



Wes Young

Interviewed by Anne Kimzey

1. Fox hunting (01:21)

Young: My uncle always had a pack of foxhounds; it's been a young foxhunter in our family ever since, uh, our ancestors, uh, came over from Scot-Ireland, years- many years ago. I don't know, several- couple hundred maybe, I don't really know about the time on that, but it's been a young foxhunter in our clan ever since.

Kimzey: Um-hum. Where did they come from again?

Young: We're Scot-Irish.

Kimzey: Oh, ok.

Young: And I'm the last, the youngest, uh, foxhunter, I don't have any kids so I'm the last young one left and it's two, me and my uncle. He's 90, his name is Frank Young, he lives in Greenwood and he's had hounds all his life too. He [bought [?]] two when I was five years old and give me my first two foxhounds. I've been in foxhunting ever since, it was years ago we would hike, rather, how we'd do is [unintelligible [?]], we used to could- we hunted everywhere. But the enviroment's changed, we have deer all over the county now, so foxhounds will run deer, we don't like to, fox hunter doesn't like to run deer, just game like the [unintelligible [?]] people don't want us to run them, we want to run the fox.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

2. Bred to hunt (02:31)

Young: The hounds are bred with hunting instinct in them.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: They're bred to go out and just- turn them loose, have them to the hunt ground, I've turned them loose right here many times before the deer got so bad. They trail the fox- they hit a scent with a fox- we usually, we run it in the light, right at night or either in the daytime. Fox feeds at night, they moving at night, you can hit a hot trail, but at night [unintelligible [?]] in the daytime. We usually go in the morning, and the dogs

would hit a trail, and they trail the fox up and, uh, they run him. And uh, we run reds or grays- that's the two foxes we have in this whole country. The red fox runs a long time, and you very rarely catch a red fox. We do not go to kill fox, we go for the chase, that's our thing. The hound music, the dogs packing up running the fox, but we catch them, we did catch a fox, but we don't- hunting in reserves, we don't catch many now. They have dens and everything for them. When you're on a gray fox, if you have a good pack of hounds, and roughly an hour, somewhere around an hour, some 45 minutes to an hour and a half, you should have a good pack of hounds. They will catch him or run him up a tree, or run him in a den of some kind, he is like a cat, he doesn't have great [unintelligible [?]]. They say he's of the cat family and the red is of the dog family, I'm [unintelligible [?]], I've heard many sayings on that, the canine and feline. And, gray fox, like I say, he'll usually run about an hour. You get a red, you can really put pressure on him and run him in a den in two or three hours, and we have run some reds at night, run them 10 or 12 hours. Finally called the dogs off of him the next day because [unintelligible] just had too much endurance for the hounds.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: But the [unintelligible] thing to do is you have your hounds, you trail him up, you jump him, and you run him till you can get your hounds off of him or you den him or kill him or run him up a tree.

Kimzey: Will the dogs kill him if they get to him?

Young: If the dogs catch him, they'll kill him. They bred to do that. That's what keeps their- they bred to, you know, get, uh, they not killer hounds, but they are bred to run the fox to catch him. Run him- they're bred to run him until he holes, he trees, or they catch him.

3. Hunting at night (01:19)

Young: I love night hunting. That's what I love, to go out and turn the hounds loose, and build up a fire and maybe take some [unintelligible], get up there about night and cook and eat and run all night long and catch the hounds about daylight. Maybe about daylight cook some- cook breakfast and that kind of thing.

Kimzey: What are you doing while the hounds are off running? You sit- ?

Young: You sitting there listening to them.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: Very little talking goes on while hounds running. You do all your bull- shooting and your bull and blaze and that kind of thing while the hounds aren't running, but when the hounds are running- we know each hound by voice and you can tell which is doing the best, you just, uh, like the [door on the other side of here [?]] and they come back, you always listen to which hound's in the front when they come back. You can tell by his, uh, tone- you know, his voice, which is his, and you just- when the fox gets [unintelligible], starts attacking the dogs, the hound that takes up the line stays on the line. Well, you pick your better dogs that-a-way, just by, and if you able to, get in the woods with them and see the fox and see the hounds, you can tell what's doing the best work. It's an old tradition, I was reading a book [unintelligible] this afternoon, George Washington had foxhounds. That [unintelligible] surprised me, see, foxhunting's an old tradition.

4. The sly fox- escape tricks (01:58)

Young: We were running downhill on Rocky Creek, the creek down here, running a red fox. Mr. Lee [unintelligible], living in [unintelligible], owned some land down there and we'd been running this red fox, my dad and Mr. [unintelligible] over here, friend of my dad's and mine. We were down there in the [unintelligible], the red fox was [unintelligible]. Started running him about 10 that night and he was just going over here and up the creek and come back down and about seven o'clock the next morning, they was still running him and Mr. Wade Robinson was down in his pasture feeding his cows, so the dogs come running there in Mr. [unintelligible] pasture, and knocked off. Just quit running like that. And they come on out, so we said "Well, they'd run him in a den, there was some piles- slab piles and push-ups back in there on the creek, so we caught the dogs up, time we got the last one caught up Mr. [unintelligible] come down and said "Well, Mr. [unintelligible] we got [unintelligible] like we run the fox in the den down there," he said "No, I was standing there when it quit." The fox came out of a thick- came out of the creek, out in his pasture and wallowed in some kind of mess <Kimzey laughs>. And got up and trotted off and the dogs came [right [?]] there and couldn't smell him anymore

<Kimzey laughs>. It's the truth. They're some- if they even learn one trick how to get away from you, they'll continue pulling it. Just like a- I was telling you about the one across the trestle-

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: And-

Kimzey: So you think somehow they how the dogs can-

Young: Well, they're- they know-

Kimzey: [unintelligible]

Young: I- they'll- a fox, you can be running him and he'll come up to the edge of a road-

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: And turn right back and the hounds will just naturally run out in the road, you know, they'll be running so fast and they'll run over the track and then something will have to come back and hit the trail, the scent again and that's giving it some breathing room, especially if they running real close on him-

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: And they just, they just, they smart, that's like [unintelligible] a liar is a fox.

5. Friendly competition (01:42)

Young: The fun of foxhunting is [your [?]] running competition. Basically, you always like to have a little better dog than the other fellow. That's been the kidding in this kind of thing comes across, you know? When, like uh, several times we've been out, be out hunting at night, and say two of your dogs bark just alike, and one dog will be doing extra good, you know, and somebody's going to be there claiming it. Somebody's going to claim the extra- the good dog, you know. And I've seen time and time again they'll- the dogs will be coming through there and we'll have the front, you know, just some certain little sharp [turn [?]] and several- several people, I've never been like that, but several people have been bad to claim all the front dogs in a race. So- it's a certain fellow, say, you know, "Oh, that's old so-and-so," you know, "That's Little Penny" or something like that and just a few minutes Little Penny will come trotting by, see, and that's when we get a good kidding.

Kimzey: <Laughs>

Young: Oh yeah, say “Well, you thought that was Little Penny,” “Oh, I did thought that, but [unintelligible], you know, it was no way that was Little Penny.” Said- the little fellow said “Well, I know that was mine all the time.” I know Mr. Jim Dowd- he claimed the dog one night we was hunting and dog had an outstanding tongue, you know, and another fellow from over in Georgia had a dog with a similar mouth. Mr. Jim kept claiming that was “Old Fiddler, Old Fiddler,” so another guy was with us walked down the road a little piece and found Fiddler bedded up in a little plum thicket, so he went back and told Mr. Jim, Mr. Jim went down there and took a stick and put Fiddler [unintelligible]. He was claiming and claiming Fiddler for that.

6. Two of the best breeds (01:48)

Young: [unintelligible] I know a little about the breeding of the hounds. I have Walker hounds and Julys. They are the two major breeds. We have [unintelligible], Walkers, Julys, Calhouns, [unintelligible]; it’s many different kinds of breeds of foxhounds.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: But the popular breed is the Walker hound. I have and Julys. They are- they’ve been here for years and years and years. But um, people are going to the Walker hounds. There’s a few, old, you know, diehard July breeders around and the July breed is making a comeback. But-

Kimzey: What did you start with?

Young: -I started with Walker dogs. Walker dogs- and the ‘50s I went to Julys and early ‘60s and then I got off of them and we back to- went back to the Walker hounds. I really wish I had two Julys. In 19- about ’58, I had a July female, best hound I’ve ever owned in my life. You’ve always heard people say that, I campaigned her all over the country and never was outrun, but I- I was- she died in my kennel at eight years old. For five years of her life she was the best foxhound that ever hit this country. I was- poor country boy, didn’t have anything and [unintelligible] from Lincolnton, Georgia, come over every Sunday and offered me \$500 for her many times. This was back in ’58 and ’60, that was good money back then. But I could take her with anybody I wanted to hunt with and she would take the front end of the fox race. She was something good. She would catch a

fox- that's one people talk about hounds- she would catch a fox by herself. Lot of people have good packs of hounds, but she could catch a fox by herself. It made no difference, she was that good. She could stay on him and run fast enough and hard enough.

7. Field trials (01:50)

Young: Now, we going to a field trial the Fourth of July. Down to this big [2,000 acre pen [?] down at [Swainsboro [?]].

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: And they going to have people [unintelligible] on horses, they going to have judges on horses.

Kimzey: That follow the-

Young: Yeah, that follow the hounds.

Young: What you do at a field trial- this has been going on for years and years and years. I was going to field trials when I was ten years old. They- you run the hounds in two different classes. From a year, uh, till they're born, which we- you don't start running them till they're eight or nine months old, seven-eight months, something like that. But from then to two years old, is the derby hounds. You- you [unintelligible] will go from one to two hundred. The all-age will go anywhere, so they're like from two years old on. And- but you turn them all loose together, but the score is different.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: Like I- my numbers may be 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 and 206, 207, 208- and they have people, you know, people walking or on horses, either one, and the fox crosses. We used to do this in the wild, see, out in the open, before- like I say, before the [unintelligible] took over. And they see the fox cross uh, they'll- the dogs will be trailing, you get so many points for trailing the fox. One come by really hunting good, moving good, they'll score him for hunting and then when the fox is up and running, they see the fox cross the road, then the judge standing there or sitting there on his horse, and the first hound that comes out they'll take his number down, like he may be 205 or 310, he gets so many points. The next dog gets so many and the next, and after the first four or five, he just takes down all the numbers he can that's really up close and up to the running

<Kimzey laughs>, they just get five points. First hound gets 35, 20, 30, uh, 25, 20, and down like that.

8. Listening to the different barks (02:17)

Young: We have some good [squalling [?]] tongues, uh, whistling tongues, some hounds just whistle loud, just like that, some got a good, hard [chop [?], just a [chop, chop, chop [?], some just have a medium chop, you know, just a little, [yap, yap, yap, yap, yap [?]]. When they- but a foxhound is supposed to tongue every time his foot hits the ground, when he's running. That's what you go there for; a dog that doesn't give any tongue is no good to the foxhunter. Cause he- all of them blend in together up there. You try, we always try- don't happen that-a-way, but we always try to have big tongues, like a choir in a church.

Kimzey: <Laughs>.

Young: You try to have the bass, the alto, soprano, all the- all that, just- try to- we always like to have some squealers in there to- little fine tongues, and you know, the rest of the chops, [unintelligible] good squalling tongues, just a good holler like the bass in the choir see, and you always try to get that. You don't always get it. I'm [unintelligible] lucky right now. I have- I'm running 12, and I have a little variety. I don't have a- some of them- my young hounds don't have as good a bass as I like them. I got one or two that's pretty darn good- going to have a good squall tongue on them. But- [unintelligible].

Kimzey: [Unintelligible] So it's like a choir, so it just sounds better overall, a little harmony?

Young: It is.

Young: Well, yeah. To the foxhunter, when hounds really get to- he gets fidgety. I've seen old hunters that smoke, I chew tobacco, I can eat up a pack of tobacco in no time. I have seen several hunters be smoking a cigarette and have one in their hand and be lighting up another one. Standing there holding two cigarettes, done got so excited about the chase, they be coming through full cry, and just get excited. I- and- my uncle would not let anybody breathe hardly when his foxhounds were running. He would talk good, but when they really got to running, you could not breathe hardly. I got scolded so many times in my young days on that account. Me wanting to say something, he was

[unintelligible] every bark when they missed or lost the fox, or something like that, he was just very humorous then, he would talk and carry on, but boy, when they were running you did not talk or say anything.

9. How long dogs last (02:09)

Young: Years ago, when we hunted on the outside, I had hounds that was seven-eight years old, still good quality hounds. I've had some eight or nine that was quality hounds. But the race didn't last, you'd run sometime all night, but three or four hours, something like that, would be your race. Like I say, you [unintelligible]- years ago, we'd catch a gray fox in a hour-hour and a half. Sometimes we'd catch a couple a day, when there were plenty of them and the hunting conditions were good. But they didn't have to run so hard. But now, we're running the fox pens, it's a lot of fox in the pens, they keep a lot of them in there so the dogs can't catch them, you know, more, uh, fox to run, and the hounds [unintelligible] in the pens, hounds run closer to the fox than they do in the wild. Therefore, he strains harder. And I honestly think a hound will not last past four or five years old, he'll be burnt out because when you take him- he runs hard; if you turn him loose at eight o'clock, it's nothing for him to be running at eight or nine the next morning.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: Twelve hours of hard, hard running; [they'll [?]] run till they absolutely give out. Then it takes them two or three days to, you know, get back up and eat good. Just like some of these- endurance runner, you know, that gets out and runs a marathon. If he runs it today, he's not ready for one tomorrow. And that's the same thing. But I think it's just-running depend on [unintelligible]. I don't think when a hound get- I think when he's five, he's through really. As far as, you know, all night running.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: But uh, he can may still do four or five hours running, but I would- I have some that I would keep on just for breeding purposes and then maybe let somebody else have them, you know, for that- [unintelligible] people are continually going out having a three or four race, and catch them up and go home.

10. Only hunts foxes (00:31)

Kimzey: You hunt other- anything besides foxes?

Young: No, no, no, no. I tell you what, my legs messed up, I couldn't [unintelligible]. I did rabbit hunting, quail hunting-

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Young: -done it all, but I can even sit and listen to the hounds, this kind of thing. It's just- if you- if you love to hear hounds run, it's the greatest sport in the world.

Kimzey: is it something you acquire? I mean....

Young: I think you have to have it bred in you, really.

Kimzey: Really?

Young: I don't think you can teach yourself to enjoy hearing hounds run.

11. Hershel and Trigger (01:11)

Young: We have a couple- most these hounds that I have are young dogs, but the Hershel, the one- the crossbreed, he and Trigger- the rest is July. They're the only two old dogs I have. I have hunted with those dogs all- those two hounds, [unintelligible], I go anywhere, but I've hunted those hounds with people all over the state of South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia- and I have never what you say, been outdone with those two. I'm not saying they're the best in the country, but if a race lasts all night I'll be there. They'll run the front with anybody, they'll run the thick, they'll run any kind. And the longer the race goes on the stronger Hershel gets. He's a stouter-made hound, and he is just outstanding. [Unintelligible] You're talking about a brag hound, he's- I would consider him- if he was a registered hound or one breed or the other, he would be, you now, a highly valuable hound. Really, cross-bred hounds like that are only good for pleasure purposes. [Say [?]] a breeding purposes are not the, you know, not as good as the, uh, the rest your stock.

