THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

AN INTERVIEW WITH HENRY FRIBOURG

FOR THE
VETERANS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WAR AND SOCIETY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

INTERVIEWED BY
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KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE
OCTOBER 18, 2016

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CYNTHIA TINKER: Ok, so this begins an interview with Henry Fribourg on October 18, 2016, and we're at his home in Knoxville. My name is Cynthia Tinker and I am the Program Coordinator at the Center for the Study of War and Society, and joining us today in the interview is our graduate assistant …

ROBERT RENNIE: Robert Rennie.

TINKER: And our undergraduate intern …

TAYLOR GRIFFIN: Taylor Griffin.

TINKER: So thank you for doing this Dr. Fribourg

FRIBOURG: My pleasure.

TINKER: Like I said, we'll see if we can get started with some of your background. I wanted to go ahead and mention your book, just to get it on the record. Um, cause it is such a good book. The first one was called what?

FRIBOURG: The first one was called, *I Gave You Life Twice.*

TINKER: Twice, yeah …

FRIBOURG: And we can, later on, explore why I picked that title. And that was published in 2003, about three years after I started working on it, after my retirement. And then, ten years later, I put out an improved edition. Actually, it's got about 50% more information, information I was able to research in between 2003 and 2013.

TINKER: About your family background …

FRIBOURG: And that one, 2013, is a digital book published by Amazon Kindle called *Escape to Freedom*.

TINKER: Okay. I wanted to get that on record, and that the book is in the UT (University of Tennessee) Library.

FRIBOURG: This one is in the library, at least I gave them a copy. (Gestures to a copy of *I Gave You Life Twice*).

RENNIE: It's still there. (Laughter)

TINKER: It's so chock full of your background. Um, so we'll try not to be too redundant and go over everything, but you were born in Paris in 1929.

FRIBOURG: I was born in Paris, just about a half a mile from the *Opéra Garnier*, the old opera house on one of the boulevards which used to be the city walls, until Napoleon III's urban renewal—Baron [Georges-Eugène] Haussmann [who was responsible for the renovations of Paris under Napoleon III]—tore them down, but just right across the street, almost from where I was born, was one of the old gates, one of the old medieval gates which, I have a photo of. (Gestures to computer monitor)

TINKER: Did you know your grandparents?

FRIBOURG: Oh, yes. I knew my four grandparents, and I knew two great-grandmothers; one on my father's side, one on my mother's side.

TINKER: And did they live close by?

FRIBOURG: No. My great-grandmother, Mathilde Roubach, [Samuel] lived in Epernay, in the department of Marne. And she died in about 1938, I believe, '37 or '38 [In fact, she died in 1939]. I could look it up in my genealogy database if necessary. And then my father's mother's mother, my great-grandmother on my father's side, died in 1935. She lived in Paris, and Fontainebleau, with us when we were there for vacation; although she had her own house. A small house. And so I knew—I remember them both. I have pictures of them both. And of course, at that time, I was less than ten years old.

TINKER: Yeah. But you have fond memories of all of your grandparents?

FRIBOURG: Yes. Yes. And of course, my father's parents, uh, were murdered by the Germans, uh, so the last time I saw them was in Marseille in January 1942 as we left metropolitan France to take the ship to Oran and then a train to Casablanca where we were supposed to board a Portuguese ship.

TINKER: Did your father try and talk them into coming with you?

FRIBOURG: Sorry?

TINKER: Did your father try and talk them into coming with you?

FRIBOURG: Oh, absolutely! Absolutely!

TINKER: Why wouldn't they leave?

FRIBOURG: Well, my grandfather, Albert Fribourg, was a retired—well not retired—he had spent several years as an officer in the United States—French Army (coughs), excuse me, I remember his answer the last time that my parents asked him in our hotel room: "Won't you reconsider?" And his answer was, "Remember, I am a former officer of the French Army! They'll never touch me!"

TINKER: Hmm.

FRIBOURG: And this, unfortunately, was the attitude of many French Jews, who had been, of course, emancipated either during the French Revolution, 200 years earlier or before, and who considered themselves completely French, and they were. And they were an integral part of society; they did not consider that the traitors of the Vichy government and other collaborators would turn them over to the Germans. Even sometimes before they were asked for.

RENNIE: Was your grandfather in the First World War?

FRIBOURG: No. He was too old. My father was in World War II, of course, just for one year [in fact, seven months]. But he didn't do any combat because, as you read in the book, he was in the horse-drawn artillery, against the Panzers [German tanks], that was not very effective. (Laughter)

TINKER: How did your parents meet?

FRIBOURG: I am not sure that I can answer that question. But I suspect that it was due to the intermediary of a person that belonged to one of the families and made sure that they would meet. Actually, it's the same way that I met my wife.

TINKER: 'Cause your mother was born in Austria?

FRIBOURG: That was just a happenstance; because her father was a sales representative for an organdy manufacturer that was in eastern Switzerland. And he was sent by the company to be the Vienna representative for several years prior to World War I.

TINKER: Okay.

FRIBOURG: And um, so my mother was born there. But both her parents were French. She was declared to be French at the consulate at the time, so uh, there was never any question about the fact, but it just was an aggravation for her the rest of her life. (Laughter)

TINKER: 'Cause they would look at, "but you were born in Austria?" (Laughs) On her paperwork right?

FRIBOURG: And that's what, supposedly, in part, delayed our being granted immigration visas to the United States. Of course, it probably would never have been granted anyway, because Mr. Breckenridge Long, was the one in charge of visas and he was thoroughly antisemitic and during the entire time he was in charge, prior to 1938, until 1945 when he retired, he wouldn't grant any visas to Jewish immigrants.

TINKER: Oh my gosh …

FRIBOURG: His—of course his boss was Sumner Welles, and Sumner Welles's boss was Cordell Hull, who worked for Franklin Roosevelt. And none of these people saw fit to override Breckenridge Long's policy …

TINKER: Right, which makes you wonder …

FRIBOURG: I don't have to wonder. I can form my opinion from the facts.

TINKER: Yes. Yes. Wow.

FRIBOURG: (Laughs) I mean Franklin Roosevelt did a lot of great things for this country and for the world during World War II, but that doesn't mean he was flawless.

TINKER: I mean, that's a well-known fact that America would—did not really open its doors early on …

FRIBOURG: It did not. It turned away the St. Louis ship in 1938, and … there were hundreds of thousands of people who wanted to leave Germany after 1933, and many of them were not allowed to come in.

GRIFFIN: Can I ask a question? When you were young, was there a lot of political conversation at the dinner table, about what was going on in Europe?

FRIBOURG: Oh, yes. I certainly knew what was going on. Well, from the time I was six or seven—I mean, I ran across antisemitism the minute I went to school.

GRIFFIN: So early on, you were able to establish your own opinions about what was going on right in Europe and what was going on wrong strictly because it was so apparent in everyday life?

FRIBOURG: It was apparent over the radio hearing Adolf [Hitler] ranting on the radio, and of course my mother could understand exactly what he was saying. There was no filter there. And she is the one who made it feasible for the five of us, my immediate family, to escape. The title of that first book is what she used to tell to me, my sister, and my little brother, "I gave you life twice: once when you were born, and the second time when, against the expressed wishes of my father, and the lack of desire of my husband, I insisted that we had to leave if we could."

TINKER: So it was your mother that pushed the …

FRIBOURG: It was our mother who insisted on it. It was my father who made it possible. Because my father had been a very successful businessperson. First of all, as a sales representative of men's work clothes in Paris; a business that had been started by his father before World War I; and by the fact that his avocation was following the stock market.

TINKER: Yes.

FRIBOURG: And so,uh, when we left, my mother–my pregnant mother, my sister and I in a borrowed car–there was a metal box, I think I describe, a metal box about yay big (Gestures with hands), that was wrapped in a plaid blanket with two straps around it and a handle. And my mother was about five months pregnant, and so she said, "Henri"—I'm eleven years old—

"This is your responsibility. You hang on to this handle at all times. When we go in somewhere to eat, it ends up between your legs. When you go to the bathroom, it goes with you. When you go to sleep, it is your pillow." Now I never saw the inside of that box, but I know what was in there: stock certificates on—not French—but American mostly, companies, bonds, and jewelry. And we lived—we got room, board, bribes, transportation, for five years for five of us, out of that box.

TINKER: That's amazing.

FRIBOURG: And you know, I never realized that, at the time, the import [importance], the import of it, that my parents were able to pay for me to go to school in Havana [Cuba]. It was a private American school. I had no idea what the tuition was, none whatever. But it wasn't free, I'm sure! Classes were taught in English in the morning, Spanish in the afternoon. When I started, I speak French. So, uh, the first three months were a little tough. (Laughter) But that's why I don't believe in "bicultural education," that's nonsense. Immersion is the way to go. And if you don't want immersion, you don't belong in this country. The language of this country is English.

TINKER: What was your—when you were leaving or preparing to leave—I mean, did they set you down and explain to you this is what we're going to do?

FRIBOURG: Didn't need to. I knew, I knew we were running away because of Adolf Hitler and the Germans. No question. No question.

TINKER: Were you sad, or you just completely trusted your parents?

FRIBOURG: Oh yeah, I mean, no. I knew we wanted to go. I knew we had to go.

TINKER: Okay. And what was the trip like? So you left Marseille for Oran?

FRIBOURG: Well, no that's not—let's start back.

TINKER: Oh, okay.

FRIBOURG: Uh, we had an apartment in Paris where we lived during the school year. And then we had a vacation home in Fontainebleau, which is just forty kilometers, twenty-five miles southeast. And … so in summer of 1939, we were at the house—at the vacation house in Fontainebleau. And when war started, the 1st September 1939, when Germany invaded Poland, we were there. I remember hearing all the news and so on in the little room that we had as a radio room, also used as a sewing room for my mother. But the radio was contained in a cabinet about this high, this big, then on top there was this huge antenna loop and then you had to adjust it, right? (Gestures at roll-top hutch) So that's how we got our news! And, at that point, my mother and my father—my parents decided that we were not going back to Paris. My father was going to go back to Paris—as a train, the regular train that goes from Paris to Marseille, and it stopped in Fontainebleau, so he was going to commute weekly, and we stayed there and I went to school at the Lycée Carnot, in Fontainebleau which just happened to be

three or four long blocks up a hill from where we were; and so that's where—that would be essentially seventh grade here, it would be the first year of secondary education. So that's where I went to school. And then, because there was a fear of air raids, I remember we had a little garden that went back straight from the house, and my father had a huge trench dug out about eight feet deep and got a concrete slab about this thick on top and there was—had dirt staircase on each end and a bench in the bottom to sit on. And so, if there was a siren going off, then we'd have to grab our gas masks and go down there. So there was many night hours that I spent there for no need, there was no, no bombing ever. Then, of course on May 10, 1940, the Germans, as they had done in World War I, violated the neutrality of the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg, and invaded with their Panzers. And about three or four weeks later, my mother decided to take us to near Lyon. Of course my father was gone, he had been mobilized. And we went near Lyon in a small town called Villefranche [Villefranche-sur-Saône], where one of the main manufacturers of the clothing that he sold in Paris to the big stores—the big box store, was. And uh, it was Mr. and Mrs. Chanfray, who had had a son who had insisted on using a motorcycle and had speeded too much and had been killed. No helmets in those days.

TINKER: Yeah.

FRIBOURG: And so she was a sad woman. A sad lady. And when the armies, the German armies broke through the little bit of resistance that the French army—put up with. Somehow my mother got them to lend us a car. A Panhard, P-A-N-H-A-R-D, which was a luxury car, but this one was thirteen years old. Panhard car, with a driver. The driver was a WWI veteran, with a white mustache, white hair. And the main thing that I recall about him is every day, regardless of the circumstances, he had to have an hour-and-a-half lunch and a half-liter of red wine. (Laughter) Nothing would interfere! There was nothing my mother could do to hurry him up. And my mother's parents, my grandparents, had at some earlier time, and I have no knowledge of when, had moved from Paris where they had an apartment to Pau, P-A-U, which is in the southwest corner, very close to the Pyrénées, with Spain on the other side. And I suppose it was their thought that if things got really bad they would cross over into Spain. Well many years later, my wife and I traveled through that area and we went through the Pyrénées. And there is no way that a sixty-year-old couple could have climbed these Pyrénées Mountains. Which are much steeper than the Rockies. I mean there is no way in the world.

TINKER: What were they thinking? Did they end up surviving the war though?

FRIBOURG: Oh yes. That set of grandparents did survive. So our aim was, in that car, to get from Lyon. You see in the mid-east to south-west corner to Pau, to be with my grandparents. Which we managed to do in a couple of weeks. And I actually kept a diary of where we were each day. And I can supply that, I can show it to you. So that's what we did. We had a few experiences along the way. About two days or so after we had started out, of course petrol, gasoline, was at a premium. And whenever there was a gas station that had some we would stop and fill up. So, there was one place, La-Chaise-Dieu, where we stopped, filled up completely, and then got out of town. And we were just at the top of a little hill, overlooking the village, when there were some planes that came over. And a bomb fell, we saw the bomb

come down, and it landed right on the gas station where we had been just five minutes ago. So, you know, it can go this way or it can go that way. Uh, later on, a few days later … Well, as I said, that car was thirteen years old. So it was not in the top-most condition. And it turns out that the gendarmerie, the state troopers, the gendarmerie wanted to keep the highways clear, so the non-existent troops could go north to fight, you know. So periodically they would put road-blocks in, and the civilians were forced to go to this field or this pasture, and not proceed any further. After we saw one of those my mother said, "We're not staying on the highways." So, by dead reckoning, because we had no maps detailed enough, we worked our way from town to town, from village to village by dead reckoning. Well this one day, about two or three days after this bombing, we were going down a hill, on a road, on a county road. And the engine stopped. Well we got to the bottom, and there was a creek, a big creek—a little river—there on the right, and an inn on the left side. Well the gas gauge didn't work. So I had, at my mother's urging, I had taken a stick, peeled the bark off, made notches in it, and so she says, "Henry while we're stopped, see how much gas we've got left," which was very critical. And I pulled the stick out, it was bone dry. I looked under the car and the rusted bottom of the gas tank had been hit by a big rock as we were going through a gravel road.

TINKER: Oh no, so it all leaked out.

FRIBOURG: And that was tremendous bad news. Especially since that morning we had been able to have a full tank. Well that inn was there so we went in, and we were able to have supper. My mother and my little sister got a room. The driver got a room, and I was given a closet all to myself with my pillow. And the next morning my mother found out that there was a smith, a blacksmith, about five kilometers down the road … three miles. So she said, "Henri, you go and see if the smith can come and fix this hole." So I started walking, I mean you know five kilometers is about an hour, and I was about half-way there, wheat field on this side, a pasture on this side. Few trees, no house, nobody in sight. This Messerschmitt 109 fighter plane comes over and sees me … strafes me … from the front I mean he came this way, and he hit about six feet away – two meters. (Gestures) I was in, flat in a ditch so he goes back, he turns around, comes back from the other side gets me on, strafes on the other side. So I figured, well if he's going to do it again he's going to hit the middle. So I rolled out of the ditch, and sure enough he got the middle of the ditch. And then he took off. A great Teutonic warrior.

TINKER: Yeah, trying to shoot a child in the road.

RENNIE: Was there a sense in your experience that this was happening a lot at this point, I mean these planes strafing civilians, attacking civilians?

FRIBOURG: They were doing that. Oh yeah, absolutely.

TINKER: Just random …

FRIBOURG: Yeah, yeah, whenever. I mean, that's documented, not just one person, but you know where they were—I mean the roads there before the roadblocks, it was absolutely horrendous. You had cars, you had ox carts, you had drawn wagons, you had wheelbarrows

with grandma in it, bicycles with huge packages, and pedestrians, you had all kinds of stuff. So they were there. I mean whenever people were there they hear planes, they'd scatter.

RENNIE: So there was never any sense that they might be French airplanes trying to …

FRIBOURG: Oh they were not French airplanes. No, we never saw French airplanes. (Laughter) They were German or Italian. And so, I got to the smith, talked to the smith, he got some tools, he got some metal plates, saddled his horse, put me behind him and then we went and he fixed it all. And then my mother was able to beg for two liters of gasoline so that we could drive to the nearest town, where there were rumors to be gasoline. Well my mother was pregnant you know, and there was an eleven-year-old boy and an eight-year-old girl. And this veteran, and we each had a two-liter can in each hand and with my mother being pregnant like this, and she also had a blue cape, which looked like a nurse's uniform, and so we were allowed to go to the head of the line, get all our cans filled up and then the gasoline man said, "Come back for a second round." So we were able to get some more gas.

TINKER: How many months pregnant was your mother?

FRIBOURG: My brother was born in October, this was in June.

TINKER: Wow. Your mother was a tough lady. (Laughs) Well …

FRIBOURG: Yes. So, eventually we got to my grandparents, then of course for all this time, we had no news of our father, and we knew that all the troops had been overrun. And of course the armistice had been signed by then, the 19th of June, and we got there a couple of days after that. Well it turns out my father had walked from Amiens to south of the Massif Central.

TINKER: He had walked?

FRIBOURG: Well that was the only way to get there. Here we go. There is where he walked. (Gestures to computer)

TINKER: Can you click on that?

FRIBOURG: Oh yeah.

RENNIE: How many miles did you say that is?

FRIBOURG: That's 550 miles. That's Bristol to Memphis.

TINKER: Oh my gosh. (Laughter)

RENNIE: That's astounding.

TINKER: That is astounding. He did that in two weeks?

FRIBOURG: When he got to the Loire River, the bridge he was aiming for had already been blown up. So he walked on downstream, the second bridge … blown up. Walked on some more, you know, about ten, fifteen, twenty kilometers in between. Walked to the third one, there were people streaming across. He walked across. He got a quarter mile and (Gesture denoting explosion).

TINKER: So how did he know where you all were?

FRIBOURG: He didn't know, he had no idea. He was just walking away from the German troops.

RENNIE: That makes sense.

FRIBOURG: Trying to get to Spain or wherever.

TINKER: At what point did he finally find out …

FRIBOURG: Well when he got here (Gestures), he was so exhausted—two of them—fifty of them started out, and two of them ended up here (Gestures to end of route). The others, somewhere along the way said, "well I got to take a two-hour sleep on the roadbank," and they woke up as POWs. He knew that being Jewish, if he was taken POW that was likely a death sentence, so he just kept on going. And he uh–of course the Armistice was June 19th signed by that great hero, the traitor [Henri-Philippe] Pétain [WWII French Chief of State; former WWI French general imprisoned after the war]. And so he sent out telegrams, and I mean he was hosted those, two of them were housed out on a farm, where they just talked. And they learned about the armistice couple of days later, there were no newspapers, no even radio, and sent out telegrams to all the friends he could think of that he had in the non-occupied, in the Vichy French area. My mother did the same thing. And so it was that there was a school friend of his for many years earlier who was a professor of mycology at the University of Toulouse, and that's how he found out … we had made it.

RENNIE: That's amazing

TINKER: That is so fantastic, your parents were so smart … They were, and brave …

FRIBOURG: So this is my handwriting, this is the …

TINKER: Your diary?

FRIBOURG: My diary of where we started. Part of it … it's only one page.

GRIFFIN: When did you start writing in your diary? And when did you finish?

FRIBOURG: The 17th of June, when we left Lyon, we were there and we went all the way across France.

TINKER: So how did your father get to Pau?

FRIBOURG: No he didn't, no this is us, this is my mother and I, and my sister. And after we located where we were, we went to Nîmes. And the reason my mother picked Nîmes, it was the furthest she could get from the German-occupied and the Italian-occupied [portions of France], it was the geographic center of Vichy France. And that's where a month later my father had been demobilized, and I remember walking to the railroad station to meet him, and he came towards me, I barely recognized him because my father was completely bald at age twenty-four or five or so, and there he came down and he had a huge black mustache! (Laughter) That he let grow for, you know, hiding. And of course he had, he was in his uniform, and so, and this is uh … this is a picture, not the plane that hit me, but one just like it, Messerschmitt 109. (Gestures to computer)

RENNIE: That was their mainline fighter plane during the war. Yeah.

FRIBOURG: Yeah, so we settled in Nîmes, and then when we settled there, this would have been in May. No, no it would have been in …

TINKER: July?

FRIBOURG: July. July 1940. And I started going to school, in France. In those days, school always started the first Monday in October. So, it was October 2. Easy to remember, I don't know if it still is. But anyway in November, my … November 10th as I recall, the Vichy government imposed a questionnaire similar to the ones used by Hitler out of Nürnberg [Nuremberg, Germany] in 1935 to identify race. And I remember my father sitting at the small table we had in the kitchen, about the size of this desk, filling in the questionnaire. Name, date of birth, place of birth, and religion; of your parents, grandparents, great grandparents, or more. If any of these was Jewish, the whole caboodle was taken. Of course there was no question about it, we were all Jewish. All French, also. I mean, my family has been French for centuries. Or was: I'm not anymore. And uh, on purpose, cost me $500, for me, 500 dollars for my wife, and 500 dollars for my son and for my daughter to be declared non-French citizens. Because the three of them became French when my wife married me and we had children. That's the law, and the reason I went through this process, is I had applied for a Fulbright lectureship which eventually I got the second time I applied, I got one to go to Turkey in 1973-74, and I knew that I would want to visit France, and with my family to show them things. And the rule was that if I, not having served with the people of my age in the military, stayed in France for more than three months, ninety days, I would have to be, I could be grabbed and put in the military, in the French Army, to serve the same length of time as the men born in 1929 like I had been. And those were the guys who were lucky to fight five years in Algeria!

TINKER: Yeah, you mean could have been forced in the service in 1973?

FRIBOURG: Absolutely!

RENNIE: As a professor on a Fulbright, yeah …

FRIBOURG: As a French citizen!

TINKER: Because you had not previously served your time earlier.

FRIBOURG: That's right. Even though I had become an American citizen in 1951, but they did not recognize the loss of citizenship, and so I had to go through the official process of them saying, "No you are not a French citizen." That's the law. That's French law.

TINKER: I have never heard such a thing. (Laughter)

RENNIE: That's fascinating.

TINKER: I am like … Do you know if it is still that way?

FRIBOURG: I have no idea.

TINKER: That is … (Laughs)

FRIBOURG: But actually I'll tell you what …

TINKER: So is that the same as—that's not basically just renouncing your citizenship, right? You're having to pay …

FRIBOURG: No, it's having them recognize that I don't want to …

TINKER: Yeah, it's paying them to legally recognize that you are not a French citizen.

FRIBOURG: Let me just take a little side trip, and show you how real this is.

TINKER: I just can't imagine you're going to go on a Fulbright, and then you're going to go to France and get snagged for military duty.

FRIBOURG: Okay, here is a document which I actually mailed to France yesterday. Okay I have family ancestors who are buried in three different cemeteries in France. Cemeteries in France are all surrounded by walls. You can't be buried anywhere else.

TINKER: Like walls and gated, where you can't get in?

FRIBOURG: Absolutely, absolutely. And if a certain tomb space is not maintained, kept clean of lichen, moss, weeds, whatever, then the direct descendant of one of the persons buried there is liable for the maintenance. If after thirty-three years of not paying maintenance, then the tomb is declared surplus. The contents are excavated, and are placed in a common grave. And the space may be used by another family … okay?

TINKER: I don't know what to say.

FRIBOURG: My parents both in their will and their last will and testament requested that I and my sister and my brother take care of this as much as we could. And of course we talked about my grandparents and others earlier. So at some point in time, like twenty-five years ago, I

opened a bank account in France, and I put in several thousand dollars in there as euros. And, I don't intend to close that account, and I have an annuity, that was bought by my parents, within of a month of my being born, to start paying after "X" number of years, when I got to be sixty-five or whatever, I forget exactly. So every quarter I get €225 deposited in this bank account, and that continues every quarter until the day I die, when it stops. My sister has the same thing. So I created this power of attorney, so that, it happens to be a relative, who is a bank director in France. Because he married a woman whose father owned the bank. (Laughter) And so this is a power of attorney to allow him to accept monies into that account and to pay them out.

TINKER: Pay for the …

FRIBOURG: And so I was, I'm going to read this: "I was born on March such and such with a name, a different one that I have now. It was H-E-N-R-I, when I became a citizen I put a Y there and so on. And I was the legitimate son," that's important in France …

RENNIE: It is, yeah.

FRIBOURG: The legitimate son of Jean Fribourg and his wife so and so, at such and such a place in Paris. And then I have the same paragraph written in French because the French, if they get a document in English, "ah hell." (Laughter) They don't even … you know. That's the mind that they have. "I am a U.S. citizen, since 18 June 1951 at such and such a date with such a number of certification. I served in the U.S. Army with a service number and I'm 100% disabled veteran of the Korean War"—doesn't look like it—but it's a fact. "I was released from French allegiance, and allowed to be naturalized in a different country on July 31, 1972. And there is the number of the phone, as well as my wife and my two children. And professor emeritus etc." So there you go, and then it goes on at the end that he has all his successor, all his employees have the right to disburse that money. And when it runs out, it runs out. If my children want to put some money in, that's up to them. I'm not going to force them like my parents forced me. (Laughs) I might have done it anyway, but—So, oh yeah you see if I didn't show them that I had been recognized as having lost French citizenship, they could call me a deserter … you have no rights. (Laughs)

TINKER: That's something …

RENNIE: French law is fascinating, isn't it?

TINKER: Yeah …

FRIBOURG: And that is why … you know I have always been very puzzled. Periodically in the newspaper, I read about somebody having dual citizenship. When I became an American citizen, part of the oath was, "I renounce all allegiance to any foreign country." And I don't understand this dual citizenship bit …

GRIFFIN: That is very interesting …

TINKER: So when you all met up with your father, in …

FRIBOURG: Well then, what happened is that, they decided that, after that questionnaire, and of course the questionnaire meant that my father could not be a lawyer, a teacher, a doctor, a painter, a carpenter, nothing. No job would be open at all, which was the case for all Jews. And then eventually they demanded the wearing of the Star of David on clothing outside the home. So, they decided we move to Algiers, and so we lived in Algiers for a year, I went to school in Algiers with French people, and with Arab. So I have some opinions about Arabs …

TINKER: So you went to Algiers in '41.

FRIBOURG: Yeah, and then when we decided to try to get out, the first thing my parents—my father had to do—And I never—you know you think about all the questions you should have asked your parents when they can no longer answer you … I don't know, I know that through the intermediary of a man named Dreyfus, D-R-E-Y-F-U-S, he got four entering visas to Cuba, they threw the baby in for free. (Laughter) $500 for each of the four. But what that man's first name was I have no idea. So I have no idea who it is, who I could thank, or anything like that. And so you get those. Then you have to book passage, on a ship, in advance, non-refundable, out of Lisbon on a Portuguese neutral ship. What he got was a second-class cabin. First-class for the millionaires, second-class, and then the rest of it was five-high deep bunk. And my mother was on the low bunk because she got sea-sick before she got on the ship. (Laughter)

TINKER: That's me …

FRIBOURG: And then the middle bunk was for my father who took care of my mother. And then the upper bunk was for my sister and I, head to foot. And the middle-drawer of the three drawer-dresser …

TINKER: The baby …

FRIBOURG: For the baby. Well that had to be paid in advance. Then, you had to get a transit visa to get through Portugal to get to Lisbon. Then a transit visa to go through Spain, then an exit visa from France, and you had to do it in that order. So, we had to go back to Marseille, because there were no Portuguese or Spanish consulates in Algiers. And there, it was in December, cold, north wind mistral blowing as it does every winter down the Rhone Valley, and raining. And I waited with my father for three days in a row at the Portuguese consulate. I mean we weren't the only ones. And it was outside in the rain, and when it closed you got numbers, you know, chits that says you could come back the next day. So about four o'clock the third day we got in, took ten minutes, and you got the papers. We ran to the Spanish consulate; it was already closed for the day. We got back the next morning at eight o'clock, or whatever, very early. And that's when we found out that Francisco Franco, Hitler's buddy, had agreed to close the borders of Spain. So, fortunately, and not to coin a pun, which is terrible, there were a lot of other people in the same boat. And so they rerouted the ship to go from Lisbon to an unscheduled stop in Casablanca. So back across the Mediterranean we went, to Oran. Took an old dilapidated train to Fez, and Meknès, Rabat. And about ten kilometers, six miles or so,

before we hit Casablanca the train stops, we're right behind a dune and we can see the Atlantic Ocean on the other side. Everybody who couldn't prove that they lived in Casablanca had to get off with their luggage, climb the dune and go behind barbed wire on the beach. And there was one Quonset hut with a concrete floor for the women, girls, babies, and another one for the men and boys. About a thousand people. Four water spigots, four outhouses.

TINKER: Oh my gosh. Why—who was enforcing this?

FRIBOURG: Vichy France. The Vichy collaborators. Well, my father had some cigarettes, although he didn't smoke them, but fortunately they were nice currency. He bribed a boy to get a message to a friend of his at Casablanca, and that man saw to it that French citizens would not be interned. I mean Morocco was a French colony. So after a week, we got out and got to Casablanca as well as all the other French. But most of those people were foreign nationals. And so every week, it was, "the ship is coming next week, next Monday, next Monday …" Finally in February the ship came. We got on about five o'clock in the afternoon, rowboats to the middle of the harbor, and these other people also got on. So, we got on a ship, had about 1,000 [~2,000 in fact] refugees on it. As a matter of fact, I have a picture of that ship.

TINKER: Did they let the non-French refugees on the ship too?

FRIBOURG: Yes, yes, yes.

TINKER: But they had to stay in the horrible camp …

FRIBOURG: Yeah, yeah, yeah … they as far as I know, as far as I know nobody was left, but of course I can't tell you that for sure. But this is the ship and the reason I found a picture of it, is in 1948 it was still being used to ship people to run the British blockade into Palestine. (Gestures to computer)

[Later note from Dr. Fribourg: I did not get to tell you the ship was built in 1906 in Bremen, Germany, and taken by the Portuguese when it took refugees in Lisbon during World War I!]

RENNIE: No kidding? Wow!

TINKER: That is amazing!

(Tape Paused)

FRIBOURG: So …

TINKER: Okay now, you were on the USS …

FRIBOURG: No, not USS; the SS.

TINKER: The SS … [Nyassa]

FRIBOURG: Steam ship.

TINKER: How do you pronounce that?

FRIBOURG: Nyassa, Nyassa is the name of a Portuguese colony on the east coast of Africa.

TINKER: Okay …

FRIBOURG: That's where the name comes from.

TINKER: And how long did the voyage take?

FRIBOURG: So … about two or three days out. U-boat surfaces, at eight or nine o'clock in the morning. Of course the ship has got a huge Portuguese flag painted on each side; spotlights at night, so they don't mistake who we are. This was the time—February '42, when the U-boats were murdering all along the Atlantic seaboard of the U.S. And about twenty guys come, two boats' worth, two row-boats worth—to inspect the ship, top to bottom. I don't know what they were looking for, but they didn't find it. I'm sure they were looking for weapons or ammunition or something like this. So, it's getting dark, they leave, of course nobody knew what they were going to do, after the boat goes down. But nothing happened. So we sailed a few more days and we stop in Bermuda, Hamilton, for British inspection. And, whether the captain was incompetent or had old charts, or whatever, he manages to get the ship on top of a sand bar. (Laughter)

TINKER: Well it's probably not too difficult there. (Laughs)

FRIBOURG: So we are there on the ship, in the middle of a small harbor really, see all these shops and so on with food and stuff we haven't seen for years. No-can-do. And then the captain tries to get the damn ship off the sandbar and it wasn't until a week later that there was a high enough tide … that he could get out. (Laughter)

FRIBOURG: So, now he decides that he doesn't have enough coal to get to Havana, or there isn't coal to be had in Havana—I don't know which. So, instead of going to Havana like he was supposed to, for us, he goes to Newport News [Virgina, USA] to get some coal. And so, we are docked at a coal-loading dock for three days, while we get coal. Uh, SP's [American sentry patrols], with their Garand rifle on their shoulder, patrol the decks so that we "dangerous possible saboteurs" don't get off. Only the people—a few people—had valid papers to get off in the U.S., so they got off. But, mighty few of them. And uh, so … You can imagine how clean we are after three days at a coal dock.

TINKER: Yeah, and how did you pass your time on the ship, just waiting. Like, you're in Bermuda for a week or ten days? Did you just … ?

FRIBOURG: You're just there.

TINKER: Did you try to play games or?

FRIBOURG: I had—there was a friend of mine, a boy that was a year older than I. And, the two of us got together …

TINKER: And played some …

FRIBOURG: His family name when he left Casablanca was Wacziarg, when we got to Newport News, his family name was Varney. (Laughter) And, about ten years ago, I get an email from Jean Varney.

RENNIE: No kidding?

FRIBOURG: In Paris! "I saw your web page …" (Laughter)

TINKER: So you reconnected?

FRIBOURG: So we reconnected. Then he died a few years ago. And his widow didn't pursue the thing. So I have no idea what he was even doing—what he did for his living.

RENNIE: I'm so sorry.

FRIBOURG: But he had—he had served in the American Army, and he went back to France and, sure enough, he (Laughs) ended up spending two years in the French Army! (Laughter) So I wasn't kidding you …

TINKER: So he serves in the American army, goes to France; they basically hijack him and make him serve … I can't even (Laughter), I can't even wrap my mind around it.

FRIBOURG: Well, the moral of this—I hate to say it but it's true. "Don't trust any government." That's the only conclusion I can get to (Laughs).

TINKER: Well, so you finally make it to Cuba.

FRIBOURG: Uh, yeah, but. Of course, first of all, we go down along the [Atlantic] Seaboard, you know, and we didn't know at the time that they [the Germans] were sinking all these ships. But they left us alone. So we get to Havana harbor and there's El Morro castle, on the left, ship goes to the right, docks. And, a few hours later, we start walking down the ladder to the dock, and then they force us into rowboats! And we go to Tiscornia, which is essentially the "Ellis Island" [of Cuba], to process—quarantine and process. Papers were all processed in about three days. And then, after that, if you want to get out, it's 10,000 bucks! Per person! And the next day it's 9,000 and the next day …

TINKER: For everybody that goes through?

FRIBOURG: For everybody.

TINKER: What about the people who didn't have the money?

FRIBOURG: After nine months, they let them go.

TINKER: So basically, it's just a shakedown.

FRIBOURG: Absolutely!

RENNIE: If you could pay the premium you get to leave.

FRIBOURG: When it [the price] got down to 500, my father decided …

TINKER: To pay …

FRIBOURG: And again, they threw the baby in for free. (Laughter) Oh yeah, and then, is my father going to work, well, my father is an intellectual. He doesn't know how to work [with his hands] …

TINKER: He was a mathematician, right?

FRIBOURG: Mathematician, but, if he's going to do any kind of business, any kind of work, he has to create a new business, according to Cuban law, and take a Cuban partner. And the Cuban partner will have 51% of the votes [to control the company], so that's how you can lose a lot of money. And so, for the three—the third year that we were in Havana, my father studied English, taught math to my little baby brother, uh well, arithmetic, I mean, the baby was five years old. (Laughter) And uh, that was it. I went to school; learned English, learned Spanish, and uh, the first spring—the spring of 1942, they put me in sixth grade. And the reason for that is that the home teacher, Miss Patricia Doyle, from St. Louis, Missouri, was the Latin teacher. And the thought was, if she talked to me in Latin, and I talked to her in French, we could communicate. (Laughs)

TINKER: You two could pick up bits and pieces right?

FRIBOURG: Then I got a hold of—I got acquainted with, and my parents with, Mrs. Sybil Kendall, a true daughter of the British Empire, (Laughter) who was the English and Algebra teacher. She knew English very well; Algebra not so well. And she started mentoring me to learn in English. And that summer, I selected a book I had already read in French, the *Swiss Family Robinson*, and I got a dictionary and a notebook, and every word I didn't know, I looked up. First day I got about ten lines. Second day I got about eleven lines. And by the end of the summer I had finished the whole book. And so they put me in eighth grade.

TINKER: Yeah …

FRIBOURG: And then that next summer, I did all the coursework for ninth grade. And then I went through tenth grade. And then the next summer I went through eleventh grade. And then by the time, April '45, that we landed in Miami, I was a high school senior.

TINKER: That's amazing …

FRIBOURG: And I was admitted to be a freshman at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

TINKER: And you were proficient in English and Spanish?

FRIBOURG: What?

TINKER: Were you—and you were proficient in English and Spanish?

FRIBOURG: And French.

TINKER: Now there was something in the … okay … the second—the British teacher you had? I remember in the book you said—you gave her credit for …

FRIBOURG: Absolutely, she was a hard taskmaster.

TINKER: … your English. And she was the reason you spoke English without a French accent.

FRIBOURG: That's right. I was supposed to—it was about a fifteen-minute walk to school, and go home for lunch and go back. So, four times a day I had fifteen minutes and I had certain, specific tongue twisters that I was supposed to say out loud, "There were, ten, thousand soldiers thriving in the battlefield" or something like that (Laughter) and that's how I …

TINKER: See I was wondering how she was able to do that …

FRIBOURG: She was a very hard taskmaster. But as I said, algebra was not so good so I usually read the book one chapter ahead of her, and I got my revenge in math for what I didn't get in English! (Laughter)

TINKER: Did you think it was easier to learn English or Spanish?

FRIBOURG: Huh?

TINKER: Did you think it was easier to learn English or Spanish, at that time? Because you were learning them simultaneously, right?

FRIBOURG: No, there was no … See for Spanish, Spanish grammar, especially is so similar to French. That was a snap.

TINKER: Oh okay.

FRIBOURG: I had to learn the vocabulary, the pronunciation. The Spanish "R" is different from the French "R", is different from the English "R". I mean that's the hardest thing, at least for me, to keep them separate. But no there is no problem, and uh, when I go to international meetings, if I happen to meet a Cuban like I have sometimes …

TINKER: Oh yeah, the Cuban accent you mentioned …

FRIBOURG: After three sentences, the question comes, "¿Cuando te fuiste de Cuba?" When did you leave Cuba? So I mean it's a very distinctive accent. Almost similar to the Puerto Rican accent, not quite, a few words are different, so that's it and uh …

TINKER: So by the time you get to New York, or Miami, you've graduated high school basically …

FRIBOURG: Essentially. We got a very small apartment in Flatbush, Brooklyn. And just about three blocks from Erasmus High School. And I went with my father to see the principal, and they decided that yeah if I stayed, went to Erasmus High School all the way through until Christmas then they'd give me a degree, but they wanted to make sure that all the grades I had gotten in Cuba were good. So we went to Haaren High School, which is two big long blocks west of Columbus Circle, in Manhattan, and the principal was willing to accept my transcripts from Cuba, so that I could graduate this June. And not only that, he let me—He ranked me in the class of five-hundred or so graduates, I was number three. And I had been there three months. (Laughter) And uh, I got there, and of course that Haaren High School, then had very mixed cultures, people from different backgrounds … I can't imagine what it is like now. But I met somehow in Algebra class, I met this huge guy about your size, but bigger, from Puerto Rico. And he had some questions about his math. I helped him with his math and he let it be known that he and I were buddies and nobody had better fool with me.

(Laughter)

TINKER: You had a bodyguard.

FRIBOURG: I had a bodyguard.

TINKER: Did your parents become proficient in English?

FRIBOURG: My father could write better English than any of you or any of the other people on most of the faculty. But he had a very strong, distinctive French accent.

(Laughter)

FRIBOURG: But his written English was impeccable, and better than any of the people that he dealt with.

TINKER: And your mother?

FRIBOURG: And my mother, enough to communicate well, and still with a French accent.

TINKER: So what month did you leave Cuba?

FRIBOURG: April 10th, '45.

TINKER: So you were already in America when the war ended?

FRIBOURG: No … I didn't become an American till '51.

TINKER: No, I mean you were in the States, when the war ended.

FRIBOURG: Oh yeah, oh yes. Yes I remember I was in Times Square on VE day.

TINKER: You were!? Oh yay, so you celebrated?

FRIBOURG: Yeah, sixteen, yeah … and I got to kiss a few girls … (Laughter)

FRIBOURG: Didn't have to worry about HIV in those days …

TINKER: I bet that was a happy time …

FRIBOURG: Oh yeah … But, not so much because two of our grandparents had disappeared.

TINKER: When did you find out about your grandparents? Your father's …

FRIBOURG: After we were here …

TINKER: Hmm … Did you receive some sort of official notification or was it just from family?

FRIBOURG: I don't remember how my parents … Now eventually my father got official documents that well, my grandfather was buried in France. Because he died of medical—German-enforced medical neglect. My grandmother of course, was deported to Auschwitz. And so the French authorities recognized that, we know that she was on convoy seventy two out of Drancy, which is on the east side of Paris. There were seventy six convoys, about a thousand persons in each. There is a book with the names of everybody [by a survivor, Serge Klarsfeld], and we have official papers of the passengers. My other grandparents of course went back to their apartment in Paris. My grandfather had been interrogated three times by the Gestapo. Fortunately they had excellent neighbors there in Pau. That couple had a mature daughter, who worked at city hall, and she heard about when visits would be made, or raids. At which point my grandparents would give their rings and whatever else of any value that they might have to the neighbors, who would hold them until they were safe. And so they were lucky that way. And they were not deported. Now the apartment of my other grandparents was sold at auction. It had antique furniture, paintings. And we still are waiting for a penny of restitution. The same thing for the house, the summer home in Fontainebleau. Not a penny of indemnity. Um, there is one other house that belonged to my grandparents. I did do all the paper work many years back, got copies of seventeen different documents, sent them in. Three-and-a-half years later, we got a check. My sister, my brother and I. The total of those three checks was equivalent to 1.75% of the market value of that house. So you see I have no reason to be sorry that I gave up my French citizenship

TINKER: Very true.

FRIBOURG: And of course what is going on even now, in France, certainly substantiates that …

RENNIE: Absolutely …

TINKER: So what kind of work did your father find initially in New York?

FRIBOURG: Okay, as soon as we got to New York, actually. Or very shortly afterwards, my father got hired by an organization, or the office of something that then was called Point-4, which was Truman's establishment of help for occupied Europe, which after some months became the Marshall Plan [The Point Four Program, which aimed to share scientific and industrial advances with developing nations in Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa, was completely separate from the European Recovery Program, or Marshall Plan], and so my father worked for the New York office, for about ten years, of the Marshall Plan. As I said, he could write perfect English, he could write and speak perfect French, and he was absolutely very useful in that. And uh eventually, in those days, Renault, car manufacturer, which is a French company, was trying to sell cars in this country, and so he became an employee, he switched over to Renault Inc. And eventually he was CFO of Renault Inc.

RENNIE: Really?

FRIBOURG: That's how he retired.

TINKER: Amazing, what a story. And you went off to college …

FRIBOURG: And I went off to college. Wanna know why I went to Madison?

RENNIE: Yeah.

TINKER: Why?

FRIBOURG: Ah hah, well I had applied to three schools. I thought in those days that I wanted to be in pre-forestry. The principal of the school in Havana, Miss Eva Anderson, was from North Carolina, and so she highly recommended that I should apply to Duke University. My physics professor, who taught me physics in Spanish, had gotten his PhD at Cornell University, so he highly recommended … (Laughter) to apply to Cornell. And the last year, the senior year, the senior year that I was there, Mrs. Sybil Kendall only taught "real" literature, so as far as she was concerned she would stop at Thackeray, nineteenth century, defunct author. Nothing written after that was worth spending your time on, it had not withstood the test of time. As long as the author was still alive (Laughter). So the school got a teacher to teach American literature, which I decided to take in addition to the senior English course from Mrs. Kendall. And to this day I have completely forgotten the name of this American literature teacher. But she was a recent graduate of the University of Wisconsin, Madison. And she was a gorgeous blonde, and she wore knitted blue, light blue dress, on a beautiful figure, and so I asked her about the University of Wisconsin, she talked to me about Lake Mendota and so on, how beautiful the campus was and my thought was, well if there are any more looking like her, that's where I'm going. (Laughter)

TINKER: I assume you didn't tell your parents this is why you decided to pick Wisconsin. (Laughter)

FRIBOURG: I had all three, I applied, I knew I would never be accepted by Duke, because on the questionnaire there was one question that said race, and my answer was, "human". Which is the way I answer that question every time, everywhere it comes to me. Including on the US census, and nobody's ever called my hand on it. (Laughter)

TINKER: You still put human race on the census?

FRIBOURG: Absolutely!

TINKER: I love it.

FRIBOURG: New York, Cornell, I was too close to where my parents were. So I went to Madison.

TINKER: Was it as nice as you thought it was going to be?

FRIBOURG: It was very nice, but, when I left New York, my parents gave me fifty dollars. They said, "That's it. From now on, you're on your own. "We don't have it." Our money was all gone."

TINKER: Yeah your father had just started working, yeah.

RENNIE: Yeah …

FRIBOURG: So I got to Madison, and I got a room-and-board at a doctor's house, whose wife was a socialite leader in Madison. Unfortunately, they lived eight miles away from the campus, and so I found out that, that was a long way for a bicycle. And the bus line only went five of those miles, and the last three had to be by bicycle up a hill, at night. And then the bus stopped at twelve o'clock which is the same time that the dormitories expected the girls to be in, so it was kind of hard, I had to take the date back to the dormitory before it was time. (Laughter) And Mrs. Neff expected me to … She would give me breakfast, and I had my room, all to myself. I was supposed to wait table, and wash all the dishes, pots, and pans. Well as I said she was a real socialite, so there often would be six, eight, ten, twelve dinner guests, and there was a cook. And of course the cook used every pot and pan in the kitchen.

(Laughter)

TINKER: So you're really working for it.

FRIBOURG: But I—she—I had a white coat that I was given, a black tie, a napkin and she taught me how to wait on table, the real high way. And well that lasted one semester and then I found that I could earn as much money scraping dishes at the cafeteria at the Student Union. And be able to pay for a room. Again, I could get a room next to the campus at a private home. I made

the mistake once of getting a room in the top floor of a house that was on a corner. Well that's twice as many sidewalk, to clean the snow off of. (Laughter) And then I got acquainted, and the French department had a play that they would put on at the Student Union that was an experimental theater, just like we have here. A play in French, the standard play. So I said, oh that would be a nice fun thing to do, and I might meet some actresses. So I went in there and they got to know me, and of course I could speak the language without any trouble, and after doing this for two years, I got to be a junior and I got appointed as an Instructor in French. So there I was a junior in agriculture, and a member of the faculty in the French department. (Laughter) After working eight hours a week, I made as much money as scraping dishes for thirty.

RENNIE: That's fantastic

TINKER: That is great

FRIBOURG: So my last two years there I was a member of the faculty.

(Laughter)

TINKER: So tell me what got you interested—why did you pick forestry?

FRIBOURG: Fontainebleau is surrounded by a forest. And whenever we were there we took all kinds of hikes, or bicycle trips. And I liked that. I changed when I became a sophomore, I changed because I found out that a forestry major spend most of his time on top of a tower in the middle of nowhere. (Laughter) So that was that, and then Professor Henry Ahlgren, Dr. Henry Ahlgren, taught the beginning course in agronomy, which was required. And I got really captivated by the way he taught. He would have about ten different colors of chalk and he would show us a clover plant and he would show the leaflets in green and the petals in dark green, and the stem in brown, and the roots, and so on. And he did that all the time for all the crops, and I thought you know this was the day before colored slides, colored pictures, nothing … And there were a class of a hundred, but I thought he was really great. And so I visited with him and asked him if he'd be my advisor. And he agreed, and it turns out that he had done some pioneering research, in renovating the worn-out Kentucky bluegrass pastures in southern Wisconsin, which had been overgrazed, under-fertilized, and poorly managed, and so I got interested in forage crops.

TINKER: That was when you switched your major?

FRIBOURG: That's when I switched my major. But I was ornery even then. I decided that crops had to have soils to grow on. Two different departments, I'm going to have two majors. Oh that had never been heard of. So I had a major in Agronomy for crops, and then I had Dr. Robert Muckenhirn who was the only one of the soil faculty that I had a course from who smiled. (Laughter) And it turns out that he was a very nice human, and so on. And I visited with him, and so I had a double major. And then as a sophomore …

TINKER: So what was the other major called?

FRIBOURG: Soil Science. In many other places in the US they are all in the same department. And then as a freshman, well I knew algebra, so I took the qualifying exam, I didn't need to take freshman math. Oh by the way I still spoke somewhat of a slight French accent. After one week of freshman English, where we had to write two essays in class, and one at home, you know what happened? "You don't have to take any freshman English. You can go into literature sophomore courses." I was exempted from Freshman English. But I decided I should learn some math, so I took the first course in calculus, which was the way it was taught then, differential, and then the second semester, integral calculus. So at the end, well at the beginning of the… in the middle of the semester they have to prepare the list of courses for the spring semester. So my advisor at that time was a guy in Food Technology. And he says, "Well, you have to take the beginning course in Animal Husbandry." I said, "I'm sorry sir, I've looked in the catalog and the time is at the same time as the integral calculus that I want to take the semester after taking differential." He said, "No, you've gotta take Animal Husbandry, that's what the agriculture major has to do." So I walked up to Ag Hall where the deans were, and I go in to see Dean Kivlin. Very thick patch of white hair. And I said, "Dean Kivlin I want to take integral calculus and my advisor won't let me because of this conflict." He says, "He's all wet, let me have this." (Laughter) Signed it, he says, "who do you want for an advisor?" That's when I learned that, you gotta stand up for your rights. And you go to the guy, you go to the top dog. Don't mess around with …

RENNIE: Anyone in between yea …

FRIBOURG: Sixteen and a half, seventeen years old. So, I said, I got my BS when I was nineteen, started graduate work. And that was …

TINKER: Your school in Cuba, that was a good … they really propelled you, didn't they?

FRIBOURG: That's right, but you see when I started graduate school nobody had told me—when you're in undergraduate school, the aim is to pass each course, period. When you go to graduate school, the aim is to learn the subject matter. And nobody had clued me into it. I mean, I knew as an undergraduate, I could go to lectures and listen, that was a B. If I wanted an A, I would have to work for it, but I usually got A's. That was it. But when I started graduate school at Cornell, my major professor, who was an eminent guy in the profession, Roy Blaser. After three weeks, I'd gotten acquainted, so I had a date on Saturday night, and a date with a different girl on Sunday night. Monday morning, I'm at my desk, a quarter to eight, like I'm supposed to be. Roy Blaser, Dr. Roy Blaser comes by the attic bullpen with about twenty graduate student desks there. He says, "Henry, I've got a question for you, how come you feel you can afford to be away from your desk two evenings in a row?"

TINKER: And you said?

FRIBOURG: I said, "Yes sir!" But nobody had clued me in ya know?

TINKER: Well how did you pick Cornell for graduate school?

FRIBOURG: I got a scholarship.

RENNIE: Not much has changed.

FRIBOURG: I got this scholarship with this guy who was well known. It turns out after I'd been there six months, he'd have to go somewhere else. So I start with a guy, Keith Kennedy, who is your height and legs at least as long as yours. And he expected me to keep up with him, which I found very difficult, and he'd been a captain in the Army. And we just had different scientific interests. So I decided I'd grind it out with him, and leave to go somewhere else. And looked around, at annual meetings of the society and I found someone then, so I went to Iowa State.

TINKER: And what was your specific interest at that time?

FRIBOURG: It was essentially what I've done for my career in management of forage crops. He wanted to work on conserved forages, which is mostly silage, anaerobic digestion, these things and I had absolutely no interest with that, and also would require much more biochemistry than I wanted to take.

TINKER: So you found someone in Iowa, at Iowa State …

FRIBOURG: So I found someone in Iowa who had a very good reputation in terms of taking care of graduate students. He was in a different field than me, but that's okay. He was a very nice guy. I really loved him, he was very nice. In 1952, the Sixth International Grassland Congress was going to take place in State College, Pennsylvania. It was a meeting that took place every four years, except during wartime. From one continent to another to another. I wanted to go there desperately and so I was registered at Ames. So I wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Organizing Committee, who was a USDA man in Beltsville. And I said I'm so and so, and my field is such and such, and I speak English, French, and Spanish, I maybe could be useful at the International Congress, and I'd like to get my travel, room and board. Three months go by; I get a letter from the Department of State. I said, "what have I done?" (Laughter). "We understand that you are fluent in three languages, we would like to hire you for six weeks in Washington, prior to the Congress so that you can prepare a trilingual glossary of the technical terms that are likely to be used so our interpreters can become familiar with the names. At the same time, we will train you as an interpreter of some sort." At that time my assistantship was $100 a month. I had thirty dollars for rent, and sixty dollars for food, the rest was for laundry and one restaurant meal a week. "We can only pay you thirty-five dollars a day plus expenses." (Laughter). And so they kept me, and they promoted me as an interpreter during the Grassland Congress, in Pennsylvania. Fifty-five dollars a day. I mean that's a twenty-two-hour day though. I mean you're working all the time. And then after the Congress, they were gonna have four tours. One in the Northeast, one in the South, one in the Midwest, and one in the Far West. Where the three eastern ones were going to meet by bus, so they got three interpreters for each tour. Then for the Far West, it's a lot of money, it's three weeks instead of ten days. "We'd like to hire you, and you'd be the only interpreter. We can only pay you $100 a day." (Laughter).

TINKER: It just keeps getting better and better.

FRIBOURG: Got to see all the West that I had always heard about, but had never seen. We'd have Pullman cars to sleep at night. The train would go from here to there. We'd get off that morning, get on a bus, go have breakfast, visit some farms or ranches or whatever, meet the train back at another place, and continue. I mean what a wonderful opportunity. And this major professor gave me leave of absence, I had to find some buddies to take care of my field research, which we swapped and so on. And that was a great idea. And of course after that, I got to travel to other international meetings as an interpreter. In Brazil, Argentina, Costa Rica, Jamaica, I mean …

TINKER: Travel the west in the early 50s, bet that was so great.

FRIBOURG: I always found it interesting, you know, some of the host-countries, host-states where we'd stop. Like I remember especially University of Nebraska, we'd stop in Lincoln. And they had gotten two professors. One professor of French, and one professor of Spanish to meet the train, and they couldn't interpret a damn. (Laughter) They had never done it. I mean the trick when you're doing it consecutively like this, the guy gives his ten-minute speech. Well I'd give it twice as good, in half as long a time, in French, and then in Spanish. What people don't realize is when you talk extemporaneously, half of the words are not needed, they are fill in words. When you grab the essential ones, that's when you get the idea. So that's what I did, and then I applied—then I got drafted Korean War. And …

TINKER: So you didn't get drafted before because …

FRIBOURG: No I had student deferments. Just like Mr. Trump.

TINKER: But you finally got drafted in '54?

FRIBOURG: Well I knew it, so I became a PhD, and then I started working for a PFC, Private First Class. And unusual, the Army actually put me into something where they could use my head. Chemical warfare research, so I was with about three hundred other guys at Detrick, in Maryland. And I was one of those who worked on the development of what later on, ten years later became known as Agent Orange [A chemical compound used in herbicidal warfare during the Vietnam War] … That's why I'm disabled. Because I have heart disease which has been associated with exposure to the dieldrin, that's by product of …

TINKER: Now what part did you specifically did you work on. You work on other agents, I'm sure, too.

FRIBOURG: No, well I worked on two. I worked on the mixture of 2,4-D and 2-4-5-T which is Agent Orange, which has the contaminant dieldrin, which is the one that's bad.

TINKER: What was your exposure, you handled it …

FRIBOURG: Our group had one director, who had, should have failed, but he got a master's degree and four other guys with bachelor's degree in biology, and then there were six of us PhDs, who were enlisted personnel. And then occasionally we were graced with a master sergeant, or a Navy chief petty officer who was getting initiated into the mysteries of biological warfare. And we got along fine as well, soon as we got him straight, but they weren't gonna bother to give us orders, because we were the ones who ran the show. We designed the studies, we designed the experiments, we got the data, we analyzed the results. We wrote the reports, the civilians just signed them. But our little group was charged with determining the dissemination of the material. So there'd be a plane flying at 20,000, 30,000 feet or whatever, in a certain direction, the winds in another direction and they'd let out some stuff, and we were on the ground. We had plates, aluminum plates, square foot, on a sixteen by sixteen mile square if you will. Or something of that nature, and we had a red dye I think so we could wash off the plates with a solvent, and determine how much we got, and we could see the distribution. So on so. That's what we did and we did that in places where they grew wheat, as in North Dakota, and rice as in East Texas, and nothing, as in Avon [Park], Florida, a SAC [Strategic Air Command] base. And wherever they got there.

TINKER: Oh, so you went to these places to do the experiments?

FRIBOURG: Oh yeah. Of the twenty-one months I was in the military after basic, I wore my uniform perhaps three months. We were in civilian clothes, but we had to behave ourselves, because they would never give us orders to be in civilian clothes, so we better not get picked up by the police. For any reason whatever. Speeding or whatever.

TINKER: Because it's top secret? Yeah …

FRIBOURG: Because we'd be deserters then. So we had to behave, even if we didn't want to. But that's what we did. And the other thing was the dissemination of rust spores, which is a deadly disease for wheat. So the spores are what the fungus sends out. Wind carried, you see. So it disperses spores and again we would have ways to sample to collect them on glued, I mean the devices that had glue on them that would catch the spores. So we'd spend hours counting however many fields, microscope fields.

TINKER: Well now what would those have been used for in warfare? The spores …

FRIBOURG: I thought that starving people by killing their crops was a lot more humane than dropping a nuclear bomb on them.

RENNIE: Yeah.

TINKER: Oh okay …

FRIBOURG: Okay, I didn't know they were going to use the chemicals to defoliate the jungle in Vietnam.

TINKER: When did it officially become Agent—I mean you were there in the very early stages of it. Like when did it officially become Agent Orange?

FRIBOURG: I don't know, but sometime between the mid-1950s and 1962/3 whenever it was used in Vietnam.

TINKER: So once you got out, you knew nothing?

FRIBOURG: I wasn't supposed to talk about it.

TINKER: Right, okay …

FRIBOURG: I mean, I found it very funny because some of the stuff that we had invented had been written up in England in a science journal, about three years before … (Laughter). That shows you those civilian people, they just didn't know anything. They hadn't even bothered to read the literature.

TINKER: So they thought they were really on to something, but it had already been out three years prior. Okay, I got you.

FRIBOURG: Oh yeah, we used a dye to go into that liquid. And the orange is also a dye that was put in there so people would keep track of which…

TINKER: Okay so when did you make the connection about Agent Orange?

FRIBOURG: Well I knew it had to be, it was to kill deciduous trees, so it had to be …

TINKER: But it was during the Vietnam War and you're watching the news, and you go (Gasp).

FRIBOURG: Of course …

TINKER: That was how you found out?

FRIBOURG: No question.

TINKER: Okay, were you shocked?

FRIBOURG: No. I don't have much respect for officerdom.

TINKER: Bureaucrats …

FRIBOURG: Well that too, but, I saw how officers got promoted.

TINKER: Yeah, political?

FRIBOURG: And you get promoted by saying "yes sir."

TINKER: Because you could have been an officer.

FRIBOURG: Oh, I was offered that.

(Phone rings, tape is paused)

TINKER: Okay we're recording again; I think Taylor had a question.

GRIFFIN: Yeah I had one question … So you were talking about the officers getting promoted by saying, "Yes sir, no sir." Or mainly, "Yes sir." At any time throughout developing the Agent Orange, did you guys find that there was something wrong with this even though it did complete the mission of deforestation?

FRIBOURG: No, we never found anything wrong with it.

GRIFFIN: Okay I was just wondering if it was a matter of someone along the chain of command, even though they might have seen something wrong with Agent Orange, they said, "yes sir" anyways.

FRIBOURG: I was not involved that now. In the barracks, see there were three hundred of us who either had a PhD or were graduate engineers with some experience, in that whole unit. And so there were all kinds of people working into all kinds of fields, and we never talked shop in the barracks or anywhere. But some of these guys were working in endemic diseases, like typhus or cholera or things like this in some of the buildings, but we never heard anything about it. We just never talked shop. The only time we talked shop was when we were in our own little group in our own little room. And we were told not to talk about it, forever. And I never mentioned any of it for thirty years.

RENNIE: During your experiments, when you're doing your experiments in the field, what sort of—was there any safety protocol for how you handled the materials, or was that …

FRIBOURG: Whatever we did, we would never have dreamed not to have gloves.

RENNIE: Right.

FRIBOURG: Nor to have respirators on. See those poor guys in Vietnam they were handling this stuff with their bare hands, so … I mean just common scientific sense and they just didn't know any better and nobody told them.

TINKER: Hmm, I noticed on your questionnaire, you got married before you got out of the service.

FRIBOURG: Well I was entitled to leave …

TINKER: Oh so you went on …

FRIBOURG: I had built up leave …

TINKER: Terminal leave.

FRIBOURG: And so I wanted to take terminal leave. I went to my boss, the civilian boss, Mr. Roy Acker, and I said, "Roy, I want to tell you that after the first week of August I'm gonna take my terminal leave since I'm due to be separated from the service on the 14th of September." He says, "Oh you can't do that, we've got three tests scheduled." I said, "Roy I understand that you do, but according to Army regulations, such and such and such, I'm entitled to take my terminal leave and I shall." (Laughter)

TINKER: Absolutely right. That's what everybody does. So when did you meet your wife?

FRIBOURG: I met my wife, on the 29th of May, 1955 at my sister's wedding.

TINKER: Back in New York?

FRIBOURG: Back in New York. On the ship that we had taken from Morocco to Cuba, my parents became acquainted with a couple, man and wife. And they were French, and they maintained a friendship when we got to Cuba. And those people had no children, no parents, no grandparents, nothing in Europe. And after a year in Cuba they were allowed to immigrate to the US. And they started an antiques store on Madison Ave in the 60s, 70s in Manhattan, if you know New York, you know that that's the place for antiques. And the reason she had a nest egg, is that in the lining of her suitcases she had three paintings by an unknown painter. And they hadn't been found by customs. This painter's name was Pablo Picasso. (Laughter)

TINKER: You're making this up I swear. Just when I think I can't hear anymore.

FRIBOURG: Well, it turns out …

TINKER: You're serious, I can't believe this …

FRIBOURG: So, they remained friends and it turns out that my sister, when she went to college at Brooklyn College, and uh let's see, in '54 she graduated with a Bachelor's, no '53, then she went to Madison, Wisconsin for one year, with an assistantship to teach French. And then she got hired on a faculty of a small private college, on the coast of Ohio. And she was getting along in years where maybe she ought to get married. And at least, that's what that lady thought. And so she introduced my sister to a young man, a son of French-Jewish family who had been born in Australia, because his parents were working there for one of those grain companies of the world. Those big ones, there's five of them. And he, this young man, had worked for them also. And that's—the name of the company is Dreyfus Company. One of the five big dealers in grain worldwide. And he had been stationed in Genoa, he'd been stationed in London, and Paris, and they met and they liked each other. And six months later they got married. My wife's parents were told that they were being invited by my parents. Because she said, "you ought to invite this family, that has two very nice daughters," and so I met Claudia at this wedding, and we danced the whole time. And fourteen months later we got married. In the meantime,

whenever I was a Detrick, I would commute, I'd leave after lowering the flag, earlier if I could get someone to stand in for me on Friday afternoon. Then drive 255 miles to her parents' front door in Kew Gardens, in Queens. And then we'd spend the weekend … since I was in the military I could get theater tickets and concert tickets for very free, or for almost nothing. And um even without having to use my uniform, just the ID. And it was safe to ride the subway in those days, so … And then on Sunday evening after supper, at eight o'clock, I would get in my car, get back to Detrick at two in the morning, stand for Reveille at six, sleep on the job (Laughter).

TINKER: That is funny, you're like oh I'll just take a nap tomorrow.

FRIBOURG: And then on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings I would visit young ladies that were planning to get married soon, and they were in desperate need of buying sterling silver and good china. And I got a twenty percent commission for everything they bought, and that's how I could afford to put gasoline in my car on Friday to go to New York. (Laughter)

TINKER: You had it going on. Did he not have it going on?

RENNIE: That's fantastic.

GRIFFIN: He's a player.

TINKER: That is something …

FRIBOURG: By the way the car I had was a six-year old car that my parents had used, and essentially gave to me.

TINKER: Yeah, so you're driving up every weekend, you were definitely in love. That's a lot of driving.

FRIBOURG: And it turns out, that actually, that young man, was related to our family, that lady was related to our family, you know seven, eight generations back. And here I have a little bibliographic database with about 61,000 names.

TINKER: Yeah, your genealogy.

FRIBOURG: Of people. Because in 1792, when the French Jews were emancipated by the French Revolution, most of them were in Alsace and in Lorraine, eastern France, and there were less than twenty thousand families, nineteen thousand five-hundred and something. So most of the Jews before World War II, in France, about 350,000, were related. You get twenty thousand families.

RENNIE: Yeah, right.

TINKER: Yeah.

FRIBOURG: I mean there were a few in southeast France, a few in Bordeaux, but most of them were in Alsace and Lorraine so everybody is related, so it's very easy, well kind of, to build such a big database.

RENNIE: That's fantastic

FRIBOURG: But uh, actually my family name goes back to 1641, when a guy from the east side of the Rhine, took a barge or ferry or whatever, crossed the Rhine, and settled in Estroff, which is in Lorraine. And that little town he came from was called Friedberg, in Hesse. And when he settled in France, in Estroff, he was the guy from Friedberg. Except he had it changed to French spelling, Fribourg.

TINKER: See I was gonna say we, Fribourg, but it's …

FRIBOURG: Fribourg …

TINKER: And how do you pronounce your mother's maiden name?

FRIBOURG: Oury … And that means moon in Hebrew. She didn't know that when she was alive, but I found out.

TINKER: That is beautiful.

FRIBOURG: So that's uh, that's how things happen. But I've been able to go back to a rabbi in fifth century Spain.

TINKER: You are a detective. So when you first got married, did you all stay in New York City for a while?

FRIBOURG: No, we got married on the 12th of August, we took a honeymoon trip to Québec. And we went back to her parents' house, and rented a U-Haul little trailer, and put all our earthly belongings in there. All wedding gifts and anything we had, and drove that car. No interstates in those days. The only interstate was the New Jersey turnpike, not quite all of it as it is now, but most of it. And so it took us three days, two-hundred and fifty miles a day, which all that '51 Chevrolet Powerglide could handle. All that we could handle. Especially going through southwest Virginia, northeast Tennessee.

RENNIE: Oh yeah.

TINKER: Yeah.

FRIBOURG: And we got here [The University of Tennessee, Knoxville] the 13th of September, and my job started the 15th.

TINKER: You already had a job offer?

FRIBOURG: I already had a job while I was still in the military for about eight months, I—The people at Iowa State were very helpful to me. They would send me all these notices of vacancies. After they'd been on bulletin boards for three months, and everybody had …

(Laughter)

TINKER: So they sent you one for Tennessee.

FRIBOURG: So I figured out that I better do my own sleuthing, so I sent out 250 letters of inquiry. That was in the days of carbon paper, guys.

RENNIE: That's right.

FRIBOURG: I typed 250 letters. I got six back.

(Phone Rings)

FRIBOURG: And I got three offers to visit … and yeah I got three offers I took this one here, at UT. I told Claudia, "Well this is two or three years until I get something better." I retired forty-five years later. (Laughter) Actually at that time, it was a competitive salary, $6,000 a year, in 1956. Monsanto had offered me a job, $9,000 a year, and I turned it down.

TINKER: How come?

FRIBOURG: Well, wrong reasons. I turned it down for two reasons. I didn't want to live in St. Louis in the summer time.

TINKER: Good point.

RENNIE: That's a good reason.

FRIBOURG: I didn't want to have a chemist as a boss, because he wouldn't understand what I was doing. The reason I should have turned it down, is they abolished the agricultural division two years later. (Laughter) Of course five years after that they started all over again and they've gotten huge.

RENNIE: Right, yeah.

TINKER: Yeah, now they're huge.

FRIBOURG: But so I didn't go commercial, I went academic, and I'm glad I did, because I don't think I would have lasted in the commercial environment.

TINKER: Did you have any kind of culture shock down here?

FRIBOURG: Yes I did some, my wife had much more. She had never been outside of New York City. Well, yes, she had. During the war her father was a poultry farmer in Connecticut, that's

where she went to grade school, but um. So it was a culture shock, but you know what, we went home at Christmas that year, to visit her folks and mine. And we came back, and the minute we got into our apartment here, she said, "You know, it's nice to be home." I knew we had it made. (Laughter)

TINKER: Like what were some of the things that caught your attention when you first moved down here?

FRIBOURG: Well the first thing was bathrooms. Men, Women, Colored. Water fountains: white, colored. I mean that …

TINKER: And was it like that on campus too?

FRIBOURG: No, no …

TINKER: Or just in the city?

FRIBOURG: Just in the city. Down at Gay Street [Downtown Knoxville], big stores …

RENNIE: Yeah …

FRIBOURG: So that, but then you see my job, well the first year I had to get acquainted with the state. I made it my business to visit with agricultural county agents in each of the ninety-five counties in the state. "Show me around. What are the problems, what are …" Then I developed my plan of research. And I must have done it pretty well, because you know what, after eighteen months they promoted me from assistant to associate professor. I had not expected that.

RENNIE: That's extremely fast …

FRIBOURG: But …

TINKER: So literally—you went to every county?

FRIBOURG: Absolutely.

TINKER: That's very smart. Because every county is different too.

FRIBOURG: Well you can group them.

TINKER: Well, west, yeah, Northeast …

FRIBOURG: No but Upper East Tennessee is different from around Chattanooga. I mean the whole county. So yeah. Of course I didn't do much in Unicoi County, or something like that with all the mountains [County that borders North Carolina in the Appalachian Mountains].

TINKER: Right …

FRIBOURG: You know I still went there. And I developed—What I had to do is to develop a program from nothing, because there hadn't been no body in my specialty ever. This was a new position. So I also had to scratch for it.

TINKER: So what was—after your visits, what was it that you formed that was gonna be your main focus and research.

FRIBOURG: You see there's twelve-and-a-half million acres of farmland in Tennessee. About twelve million acres of forest land. Of the twelve-and-a-half million acres of farmland, six million are in cash crops, corn, soybeans, it used to be cotton, it's not any more and small grains, wheat, oats. And six-and-a-half million are pasture. And those six-and-a-half million acres provided the feed for close to two million cattle. So the problem was to see … What were the problems with the cattle depending on this kind of feed? Well of the six-and-a-half million acres, three-and-a-half million was tall fescue, which is a grass that took off like wildfire in 1931, because a man named, Ian Fergus, who was out of Kentucky, found this luscious grass on a hillside and he took some of it to a greenhouse, multiplied it and so on. And found that it had all kinds of good qualities. They would survive drought, survive cold in the wintertime, and produce a lot of grass. There is only one problem. If steers are grazing orchardgrass, they would gain one-and-a-quarter, one-and-a-half pounds a day. Between age three months and eight months. You put them on tall fescue, they would gain a half a pound. Now that's a problem, why? Well, it wasn't until the late 1970s that one of my colleagues who was working at Auburn University found that some of the people that worked for him had made a mistake. He had told them go to the storage place for the seed bags that he had there, and get from that pile which is closest to the door, to seed these new pastures … three-acre paddocks for storage. Well the guys picked the wrong pile.

TINKER: Oh no …

RENNIE: Oh no …

FRIBOURG: And they picked on a pile of seed, and instead of being the new seed that had been purchased that year, was seed that had been housed there the year before. And had been stored in this metal roof building, no air conditioning so it had gotten hot and humid and so on. And so they used that for the paddocks. And low and behold, when my colleague put cattle on there to graze they gained a pound-and-a-half a day, which was two and a half, three times as much as they should have … Why? Well, started looking at tissues with a microscope and so on. Found out that there was a fungus growing between the cell walls of the grass where the cattle didn't gain weight, and there was no fungus growing in between the cell walls of the grass that had been stored over a year. In other words the fungus had died, because of heat and high humidity. And then, it took about fifty of us, from fifteen different states, as well as people in New Zealand and Australia to resolve the problem. So that's what I spent a great deal of my fruitful professional life. As a matter of fact it turns out that there is a book, no not this one, this one. This one, which is *Tall Fescue for the 21st Century*, and it's got fifty-nine authors and I'm the senior author.

(Claudia Fribourg, wife of Henry Fribourg enters)

FRIBOURG: Hi…

GRIFFIN: Hello.

CLAUDIA: Y'all are having a party, hi …

FRIBOURG: Are you still alive?

CLAUDIA: I'm the epitome of health.

(Laughter)

FRIBOURG: How come you've aged then?

(Laughter)

CLAUDIA: We don't look at those numbers. (Laughter) Is everybody comfortable cramped in this little …

TINKER: We're good, we're just about finished.

RENNIE: Oh yeah.

CLAUDIA: Yeah that's fine, that's fine.

FRIBOURG: And so it turns out that, that fungus when housed in a host plant, generates alkaloids, loline alkaloids, that have nasty effects on the animals that consume this stuff … has all kinds of bad physiological effects and so on. And so we figured this out, we figured out that if we removed the endophyte completely, the host plant dies two years later or three, because it can't stand the drought, it can't stand the heat in July and August, it can't stand the freezing temperature in January. So the trick now, and has been, to develop strains of the endophyte fungus, that are compatible with the host and don't generate certain of the alkaloids that the cow or the goat or the sheep doesn't like. That was about a forty-year joint work by forty or fifty people.

TINKER: Let me see, I was gonna read, *Tall Fescue for the 21st Century*. You're the senior author, yeah right there. That's amazing, so you started your career wanting to focus on …

FRIBOURG: Well what happened is this, is I saw that there was all this fescue, and I realized that it was not a matter of managing what was there, it was something else that was dealing … it was not the plant, it was the animal reaction.

RENNIE: Exactly.

FRIBOURG: So I worked with other things. What other things? Well it turns out at that time, there was a great deal of interest in sudangrass and sorghum, plants that would be used, to be grown only June, July, and August. I mean it was hardly anything to eat in the hot summer months for cattle. So uh, I became the guru on those. And that carried me for about fifteen years. And then by that time, then some of this had been determined and I said aha! We need to do grazing experiments with this.

TINKER: Right … That's fascinating.

RENNIE: That is fascinating.

GRIFFIN: Very fascinating.

TINKER: That's amazing … so you spent forty-five years at UT.

FRIBOURG: Yeah

TINKER: How did you do that? (Laughs)

FRIBOURG: Well actually, it was pretty good. The reason I retired in 2001, I couldn't stand the bastards in administration anymore. They had changed two years earlier. And they were interfering with what I needed to be doing, were coming down with ridiculous policies. And I was seventy-two when I retired.

TINKER: I mean at the department level or the school level, the college level… the AG [Agricultural] level?

FRIBOURG: I could still continue my work, successfully, and I just said to hell with you guys. I had nine grazing experiments with a guy in Animal Science. He was able to hang on to one of them, and they axed all the others. And then he retired five years later.

TINKER: Now when you retired did they replace your position?

FRIBOURG: No.

TINKER: See that's another thing that I've heard of that happens very often, even in History [History Department].

FRIBOURG: When I retired there were six of us that were working with fescue or animals using fescue. Now, there is one person who's got a ninety percent extension appointment, which is talking to farmers to purchase, and ten percent research. What the hell can he do with a ten percent appointment research …

TINKER: Nothing!

FRIBOURG: Zilch.

TINKER: So what is all the ag research in now.

FRIBOURG: I'll tell you. I'll tell you where all the money goes. DNA jugglers…

TINKER: What?

FRIBOURG: DNA Jugglers.

TINKER: Oh the …

RENNIE: Genetic modification.

TINKER: Genetic …

FRIBOURG: Genetic. Which is done by people who are highly qualified to do this. Who do it with the organism with which it is easy to work. And whether these are economically important or not is irrelevant. And once they have found something interesting for these irrelevant plants they don't know what the hell to do with them.

TINKER: It's just a fad, right?

FRIBOURG: But that's where the money is. And the other money is available for making moonshine out of switchgrass. (Laughter)

TINKER: Yeah, I got ya. I understand completely.

FRIBOURG: So my former department now, has three people that were my colleagues when I retired. One of them is excellent. He is a soybean breeder, and he handles both the field work and gets enough money to do the DNA bit, because he can get money from the Soybean Growers Association.

TINKER: Oh yeah.

FRIBOURG: Okay? The other two are has-beens, who never accomplished anything, and they continue to do this very well. (Laughter) And then we have people who are "artistes"—that's T-E-S [as opposed to "artists"]—ornamental horticulturists. See and you get money to do that. From garden clubs, from athletic fields, from lawns, from industrial lawns, whatever, but that's my department, and I have not received a single communication from that department since I've been retired, completely ignored. I keep knowing what's going on because there are two friends that we get together for lunch once a month, with several of us retirees. But officially, "we don't need you."

TINKER: Must pain you to some degree?

FRIBOURG: Of course …

TINKER: It pains me and it's not even my field.

FRIBOURG: But what I hear from other departments, it's pretty much the same.

TINKER: Yeah.

FRIBOURG: At least in agriculture, I don't know much about … I used to have—know people in liberal arts, sciences, but I don't anymore. But I noticed the only ones who accomplishing anything, is because they get money, somehow. I mean …

TINKER: There is gonna be some type of tipping point, there has to be at some point. It can't just keep going this way.

FRIBOURG: No it can't. But you see the legislatures, state and Congress, have of course obviously abdicated their role in supporting education and research. And until the public wakes up and shakes those guys up …

RENNIE: It'll stay the same.

GRIFFIN: Once the public does shake up these people that are in charge, implementing how to spend education funds, what do you think will solve the problem of allocating these resources in the wrong place? Just getting the right people in there, or is it specifically certain things …

FRIBOURG: I don't know. I just don't know.

GRIFFIN: It's a difficult question. A lot of my generation is dealing with it right now. Why are we getting these degrees, and it's fun, you know, at the same time …

FRIBOURG: And you've got a governor in this state who says he is, and tries to show that he is for education, and he's done better than most of them, but that's not very much.

TINKER: Well is there anything that we didn't cover? Between this and your book, I think we've …

FRIBOURG: I don't know, let me look if I see any picture that evokes anything. See this is my grandparents who survived the war.

TINKER: Could you email me some of those?

FRIBOURG: Well, what would you like?

TINKER: Well how many is there? A bunch? Just some related to … like the maps, like the things we discussed today, the picture of the ship …

FRIBOURG: Well, I'll tell you what, let me have your email address … I'll get a few to show you.

TINKER: Yeah your grandparents … the maps, the ships, your parents. Okay well thank you.

FRIBOURG: My pleasure.

RENNIE: It's been a pleasure.

GRIFFIN: It has been.

—END OF INTERVIEW—