the podium, and the director of the SUN 'n FUN started identifying celebrities or people in the crowd. And he mentioned Curtis Brown, and I lit up and knew immediately who it was. I turned, and I went straight, I left the podium and went straight to him, and I asked him if he would pose for me in front of the exhibit I put together on the Cape, there in the museum. And he did. He posed with me and the president in there, and I didn't know at the time, but Curt Brown also carried aloft on his mission, STS-66, later. A few months later, he carried aloft a decal and a document from the museum, the SUN 'n FUN museum. Now it's the Florida Aviation Museum.

So, as it turned out, I got a chance to meet him and talk with him, and he recalled getting a picture from me of one of the launches when he was at CAPCON, one of the controllers of a mission at Houston. Okay. I told Astronaut Brown that if I got good a picture at his launch, I would send it to him and ask him to autograph it, and so forth. As it turned out, November the 3rd of that year, it was the best picture I've ever taken. And I set up two cameras, same location, just to be – to try to get a good picture, and it turned out that way. It's done very well for me. In fact, a 30 x 40 is hanging in that Florida Aviation Museum now, in Lakeland, as well as in the Viera Hospital, Viera Hospital over here on the coast, near Kennedy. And then the Kennedy Space Center Media Center, and different places. Anyway, Curt Brown later was the commander of the mission that flew John Glenn back into space.

And, well, I want to back up just a few days, because that dedication ceremony took place on the 11th of April of 1984. On the 8th of April of, just a few days earlier, STS-59 *Endeavor* was to launch on the 8th. And I was out at the fire training tower in the boonies, which was actually about four miles from the pad where the shuttle was. I was out there getting ready to photograph the launch, and up these metal stairs came Ronald Howard, Opie [Taylor] of *The Andy Griffith Show*, and now a director, producer – anyway, a movie star. His wife and daughter, along with Tom Hanks and his wife. And NASA escorts had brought them up there right beside me, to where I was shooting from. Well, I had a very powerful pair of binoculars – ten power – and they only weighed about nine ounces – Pentax – and I decided to let them use them to look at the shuttle from where we were. And that was the 8th of April, and that day, the shuttle was scrubbed and didn't go up. But the next day, Tom Hanks couldn't come with his wife. They had to go back or they couldn't make it, but Ron Howard walked up to the stairs with his wife and daughter, came straight to me, and said, "Your binoculars are on the front page of *The Orlando Sentinel* this morning." Here Tom Hanks is with my binoculars, looking at the shuttle.

Well anyway, I let Ron Howard have my binoculars so they could use them to look at the launch. Well, I photographed it, and he let his daughter use them, and they stood right next to me as the shuttle actually launched on the 9th of April.

Well, I told Ron Howard – in fact, I brought the picture of him next to me, I brought that up and he autographed it right on the spot. But I told him that I knew the pilot, Curt Brown – no, Kevin Chilton, I want to back up there. The pilot then was Kevin Chilton. I knew the pilot and I would have an autographed picture sent to him for his daughter, and I did that later. I got a NASA photo, 8 x 10, and had Chilton autograph it, and I sent it to Ron Howard. But, having a chance to meet Ron Howard and Tom Hanks and everything there, for a launch, was a highlight that I don't want to forget. You can pause if you want to.

End of Interview