

William Greenwood  
Narrator

Philip Leonard  
Hoosick Falls Historical Society  
Interviewer

Interviewed on  
Louis Miller Museum, Hoosick Falls, New York

William Greenwood (WG): William Greenwood, 4 Rensselaer Street Hoosick Falls, New York.

Philip Leonard (PL): How long have you lived in Hoosick Falls?

WG: All my life.

PL: You were born here?

WG: I was born here.

PL: Would you tell us a little bit about your life in Hoosick Falls before you entered the service?

WG: I quit school when I was in second year high, I went down to enlist and I wasn't old enough, I was only sixteen, so I had to wait for a year or a little bit longer than a year.

PL: What did you do during that year?

WG: I went to work on the village highway crew, nickel grind. Pat Cavanaugh was the boss. I had to wait—I had to go down to enlist—and I couldn't get in right at that time because I was underweight. So I had to go to Sullivan, the enlisting officer, who was a retired chief navy officer, and he said go home and before you come down again, eat a bunch of bananas and I had done what he told me to do. I ate a bunch of bananas and that was it [Laughter].

PL: ...then you had enough weight on you to get in...

WG: ... I had enough weight on me...

PL: ...there was a minimum weight at that time...

PL: When was this that you enlisted?

WG: May 29, 1944.

PL: You enlisted and what happened then?

WG: They sent me to Sampson for boot training. From Sampson I went to New London. I went to sub school there. First, I think all the Navy guys had to go to some kind of a fire school down in Newport, Rhode Island. Then I went to New London for sub school. We went out and we got the AS25 Subtender. We went over and across on the subtender.

PL: Could you just tell us a little about what a subtender is?

WG: It takes care of the submarines. Telescopes, batteries...

PL: ... repairs and keeps it going...

WG: ... it helped to keep it going. You would also fill in. I was at one of the fill in stations. You would relieve the guys who were there for a long time and we took over there [unclear].

PL: You went to New London and what happened after that?

WG: We went all down through the Panama Canal, up to San Diego, took out torpedoes, sent them over to Honolulu, Hawaii. We stayed there for about four days. Then we went over to Havana Harbor in Guam. Guam was our station.

PL: That's where you worked out of, Guam?

WG: Yes.

PL: You were saying you just missed Art Harrington?

WG: Yes, he got discharged just before I went in there. And Walt Warren was also there. He was the commissary.

PL: Yes, the commissary. He did the purchasing for the hospital there. And he was from Hoosick Falls. What was his name?

WG: Walt Warren. He owned the big store down on First Street, where the Eagles is now. In Guam he did a lot of stuff, went out to sea and come back.

PL: You went to make sure the submarines were working properly so they could do what they had to do.

WG: Yes we would test-drive them.

PL: And is that what most of your Navy time was? On the subtender? And you were in Guam. How long did you stay in Guam?

WG: About a year I think.

PL: And then what happened?

WG: I got discharged. I was in there for about two years; one month and ten days I remember that.

PL: And you were in the Navy?

WG: Yes.

PL: So then after you finished at Guam, they sent you back home, and you got discharged from...

WG: We went to Norfolk and loaded everything at Norfolk, torpedoes and all of the shuttles that was on the subtender. We went back up to New London and then to Toledo Beach to get discharged.

PL: And then you came back to Hoosick Falls? Then what happened in Hoosick Falls? Did you go to work?

WG: I went to work at Wood Flong. Well I went to work in the Petersburg Railroad first. Then I didn't like that it was too hard of a work. [Laughter] So I went to work in the Wood Flong and I was over there for thirty-three years...

PL: ...Oh at Wood Flong, thirty-three years...

WG: [unclear] it downsized a lot of the help. Which I wasn't the only one they laid off. Then I went to work for, well it's Furon now, [unclear].

PL: Right, and you worked for Furon. Are you retired now?

WG: I am retired and I have been retired now for about eight or nine years now.

PL: And you're active in the village?

WG: Yes, I was in Little League and you name it. All of the sport things, I helped the high school with their football team. My kids played football.

PL: And you're on the Village Board?

WG: Yes I am.

PL: When did you get elected on the Village Board?

WG: I was elected in 1976. And then I got defeated in 1986. In 1992, they appointed me again and I ran for election every time after that and I got elected again.

PL: So you're active on the local Village Board and you're an active person in the community. Do you have anything that you would like to tell us about the community or to your service before we say thank you? Are there things you would like to say to people who look at this fifty years from now?

WG: I think a lot of people know my feelings right now... [Both Laugh]

PL: ...Oh I don't know [Both Laugh]...

WG: ...but I don't want to put it on tape.

PL: Okay, is there anything else you would like to talk about?

WG: I got married and had six kids.

PL: You had six children?

WG: Oh yes. I was married in 1955.

PL: Any of them live in Hoosick Falls?

WG: Yes, two.

PL: Two live in Hoosick Falls.

WG: One lives in Salem, one lives in Florida, one lives in West Hoosick, and three in Hoosick Falls.

PL: Was your father the man who used to help us at the swimming pool?

WG: Yes.

PL: That was your father right? Because I used to work with him at the swimming pool. He used to help me out down there. Well, thank you. Thanks again. We greatly appreciate it.

WG: Thank you.