BS: What follows is a session with Mr. Gordon Fountain, who was with Admiral Byrd on the second Byrd Expedition to Antarctica. He sailed as a seaman on the Bear and today is in the position of being one of the Board of Governors of the American Polar Society. We are going to begin this as Tape 1. The date is the 19th of October 1996. The interview was conducted in Mr. Fountain's home at 5 Bowles Place, Oakland, California.

Mr. Fountain, I think the best way to get started is to tell me how you learned about the expedition and how you got assigned to it.

GF: Well, it's kind of a long story, I guess, in some ways. I first became acquainted with Byrd's things from reading the National Geographic and the McMillan expedition where they were operating with, I think it was (loaning) amphibians. I have a copy, I think, of the 1925 or something like that, Geographic that shows some of that. Then, following that, of course, the Josephine Ford and the North Pole flight. That interested me and got me interested in model airplanes and I wanted a kit for Christmas of the Josephine Ford, but it was too expensive, so I got a cheaper one. And, it sort of went on from there. But anyway, then when the Atlantic flight
was coming up, I was very interested in that and naturally hoping that he was going to win the (Orteig) Prize, I think it was - Orteig that was putting up the money. So, I was a little disappointed when Lindbergh beat him out, but I think that was just one of those things. And I think Byrd was very fair about that because he had built a special ramp to start the airplane on so it was worth probably a few feet of runway to get the airplane moving when they first opened the throttles. And I think Lindbergh stated it in some of his publications, that he appreciated being allowed to use that because Byrd had had that built specially for himself.

Well, then getting ready for Boy Scouts, I heard about Paul Siple being selected to go down to the Antarctic and that was something that naturally was very interesting to me. And I never thought that I would ever get there, but sometime later, I met Norman Vaughan and this was after the first expedition. I was in Boston taking care of my uncle's 46 ft. motor sailor in which we used to go sword fishing in and what not, and I believe at that time that Norman was working for an advertising agency and the agency that he was working for was trying to sell some stuff to my uncle because he was in charge of part of Canada Dry Bottling Company in Boston. So, Norman had made a couple of trips with us out after swordfish and then finally, I guess it was in '32 that they brought the Bear around to Boston and I think my uncle went out on a towboat or something to watch it come in. Anyway, it ended up that Norman offered to take me over and show me the ship.

(50)

So, I went over to the Boston Navy Yard and at that time, Ike Schloshback was temporary Skipper and he was wearing an old battered felt hat and appropriate other clothes that about matched the hat and he was sorting out like pipe fittings that we did want or didn't want, and there was all kinds of junk and stuff on the ship that had come down from the Coast Guard. And I inquired of Ike, "How do you get on this expedition?" and he says, "Well, you can turn to and
see what happens. None of us know whether we're going to make it or not." And there was probably a dozen in the crew at that time, working on the ship, burning paint and what not.

So, I went over and got some fresh dungarees over in Boston, came back and went to work. Well, I did about everything that you could think of to do on there. They had me inside of tanks, painting them . . . this was water tanks . . . painting them with cement and being that I was one of the smallest men and youngest, I guess, they put me inside the boiler scraping tubes with a wire brush and this was a fire tube boiler. I wasn't too comfortable in there. I thought I'd never get out. I was sort of wrapped around all these tubes. And, of course, with an electric light bulb in there, so I could see what I was doing, it was pretty damn hot and I'd perspire and all this stuff that I was getting off the tubes stuck to me. I finally finished that job, and I was glad to be done with it because it was really an uncomfortable position to be in. I understand that people have crawled into those things when they were still hot. I don't know how they stood it.

Then, following that, they had me in the back of the boiler in the uptake section, getting the soot off. That wasn't too bad. It was still pretty warm, but you had a draft because that big tall stack that *Bear* had, when you had the fire doors open, there was a pretty good circulation of air that kept you pretty cool. You still got awfully black. Well, finally, there was a number of other jobs that we had to do, but burning paint off the sides was one of the things that kept us pretty busy and the last coat of paint that came off was gray paint. I guess it was probably put on in World War I. So, we got all the paint burned off and as we took it off, we put linseed oil on and finally we painted and some of the painting was done with brushes tied onto sticks and we'd work from the side of the pier or out of a boat. But, anyway, we finally got her painted. Then we had to put the sails on, bend them on and, of course, that was kind of a different thing because we had to go aloft and we found a few things that were bad up there. A three-foot piece fell off the top of the main. Had some dry rot and a couple of the fellows had been up there on that a couple of days before it fell off. So, we had to replace that.
But, one of the other jobs that we had, the rudder control was hooked up to a steering engine by means of a chain that ran along the top of the bulwarks in a kind of a channel - an open channel. Somebody thought, well, that was pretty crude. That was going to get stuck, or whatever. So, we ripped all that out and they put in wire and later on, though, the wire had to come out and the chain back in because the wire didn't work half as good as the chain.

Anyway, this was in the summer of '33. So, finally, the day the sail came and I didn't make it. They had too many people that had more experience than I had and, of course, they had a bunch of scientists and what not that were going to act as crew. So, I'm standing there waving good-bye on the dock. Anyway, I kept in touch with the crew and what not through the radio hams that were operating along with the ship and the expedition.

BS: *What date was this sailing?*

GF: It was in September, I think. The end of September, '33.

BS: '33.

GF: Anyway, I kept track of their progress. Finally, I got a radiogram from Captain English. This was after they had made the trip in and back out to New Zealand. If I could get down there on my own, I had a job. Evidently, a number of people had quit or were fired from the crew. So, I was lucky enough to be able to get a workaway passage on the *Port Hobart*, that was a British motor vessel that operated down to New Zealand and Australia. And I signed on for a shilling a month. So, I got a couple of shillings going down there. We stopped at Auckland, Wellington, Lyttleton, Christchurch, finally Dunedin. And I made more money, I think it was in Wellington. We had more cargo in one hold than we had in the others, and the old man wanted to get it all done at the same time, so he could save a day for sailing, and the union said no, you've got to pay
overtime and everybody has to work and it was still going to come out uneven. So, we ended up with the crew unloading the final bit out of the hold and I made more money in that day than I made on the whole trip.

So, I was back on board in Dunedin. And at that time, then, we started to rip out the old mast and put in the new one that had been shipped down from the States.

BS: *The one we saw in the photo?*

GF: The one in the photographs there. Well, let's see. Where do we want to go from here?

BS: *So you were in Dunedin, Otago?*

GF: Right, Otago. Anyhow, we had a lot of rework to do down there because she was an old ship and we found out things that hadn't showed up before or had just been overlooked.

(150)

BS: *How long were you in Dunedin?*

GF: I think we left just about New Year's. I'd have to look that up, but it was about New Year's '34, when we went back to bring things home. Anyway, oh, when we got her loaded up, we had all the coal trimmed right up to the deck-heads and we had a fire started because it was too close to some of the lights that were down there in the hold where they were taking the coal out. We also started out with about 50 tons on deck and that made a pretty good size pile. Practically covered up the galley.

BS: Where was the plim line? Was it below the water line?
GF: Well, we had something like 36" of freeboard. And we were really down. We could only carry coal for about 30 days, so we did a lot of sailing. And on the way down, we had a pretty good trip. There was not too bad ice and we stopped at Scott Island which is practically on the intersection of the Antarctic Circle and the 180 meridian. We tried to land there, but there was too much surf and not any good place to pull out, so they just kind of circled the island and came back. And I have a photo was taken, I think, with my camera, but somebody else was in the photo. I wasn't in the boat that tried to go ashore.

BS: Was Admiral Byrd with you on the Bear then? Or on the Jacob Rupert?

GF: No, he was on shore. I mean, on the Ice at that time.

BS: Oh, I see. The ship had come back.

GF: Right.

BS: I see. OK. And you went down - this is the pick-up cruise.

GF: That's right. And he'd spent quite a bit of time on there earlier, when they were going in the first place. But anyway, we coasted along the, I think it's the Admiralty Range on the west side of the Ross Sea, and we went past McMurdo and what's it - Erebus?

BS: Um-hum.

GF: We surveyed the barrier all the way from there to Little America to see how much it had moved since the last time it had been surveyed and on the way, we stopped at Discovery Inlet
and we picked up Doc Poulter and I think Dick Black and a couple of other fellows that had made a trip over from Little America to meet us ahead of time there. They had to drive their teams out over a lot of floating ice which was not attached, to get out to the ship. They'd been doing a survey with Doc's seismic machine.

They would set off an explosion and take the thickness of the ice - you know, whether there was water under it or whether there was ground under it.

BS: *Geophysical work.*

GF: Right. So we took them back to Little America to the Bay of Whales. And at the Bay of Whales, when we first got there, we tied up to the bay ice because that was as far as we could get and that was kind of a nuisance because it kept going out. Sometimes we'd bury dead-men and get the ship tied up and by the time we got it tied up, why the piece we were tied to had broken loose. So, that kept us pretty busy. But, finally, we got up to where we were in a place called Bolling Bight, which was a low place in the barrier where the deck of the *Bear* was just about even with the height of the barrier. Well, you saw that photo of loading that machine on board. We were taking all kinds of loot boxes and, well, anything that had to go back. We were taking that off of the dog teams. We had a cache right there by the Bolling Bight and we would take it out, well, after . . . I got a little bit ahead of myself here, I guess. It was about two weeks or ten days anyway later that the *Rupert* came in after we had told them what the ice conditions were. So, there had to be a shore party to go ashore from the *Bear* to help dig out the Ford Tri-motor and that was quite a chore, but they taxied it out of the hole after it was uncovered and most of the aircraft were either taxied over or they were towed by some of the little tractors that we had - the Citroens. We had a big heavy tractor that Pete Demas used to run by skiing behind it. He had
controls rigged up so that if it went in a crevasse, he didn't go with it. Anyway, we did considerable loading and the *Rupert* stayed off from the barrier and we ferried stuff out to them. They had to finally come alongside to take on all the aircraft, but they were only there for a short time and they held her off from the edge with some telephone poles that they had to keep away from the edge of the ice.

BS: *Why was that? Did she bang a lot and damage . . . ?*

GF: Well, they were afraid that they would.

BS: *But they weren't for the Bear.*

(250)

GF: No. No. We had - well, I can tell you a little about that. One place where we were laying up against the barrier, we had a big piece came off right against the ship and it really shook us up. It didn't do any damage, but we had a fellow that was collecting some fine drift snow to make ice cream. Doc Poulter used to really be an ice cream hound. And we had this mixture of stuff from Jello *(Corporation)*. Jello ice cream powders and we found you could make good ice cream with this if you got the fine drift snow that hadn't seen any dogs. Put it in a dishpan with a couple of boxes of this ice cream mixture and with a baker's wire beater, you could make some pretty good ice cream. Anyway, we had this one fellow collecting the snow when the piece he was on broke loose. He was able to jump the crack before it got all the way too far, and dropped the dish-pan full of snow right on the edge. So, I finally ended up by putting a rope on him and letting him go back to get the snow and we had our ice cream.
BS: *Did they fly the tri-motor or just took it out to ship it back?*

GF: They just took it out to ship it back.

BS: *And the Fairchild?*

GF: The Fairchild was recovered. Part of the wing had to be recovered and one of the wing struts was buckled from the weight of accumulation of snow, I guess. A drift on the wing. But, that was done and it was used quite a bit to take the place of a Fokker that crashed earlier in the mountains.

No, I never saw Byrd at Boston. He was pretty busy. I saw his wife before I went down. I had to go take a new physical and get some paperwork done by Mrs. Byrd. And so I was over at 9 Brimmer Street a couple of times, but it was just business at that time.

When we finally got ready to leave, there was quite a bit of supplies that they were going to abandon. There was powdered milk and stuff like that, and Walford Miller and myself - we called him Seagull, because he was always making a lot of noise - decided that we would go and get some of that powdered milk because we liked to make milkshakes and we had a lot of Horlick's malted milk and what not on board. So we borrowed a dog team and went up to this cache and loaded it up with our powdered milk and we'd go about 100 yards and then the dogs would dump the sled over and stand around and laugh at us while we put things back together again.

(300)

And I think they did that three of four times to us in about a mile. So, we weren't very good dog drivers, but we had a lot of fun. We had a lot of extra milk for our milkshakes. Well, later on,
when the ship ran out of milk, we had to give up some of our milkshake stuff for the crew to use. But, anyway, we were glad we had it.

BS: *Interesting. But, you met Admiral Byrd on the Ice, then.*

GF: That's right. Yeah. And, of course, he came on board a number of times, you know, just off and on for various things. Doc Poulter was right there doing all the hard work. Boy, he was a big fellow, you know. And I think we had a couple of scares with him when he was loading stuff, carrying it on his shoulder and some of the ice gave way and he managed to scramble up the gangway with it. Somebody else probably wouldn't have been able to make it, but he was a pretty husky fellow.

BS: *Professor?*

GF: Right. But he was an all-around . . . he wasn't just a professor as you would think. I mean, he was a good machinist. I think that he had at one time served on submarines and he could build anything you needed.

BS: *Dog-sleder?*

GF: Yeah. Another thing he devised was, when they were out to rescue Byrd, they had trouble - it was night, of course, or dark anyway. They had trouble taking bearings to keep their course and he built little lighthouses out of candles that they would put in a - they'd build a snow column and put these candles in a tin can or something like that and they could line them up until you could get their compass course and keep it straight.

BS: *How neat. So, that's how they got to where Byrd was alone.*
GF: That's right. Yeah.

BS: *Who went with him on that?*

GF: Let's see, it was a Coast Guard guy.

BS: *Bud Waite?*

GF: Bud Waite, yeah. Bud Waite and Pete Demas and I guess that was it.

BS: *Very courageous thing.*

GF: Oh, they had to make several tries before they got there.

BS: *Was Byrd pretty sick when they brought him out?*

GF: Yes, he was. In fact, I don't think he ever really recovered. He certainly breathed an awful lot of carbon monoxide and it didn't do him all that much good.

(350)

BS: *So, when you got down there, he was already back in Little America.*

GF: Yes, he was in pretty fair shape. But, I think it was kind of a permanent problem.
BS: _That's interesting. I've heard that before too. He certainly didn't go back and stay over the winter again._

GF: No. Well, he wasn't all that old when he died either, really.

BS: _No. I've seen the pictures of when he went down in IGY and he didn't look good. So, here you are on the ice. What happened next? How long did you stay?_

GF: Well, just off hand, I don't recall how long we were there. But, finally, in the end, we collected a bunch of penguins and we had some of them in a little pen on deck. They prepared a special, you might say, room for them on the _Ruppert_ and they had temperature controls, they could keep it fairly cool. They tried to keep a bunch of them alive to bring them home. It wasn't entirely successful, but they did get probably at least half of them to the States. And I don't know where they went from there. But, they were supposed to go to some zoo that thought they could take care of them. I don't know what happened to all of them finally. But, they were not used to people and they certainly weren't used to sled dogs at that time, anyway. They'd walk right up to a dog team and get torn to pieces, of course.

BS: _Did you take the dogs back?_

GF: Oh yeah. We brought the dogs back. We didn't . . . most of them were on the _Ruppert_. We had about a half a dozen on the _Bear_. We had one bitch by the name of Nome. Robertson and she had been down on the Ice over the period and had about six pups and we had most of those pups on board the _Bear_ on the way back. There might have even been as much as eight, but anyway, various people ended up with some of those pups.
Well, by the time we were bringing them home, they weren't pups any more. They were pretty
damn big and pretty husky. That's all the dogs that we had on board.

BS: Did they fight?

GF: No. They were sort of a family so there wasn't too much problem with that. But, they gave
the cats a bad time and we had one cat that had 6 toes on his feet. We called him Snowshoes.
And one day a whole bunch of them, half a dozen had surrounded him. I think he was standing
on one leg and throwing the other three at the dogs and those dogs didn't do any damage to him,
but he put up a pretty good fight. And I think they were quite surprised.

BS: So, you left and went back to Dunedin?

GF: That's right. Well, we made another stop at Discovery Inlet and I believe that was to catch a
few more penguins. Some of them had escaped out of the little pen that they had for them at the
Bay of Whales. And while we were in there, we had some killer whales that approached our
shore boat and they had . . . I think this was a boat we had borrowed from the Navy for a dollar
or something like that. It was a fair sized rowboat. Anyway, we pulled it up level with the rail.
Not all the way up above the rail, because they were in such a hurry to get out of the water when
these killer whales came around. Well, we went around the next corner at Discovery Inlet, kind
of grazed the ice, and smashed the boat. Later on, in a blow, we were trying to take it back so it
could be surveyed, I came up on deck and I saw all these little pieces of gray every place and
wondered what it was and finally found out that in the blow that the darn boat had completely
disintegrated and there was nothing hanging in the davits except the eye bolts that was securing
it.
It blew pretty hard. We had enough rolling and pitching that the engine kind of loosened up in the bed. So we had to shut it down and we had on board, some portable generators and stuff like that, was supposed to be able to generate lights and what not. And, of course, they were gasoline driven and we hadn't used them for a long time, so there was no gas in them. And they had to use lanterns down in the hold to re-bolt or tighten up the bolts on the engine.

BS: *On the way back, did you get into any ice pack?*

GF: Not too much.

BS: *Pretty uneventful.*

GF: Yes it was. We had some real cold days and I guess between Little America and Discovery Inlet, there was a lot of pan ice that was forming. One of those pictures that you saw there, the . . . . every line on the ship had about double it's size of frost on all the little hairs from the lines and what not.

BS: *Did you have ship ice?*

GF: Not too much. Not too much.

BS: *How about storms on the way back?*

GF: Oh, we had a couple of pretty good blows. About 90 miles an hour, I think, at one time. And of course, the *Bear* had a pretty slim ratio of beam to length - 198 and 29.9 and of course,
that round bottom, she rolled real good. At one time we had the thing rolling so hard that we had a thermometer up on the bridge that was about eye level and the mate stepped on it when he was bracing himself during a roll. So, well that was another thing. We did all the steering from the bridge.

(500)

We didn't do anything down in the pilot-house. That was just for charts and what not. Ole Johansen, who was ice pilot, he wouldn't have anything where we were going to be too relaxed. On the way in, why he had us washing down until every morning at about 6, to wash down the ship until the darn water would freeze on the decks and then he'd quit. Let's see what else?

BS: Did Admiral Byrd come out with you or did he go out on the Rupert?

GF: He went out on the Rupert. They had lots of room. It was a pretty big ship.

BS: Was it an old ship? I've seen the pictures.

GF: It's a World War I Three-Islander, I think they called it. And it was called the Pacific Fir. Well, after . . . the Bear sailed before the Rupert - about two weeks before - so after the Bear sailed and I was left standing on the dock. I went over to the Rupert and I worked on that for a couple of more weeks, bailing out the bilges and what not. We had done that on the Bear too, but the way she was built, there was hardly any space down in the hull to clean out the crud that was accumulated. We had to use these little tins that tobacco came in. They were little flat things with a hinge on top. You could stick it in your pocket. The ribs, I think, were on about a 24 inch center and they were about 20 inches or 22 inches in the fore and aft direction, so you had to scoop it out with your hands or with that kind of a thing. There was a lot of coal dust in the Bear.
But in the Rupert, there was a lot of fuel oil. She was an oil burner. And that was a pretty messy job, but we worked a couple of weeks getting all the bilges clean on the Rupert.

(550)

BS: *Tell me the story about the shifting of the coal.*

GF: Oh, that's right. Just out of New Zealand, on the way south with our 50 tons on deck, we had a few rough days and the coal was washing around on deck with sea water that came over the rail or through the scuppers or whatever. And actually, it cleaned the deck better than we'd ever had it cleaned. It just sanded it down with this water. In the foc'sle area, we had kind of a shelter built. Well, the Coast Guard had it originally, but we had to do some modifications and what not, I guess mostly because of bad wood and what not in Boston. Anyway, when this blow came up and the coal was washing around, well we needed for the coal not to go over the side, for one thing. So, we were going to stow it under this shelter deck. Well, of course, we had a small door about as wide as a wheelbarrow, about two or three inches wider than the handles, and we put a couple of ramps of 8 inch timbers to run the wheelbarrow up so we could run it inside where it couldn't get away from us. And, of course, we had a lot of fun. We' load up the wheelbarrow and take a run at this 8 inch plank and try to get it over this sill which must have been at least a foot high. It was kind of hard on your knuckles because the ship would take a roll or a heave of some kind, and then your knuckles were between the edge of the door and the wheelbarrow.

(600)
We finally got it all transported. We were working on that coal first, but we still had a lot of it when this blow came up.

BS: *How long did the blow last?*

GF: Oh, I don't know. Maybe a couple of days.

BS: *90 knots?*

(End of Tape 1 - Side A)

(Begin Tape 1 - Side B)

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GF: We had three men and a mate to a watch, so if there was any real sail handling to do, we'd try to wait until it was time for the other watch to come on and then the two watches would handle it. If it was more work than that, well we'd call all hands. Then everybody, including the cook, would be out there handling sail or whatever. We stood wheel watch of an hour and 20 minutes and that took care of the three men and usually, during that time, the two that were not on the wheel, one of them was up on the foc'sle as lookout and the other one was probably back in the galley making coffee. We had an old timer from Newfoundland who was about 60 years old. He was the only guy that was on board, I think, that was older than the ship at that time, or as old as the ship, named John Murphy. He was our boatswain. And he used to like to make the coffee. It was almost instant coffee. He'd put the coffee grounds in the pot and then he'd take it over to the steam line that heated our wash water for washing the dishes and run the boiler steam
through the water until he had coffee. It was pretty quick, but it tasted a little bit of boiler chemicals.

One of the other things we had, the foc'sle was under this shelter deck with an alley on each side and down the middle we had our mess table and, of course, we had a couple of boxes on the mess table that were nailed or screwed to the table so that the sugar and the red lead and whatever, wouldn't be skidding around too much. But when the ship would roll real good, it would heave those things right out into somebody's bunk and you either had a bunk full of sugar or red lead or whatever.

BS: *Who was the Skipper?*

GF: English.

BS: *Robert English?*

GF: Bob English, yeah.

BS: *Now, was he in the Navy then?*

GF: Well, I think he was on leave.

BS: *Seconded.*

GF: Yeah.

BS: *But he became Admiral later.*
GF: Yeah, as I understand.

BS: And President of the Polar Society, wasn't he? You mentioned shifting of coal for stoking the engines on the high side when the ship was heaving. And then having to shift it back. Can you tell us something about that?

GF: Well, the coal passers who were bringing the coal from the hold to the fire room, they always liked to do it the easy way, and we'd be on one tack sailing, they'd take it out of the high side because they could run the wheelbarrow downhill rather than uphill, and then, of course, when we'd come around on another tack, the ship wanted to lay over because the coal had been trimmed unevenly. So, then our sailors had to go down and do that job in a hurry because we were pretty well heeled over.

BS: And you went back into Dunedin?

GF: Back to Dunedin, yeah.

BS: How long did you stay in Dunedin? Did you have to refit?

GF: Not very much. I don't know. I think we were probably there a couple of weeks. And we had a long trip back across the Pacific. I think it was 40 days from Dunedin to the Panama Canal.

And we had picked up additional coal in New Zealand and the Rupert was carrying it and we were going to meet at Easter Island and transfer the coal to the Bear, which we did. And in the process of doing that, why we banged the ships together quite a few times and when we were
laying off the island, at the time, we were busy transferring coal, the natives from Easter Island came out in their small boat trying to get sacks-full of aku-akus and what not to trade with us and they traded for used clothing, hats, I don't think they bothered with shoes, but they were glad to get shirts and tobacco and we had Kool cigarettes. We traded those. I don't know whether they were made when they found out that they had that special flavor that the Kools had, but anyway, we traded a lot of tobacco and used clothing for these wooden carved aku-akus. I got three stone ones at that time. A couple of them are about 6 or 8 inches tall and I had a bigger one which I gave to my Uncle. I don't know what ever happened to that. I think I have about eight of them that I picked up at this time.

BS: *You still have them?*

GF: Well there's one and an abbreviated one there. And I have two stone ones, I think, downstairs. And I have another one this size. And when we were down there in April, May of last year, they wanted about $600 for some of those. So, I think I got a pretty good bargain.

BS: *Did you go into Fletcher's . . . not Fletcher's . . . Mutiny on the Bounty - those islands that those people are on?*

GF: Yeah. We stopped at Pitcairn.

BS: *Pitcairn Island. That's what I was thinking.*

GF: Show him your Pitcairn cane.

BS: *I mean on the expedition coming back.*
GF: Oh no, no.

BS: *Just Easter Island.*

GF: Yeah.

BS: *And you banged the ships together.*

GF: Right.

BS: *And from there? Panama?*

GF: Panama. And then coaling again. And we had a big pile of coal covering the galley again. And Byrd was going to come over and have dinner on board, but when he came on board and saw all this coal dust, we had coal dust in the mashed potatoes and it looked like it was highly peppered, he decided he'd go back to the *Rupert* for dinner.

BS: *Well, from there to Boston?*

GF: From there to Boston, by way of Washington. We stopped at Quantico and we had a Marine cook on board the *Rupert* and so, boy, we were a big deal for the Marines there. They treated us like long-lost brothers. And this fellow was named Carbone. He was a pretty good cook.

BS: *Now did Ike sail with you on the Bear?*

GF: No, he finally ended up on the *Rupert.*
BS: *Quite a leader?*

GF: What?

BS: *He was quite a leader?*

GF: Yes.

BS: *I know he sailed on other expeditions, too. Was he on the first Byrd expedition?*

GF: No, he was with Wilkins on the submarine. Then he was on an Arctic expedition with McGregor, sometime after we came back. Then he went back down again to the Antarctic, I think with the Belgians or somebody like that. Then, I think in World War II, he was out at Henderson Field. I think he was Commander there for a while.

BS: *He was in the '39 expedition? And the Finn Ronne expedition.*

GF: Right.

BS: *What happened to Ike?*

GF: He finally died in New Jersey. He operated an airfield in New Jersey for years and I have a book called, "Ike's Travels," that was put out a woman in the local library there. It's just a kind of an 8-1/2 x 11 typed thing, but it has a lot of information on Ike, and it's nice and readable. Wasn't too many copies of it made.
BS: I'd like to read that. So, you went to Quantico where, did you participate in ceremonies with President Hoover?

GF: Uh . . . Roosevelt.

BS: Roosevelt, by then.

GF: Yeah. We went, finally, up to Washington and I think we tied up behind the (USS) Potomac or something like that. And the President was there to welcome us and what not. We had National Geographic due there and what was the name of the hotel? The little bull off of the Rupert, they had him in the lobby of the hotel. And we got a little medal about 2-1/2 inches in diameter - bronze medal from the American Guernsey Association or whatever had given the two cows to take down to the Antarctic.

BS: And they kept that cow for a year down there.

GF: Yes.

BS: Did they have it . . . ? They must have had it inside in the winter.

GF: Oh yes, yeah. They had a special pen built, I guess, out of old crates and what not. And one of the fellows, I guess, kind of took over the job of tending the cows.

BS: I want to back up a little. When you all left Little America, did you know Lincoln Ellsworth was coming?
GF: Ellsworth went to a different place.

BS: But, he was going to fly to Little America.

GF: Yeah, he was going to, but he never made it. Their airplane got banged up or something over by the Antarctic Peninsula.

BS: I see, it was a later flight when he came into Little America.

GF: It was about a year or two later. I guess it must have been '36, maybe, when he made the flight.

BS: But, he was in Dunedin with you.

GF: He was in Dunedin with us, yes.

BS: And the Wyatt Earp was ..

GF: Tied up ahead of us.

BS: OK. So the Byrd expedition and the Ellsworth expedition worked together.

GF: Right.

BS: Did you have good relations with them?

(150)
GF: Well, I don't know that we did a lot of working together, but yeah, I'm sure there was cooperation. We were in contact with them when they had left Dunedin way ahead of the Bear because they had a long ways to go. And we knew they were having problems over there with the, I think, the first place they wanted to go, they couldn't get in, or something like that. And I think they finally got the airplane over the side, but they had damage or what not trying to get it ashore.

BS: *they sailed out of Dunedin, but they sailed over to the Antarctic Peninsula area.*

GF: Right.

BS: *That's interesting.*

GF: Well, they were going to fly back from there, I guess, towards Little America.

BS: Yes. *Was Sir Hubert Wilkins with them then?*

GF: Wilkins was with them at that time. Yeah.

BS: *I've never been clear on his position. Was he the No. 2 in the expedition?*

GF: I don't know for sure. He was sort of in the background. Well, you saw that picture there. He wasn't in the picture, but he was there at the time. So, I suppose that he had kind of an advisory capacity or something like that.

BS: *He ran the main base, I know that. Of course, he was already famous for his own flights.*
GF: Oh yes, I know that.

BS: Well, that answers some of that and I think it's interesting that you crossed paths with two great expeditions. So you went from Washington . . .

GF: Well, after Washington, we ended up in Boston and, of course, we had another celebration there. Mayor Curley - that was before he went to jail - he put on quite a show. And finally, the ship was laid up and our boatswain was standing by as a ship-keeper for a while, until he fell over the side one night, I guess, after too many beers. But, he was a real character. He would always race to try to get aloft and furthest out on the yard when there was any sail handling to do and he liked to chew tobacco and when everybody was leaning over trying to heave in some sail, he'd let go with the tobacco and hope to get everybody on the yard with it. Laughed, laughed. He thought that was more fun than anything else. He was a real character. But, he really knew his seamanship.

BS: Were there other characters on the ship?

GF: Oh yes. We had a Fin and he was real good. And we had a Dutchman, Van Reen. And we had a Swede, Eddie Roos, who had been on the first expedition. And he was our oceanographer. He's the one that operated the sounding machine and, of course, every time that there was any sail handling to do, he had to take a station to see how deep the water was, so he got out of the sail handling. But, he'd been on the first expedition and I guess he'd earned it. But, we used to kid him about it all the time because it seemed like it always happened that way.

BS: Did you know Finn Ronne?
GF: Oh yes, yeah.

BS: Was he on the Rupert or the Bear?

GF: Uh, he was on the *Rupert*. I knew Finn Ronne quite well. In fact, he's one of the one's that put in for me for the Explorer's Club, he and Doc Poulter. So, I saw a lot of Finn. A lot of people don't like him or didn't like him. But, he was kind of a hard-nosed Norwegian. When he said jump, he expected people to jump, I think.

BS: Were you there when they organized the American Polar Society?

GF: Well, when we were outfitting in Boston to start with, August was out there almost every day talking to everybody trying to get us all to sign up. And I think he was working for the Boy Scouts at that time, which I believe is why he was interested, because of Paul Siple. So, that was the beginning of the Polar society. He put out *Little America Times*. Do you have any copies of that?

BS: I have a complete set.

GF: I have a bound set. I really got to know Finn Ronne pretty good because after his expedition, he was out here doing lectures and we had a Polar Society meeting at Louise Boyd's over in Marin County and, of course, he and his wife were there - Jackie. And finally, later on, a couple of other times when he came out to do a lecture, he used to go sailing with me on my boat down the estuary here out in the Bay and he seemed to enjoy that.
BS: Louise Boyd. You were a friend of Louise's?

GF: Oh yeah. I've got a couple of her books. And Marjorie had quite a bit to do with her in her later days when she was in hard times and in a bad way physically. She was in a rest home for a while and Marge used to go up and see that she ate her lunch and things like that. In fact, we had some photographs and stuff from Louise. Let's see. What's the name of the photographer that took Louise's furniture pictures?

MF: Ansel Adams.

GF: Yeah, Ansel Adams.

MF: Nobody else but Louise would have got Ansel Adams.

GF: Yeah, he took pictures of all her furniture for insurance purposes. She hired him or talked him into it. I don't whether she paid him or not.

MF: She talked him into it.

GF: In fact, I've got a bottle of brandy downstairs or part of one that we got from Louise Boyd that was, I don't know, it was the property of her father.

BS: So, you have that.

GF: I have that. It was 1874.
BS:  She was . . . I've only learned about her since being in the Polar Society and what I know is sketchy. She had her own expeditions?

(250)

GF:  Oh, she had a number of them.

MF:  Yeah. She paid for them herself. Hey, you fellows, you've talked a long time and it's way after lunch time. Will you have a bowl of soup with us?

(End of Tape 1 - Side B)

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END OF INTERVIEW –