RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS T. ADAMS

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

WORLD WAR II * KOREAN WAR * VIETNAM WAR * COLD WAR

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with Mr. Thomas T. Adams, on May 18, 1997, at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Kurt Piehler ...

Jennifer Lenkiewicz: And Jennifer Lenkiewicz. I'd like to start out with a little history of your parents. Where was your father born?

Thomas Adams: My father was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. His parents moved out there on a homesteading basis, and he was born at 1876. I believe that his father's brothers and he decided that's what they wanted to do. But when they were out there, it came just at the time of a three-year drought. So they gave up and went back to Brooklyn, New York. But there's still a tie between my grandfather and his brothers out in Iowa, because we picked up a letter that he'd written to his wife from Chicago. Apparently, he took the two boys with him to go back to the farm and my grandmother kept the daughter there. He wrote this letter saying, in brief, "I'm sorry, I can't leave you. I'll bring the boys back. I'm coming home, I'll come back to Brooklyn." And the only other thing that I really know about him comes from a picture that shows him in front of a Singer sewing machine store. He and the man that he was working with were standing out in front of the store.

JL: Now, he went to high school ...

TA: No. No, he didn't. His father died when he was relatively young. So, what I understand was, the very first job he had as a teenager, a young teenager, was to take up an apprenticeship with a pharmacist. He worked with him for several years, so he learned all about pharmacology. He was a very intelligent man. He soaked his head up, with all these things, about the drugs, the combinations, what's good for what and so on. And also, he became quite an expert as a soda-jerker. My parents were married approximately '93 or '94, I believe, something like that. I remember hearing that he developed typhoid fever, and, of course, at that time, it was a very deadly thing. But he recovered but was very weakened by it. So, I remember hearing as a child, that Pa had gone to work for Abraham and Strauss Company to develop himself delivering furniture. He wasn't a very big man, but he never lost the knack for handling heavy things. He knew exactly how to do it. Subsequently, sometime, I'm not sure when, he went to work for a title insurance company in Brooklyn. His job was to verify the locations of properties, to verify the title, and they trusted him fully on that. He got very intimate with the streets in Brooklyn and he knew where everything was. So, he'd identify it, then he'd come back to his office and he'd prepare a sketch on a desk. I remember him taking me there as a child and sketching it out to make a record of it. So, then, apparently what happened, was his brother married a family that had lived in Towaco, New Jersey, and they'd gone out there for the summers. It was about twenty-five miles from New York. At that time, the town was really more of a summer place to go live, where people would have houses out there for the summer and then go back to the city to live for the winter. So anyway, Pa went out there with his brother and they decided to stay in Towaco. So they each built houses in Towaco and that's when I and all my other three older siblings were born in Towaco. My older brother was born in Brooklyn, you see, before they came out. So that's what I remember about Pa. He was always a very jovial, comfortable person to be with. He'd let me watch him shave, for example. I can remember standing in the bathroom with him, dropping his razor and so on. He was always very kind to me, he never got impatient with me. I can't ever remember his threatening me with his razor belt or anything like that. I

have very fond [memories] of my father. He lived to be eighty-one and he always came to see me, even after we were married with the children, to visit us. He helped me paint once, our first house. My older brother didn't get along well with Pa at all. They just didn't harmonize. So I think the contrast was probably between my brother and me.

KP: Why didn't they harmonize? Your father seems absolutely delightful. Was it your brother or just ...

TA: No, no. It was just a matter of the kinds of people they were? I remember my older brother, for example, protesting the fact that Pa had squirted grape juice on him, when he was getting the grapefruit out of the, out to eat, you know? I can remember that, for example. And he was so impatient with Pa. But I never had that kind of reaction. And I remember my brother objecting, next older brother, objecting about Pa using so much vinegar on his food. And I always felt, well, if Pa wants vinegar, then why can't he have vinegar? Vinegar didn't bother me. And I like vinegar myself. I still put it on some things, like greens for example, although my wife doesn't quite understand that. She came from a different family.

JL: Your mother, what was she ...

TA: She was born in Brooklyn and her parents emigrated from Ireland during the potato famine. They were a Catholic family. I've heard about them, from my mother, that he, her father was a cabinetmaker, a very skilled cabinetmaker, and her mother was a very skilled dressmaker. She had a shop and she employed women to work for her in Brooklyn. And that's about all I know about the situation, because Ma's father, parents, were Catholic, and the Catholics had the attitude at that time that, "You're out of the family if you marry outside the Church," 'cause Pa refused to join the church. But that didn't bother Ma. She, they joined the Episcopal Church, and that's the kind of church they always went to.

JL: So your mother converted after she met your father?

TA: Yes, that's right. That's right. She joined the Episcopal Church.

JL: Do you know how your parents met?

TA: Beg your pardon?

JL: Do you know how your parents met each other?

TA: How did they get along together, you mean? Well, is that what you mean?

JL: Well, how they met.

TA: Oh, how they met. I don't really know, frankly. Ma talked to me about other men that she had met, you see. But Pa was a very handsome man, and he always dressed well, and he was probably charmed by Ma when they met. And I think that she married when she was about twenty or twenty-one or twenty-two perhaps. She had gone a little further in schooling in

Catholic parochial school, and she never told me anything about employment that she had. Nothing like that, so I don't really know. And we never heard anymore from her family, except her sister used to write her, I remember, pleading with her to come back to the Church and that always upset Ma. I heard her say, "I don't see why she does this. I can't understand why she can't leave me alone." So I don't know anything about her family, except that's the way it was, and she didn't seem to be bothered by it. She had her own family and she loved the children and Pa and so on and got along fine.

JL: Do you know if your mother lived in any of the ethnic areas, or any predominantly Catholic …

TA: They stayed in Brooklyn. They were all Brooklyn families, and that was a fine place to live at that time.

KP: I grew up in Morris County also, and ...

TA: Did you?

KP: My parents move from Queens when I was about seven, and actually, I'm not too far from Towaco and Lake Hopatcong. I'd like to hear some of your memories of what it was like to grow up in Towaco.

TA: What was Towaco like?

KP: Yes.

TA: I loved Towaco. We had, Pa's house, where he built the house, was on a rise overlooking the valley of Towaco, and there was the Delaware-Lackawanna Railroad train went right through it. And at the time he built his house, there was a canal, the Morris-Essex canal, I think it was. The canal was not in use, from my memory, and I think, as I understood, they took coal, primarily from Scranton and took it into Jersey City. But I remember they left a tow path there, along the canal. It was always a feature that I loved. You could get out there and run like a deer. You know, straight on that, a good path and everything, along the Morris Canal, and I think it was one of the things that attracted Pa to that place. You know, water always attracts people. It attracts me, too. Of course, about Towaco, it was very rural, primarily, at that time. There were some families that had houses, isolated places like we did and, so, it was a mixed community of farmers and people that worked in New York, like my father did. And it was just perfectly natural for me to think that, well, "Pa goes to New York, I'll go to New York." That's the center of everything. So, I always thought, if I'd get a job, I'd go to New York and get a job. You see, that was always the locus for it. And my cousin, for example, who's just a month or so older than I am, often said that when we visit her, "Weren't we fortunate to grow up in Towaco?" And you could go out, as a child, I can remember going out and picking wild strawberries, for example. Picking black caps, and I always admired the freight trains when they went through. You could count the cars, you can see where they come from. And we'd always go to the station to meet Pa and walk home with him, or when my sister got her car, we'd go pick him up and bring him home. The station brought in freight to the community, too. We'd go down to play in

the freight cars there that brought in the grain and things like that into the community. So the railroad would come by in the night and blow for the crossings, as they used to do, and I found when I went away, when I came to Rutgers, I'd come home and I'd feel comfortable to hear that sound again in the night. It was a real symbol of home. But it's changed so much now. There's nothing there at all, really.

KP: Towaco is, compared to a lot of Morris County, is still somewhat more rural, let's say, like the Lake Hopatcong area, or where I grew up around Morristown.

TA: Yes. You understand that.

KP: So you were used to your father being a commuter?

TA: Yup, that's what he did. He always played, I remember, he played pinochle with his friends on the way out, and on the paper, the ritual was to pick up the paper at the station and read it on the train. And that had great appeal for me, you know? You could get the paper read all in the morning. I remember, about the train myself, I worked for year before I, after high school, before I came to Rutgers, and I got a job at the Irving Trust Company in New York at 1 Wall Street. And that was a thing to do, you know? Go get a job. And I read an ad in the paper, in the *New York Herald Tribune*, which was the paper of home, went into this employment agency and that's how I got a job. So that's about Towaco and all the connections.

KP: You listed in your pre-interview survey that your mother was a housewife but she was also a volunteer librarian. Can you talk a little about her?

TA: I'll talk about that. My mother was wonderful person. And I remember being fascinated by the fact that she never had to look up a telephone number. She knew all the numbers that she wanted to call. I don't know how she became attracted to the library but she felt, both my parents felt, that books were important and, for example, we had <u>The Book of Knowledge</u>, the encyclopedia series in the house, and as a child, I read that, every one. I just felt that was something that attracted me. It was a wonderful thing. But I remember about the library, I have a vague memory of the library being on our front porch. There was a fire in the building where it was, downtown, but the firemen saved the books. I don't know, Ma said, probably, "I'll take them." And I remember people coming, we had a separate door to get into the porch, where it was, and I remember people coming in the door to get into the house. They didn't come in the kitchen door, they didn't come in the front door, they came in the porch door. So that's what I remember about that library and I have a vague memory of the books on the shelves. But then over time, the Building and Loan Society built a building downtown, and part of the building was for the Building and Loan Society and the other part was for the library. And so, I can remember, every time my Ma was down there, for two afternoons a week, I'd go after school into the library. And I knew that there was lady who drove a van around the county and she was the county librarian. And I'd always know when she was coming and she'd always let me know the new books, what's coming. So I'd always get those new books, I'd always have first crack at them. Well, then, over time, a young lady that lived in the town was employed, so Ma just moved down on occasion there as a volunteer. Now, I don't know exactly how Ma got into being the newspaper correspondent, but she did. She was a correspondent for the *Newark Evening*

News, *The Saturday Morning Call*, I think it was, and the *Boonton Times Bulletin*. And she collected the news and wrote it up, all by hand, at that time. So, I know it was always important to get the letter in the mail, you know, on-time, and I remember being so upset with myself for not getting home one afternoon in time to take the letter to the post office. Ma didn't berate me for it, but I knew she was disappointed, that I didn't get there to get that down to the station. The only time that happened, only once. And then when I was a child in high school, I think I must have been about thirteen or fourteen, Ma developed this very debilitating disease. The A.L.S. that you're probably familiar with. And so I heard about it and understood that it is terminal, but we didn't know how long Ma would be with us. But it was evident that somebody had to do something about this corresponding business, so I decided to take a typing class in high school and my brother brought a typewriter and I would type it up, and over time, initially, Ma would make the telephone calls to collect things, but later on when she couldn't get to the phones and so on, I would make a few calls. And, of course, we all knew what was going on and do that. I don't know exactly how long she kept up. I think she kept up the corresponding relationship with the *Boonton Times Bulletin* the longest. Because I don't remember being involved with the other papers when I was doing that. And I didn't mind that all. It was fun, you see. Most of the people knew me very well, because, when I was a child, I'd go to their houses to visit and sit down and talk and so on.

KP: What kind of things would go in the articles? What would be a typical story?

TA: The stories? The best story of all was to get a wedding story. A lot of detail in that. That's right. The bride wore this, who came to the wedding and so on, like that. And the other stories were [of] people who were visiting, brother and sister would come from Scranton, Pennsylvania or someplace like that, and they were visiting. So we got the full names, we'd have to get [them] very carefully spelled, make sure we had [them] all right, and get that, and those were the kinds of stories. Of course the local events, like the meetings of the Ladies Aid Society or the St. Mary's Guild of the Episcopal Church or what else was going on, who'd been appointed in the school type of thing, I can remember very well. And Ma was also keenly interested in politics. She felt that was a proper thing to do. And she became the county committeewoman for the Republican Party, which was really a pretty significant thing. I remember, she had to be consulted before they could hire the postmaster in the town. And, if some day, if the postmaster was not doing something right, then her friends would say, "Bess, he's not doing this right. And he's got some filthy magazines in there or something," you know? So it was up to her to get it straightened out. And she did. I remember her also, the way our family operated, we all sat around the dining room table for the meals. We all got together for regular meals. Breakfast was kind of a chaotic thing, but every dinner we'd get together. Ma would expect us to be there. We would get home on the six-eighteen train and Ma would have dinner ready, and then we'd sit down to dinner around six-thirty, or six forty-five. And about Ma, one of the family stories that we always remembered, we all had tea, so, with the five of us there, there were seven cups, and we had this great, big table and Ma would put out the cups by the teapot and have the sugar bowl there and, of course, she loved to talk, so she'd be talking anxiously about how she was upset with this person or something like that, political, and he didn't do what he said he was going to do, that type of thing, and that upset her very much. She was talking away, one time, and she poured the tea into the sugar bowl. My brother, we always remember that whenever we got together. "Remember the time Ma poured the tea in the sugar bowl?" That's a little family thing

that I remember. And I can remember, we didn't have a high chair, but I sat on the Books of Knowledge and the telephone book, stacked up. And over time, the numbers required were reduced. Well, my older brother was nineteen years older than I, and I remember he married and he lived in the town and he went into New York to work. And my older sister became a teacher, and she lived at home until she married, but she didn't live in the town. They lived nearby. I think it was in Livingston, New Jersey. My next older sister, she was killed. One time, I remember this so well, I was twelve at the time, and she and my older sister had gone out for ride. Grace had a convertible, and it was a nice thing to do, you could put down the top and just go out for a ride. And someone rammed them from the side, through, running a traffic light. And the story was, I wasn't told right away, that night, I was, all I knew was, that I was at the house of a boy that lived next-door. We often did that, I often went over there, and I knew that, I was told, that, "Your mother has called and asked if you could stay over here all night." And then, of course, I didn't really hear about what happened until the next day. I went home. And of course, that was a very traumatic thing for the family. She was a senior in high school, lovely girl and very popular. And all we knew was, I can remember, they brought a sealed casket home for the funeral and then we got peach blossoms. I remember those things about the service. Some people put a connection between that tragedy and my mothers ailment, but the doctors would say "No, that wasn't what happened." But some people really believed Ma was so upset about that, and that's what it did, you see? I remember hearing that from people, even recently, from one of my cousins. So that's a little bit more about the family.

KP: In some ways, having grown up in Morris County, it's not surprising that your parents were Republican, just because Morris County was Republican and it's still very faithful.

TA: It is.

KP: What did your parents think of Roosevelt? There were these degrees of Republican feelings towards him.

TA: Well, of course, they were very upset with Roosevelt, Franklin D. Roosevelt. I remember Pa, greatly objecting to Social Security, for taking money out of his paycheck. "For whom? For what?" You know? And I can remember, I thought the year of this was, it must have been in 1932, I was a pretty precocious child, and I remember I could make a contribution to the cause, of the anti-Democratic. So what I did was, I bought a can of black paint, and I got one of Pa's brushes, and I climbed up on a big sign they had on the way to Boonton, along 202 there, of Roosevelt and Garner, at that time. And so I got on that sign and I painted in broad black letters, "To Hell with them." That was the best thing I could think of. It wasn't a very nice thing to do. Nobody did anything about it. I didn't tell anybody that I did it, but a lot of people knew. Well, that's the way it was. I was biased to the Republican Party, in part, because of that. But thinking back, I think Roosevelt was the man of the time, for that period. I wouldn't do that now, I mean I wouldn't do it that way. I realize that's not socially acceptable behavior.

KP: That's a really great story to gauge your parents partisanship, because some parents were Republican but they really loved Roosevelt. But it sounds like you were a partisan Republican.

TA: Of course, I read that. Pa would bring home the paper, and we read the *New York Herald*

Tribune. I'd read the columnist and so on. They had, Mark Sullivan was one, and they were objectively critical. They weren't biased like some of the people were, but they didn't like some of the things that he did and they'd give you good reasons why, you know, "This is not proper under our form of government," or something like that. In other words, it made sense to me, and I think, indeed, thinking now that was not illogical that that should be the case.

KP: *The Herald Tribune* was great paper. I've read some of the back issues. It really was a fabulous paper.

JL: Did your family benefit for many of the programs Roosevelt implemented?

TA: No. We got no benefits of any kind.

KP: How did your father feel about Roosevelt, once he started collecting Social Security?

TA: I don't remember. I remember Pa did collect Social Security, and the companies didn't have pension programs, and he wasn't a wealthy man, but he was sustained by his Social Security. And, I remember, my older brother lived in the town and he was looking after Pa, that was his filial duty, and he always kept us posted on was happening. And when Pa couldn't live alone anymore, he went to live with a lady, Mrs. (Mckee), who I remember. Mrs. (McKee) was a widow and she came to our house to do some ironing for Ma and that type of thing. A very fine lady. I remember her children, and we knew them well, and I remember the last time I saw Pa. He was seated on Mrs. McKee's porch on a rocking chair and obviously in good shape and well-cared for. But he was a smoker and he smoked cigarettes, he smoked pipes and so on. I never took the cigarettes, but a pipe was something I felt was for me. I should do it when I got to be out of college. Of course, I never smoked when I was in college. That turned out to be the cause of my father's death, was lung cancer. And his mother, I remember, lived a long time, my grandmother. She lived in the town and, I remember, she died in her nineties, and his brother didn't live very long, but he was a different physique, and his sister died in the typhoid epidemic time, but they said it was because [of] some traumatic infection after her youngest child was born. They couldn't cope with it. That's pretty much what I remember about that family. Except I do remember, that, apparently Ma was highly regarded by a cousin, who had owned a furniture store in Brooklyn. And I remember Ma getting a bequest. So things happened. We got a new car. We fixed up the house and so on, and that type of thing, that I remember. And that was just about, must have been in the early '30s when that happened, and then afterwards, of course, the Depression time. I remember Pa coming home from work and reporting that his salary had been cut by ten percent. So that was traumatic for the whole family. "What can we do? How can we pay the mortgage? How do we feed the children?" and so on, all these things. And he subsequently came home and had to say that he got a fifteen percent cut. And I remember we heard all about this type of thing. We weren't sheltered children. It was all open, excepting all the intimate things between my mother and her husband. We didn't hear anything about that. Anything to do with the family was common knowledge and it seemed the proper thing to do. Now, my wife, Virginia, says her family wasn't like that all.

KP: Some children never knew their parents.

TA: That's right. She never knew her father lost his job during the Depression. She never knew why, she never heard anything about that. And apparently, he was an accountant, so he could get some occasional work. But she does remember that there wasn't any money and she couldn't get new shoes and things like that. She remembers about that, but it didn't change much for her, in the way the family lived or what they did. And I remember that contrast, you know, and that connection.

KP: How did the Great Depression affect Towaco? How did your neighbors fare?

TA: Well, I remember the town, a little bit more about Towaco. I remember we always had parades. And when I was old enough to get in the parade as a Boy Scout, I went to the parade. Pa bought me a fife so I could be in the parade. I could never play it properly, but Pa wanted to see me properly equipped. And I remember a fellow up the street that lived near by us was a Italian fellow, his last name was Garcia, and he came, I remember his coming and asking Pa, "Would you contribute to the celebration this year?" And Pa would give him ten dollars, and that was the routine every year. And then the parade would go up to a nearby field, up along 202, and we would go up there and watch the fireworks. And then afterwards, my brother, older brother and I, really, he was with me a lot, I remember as a child, I was his friend, although he was seven years older than I, and he taught me a lot. He taught me about, he was interested in trees and forestry and so on. It's never left me. I can remember I wanted to be a forester. That's why I came to Rutgers and so on, that type of thing. And I remember building a, there was a heavy snow storm, for example. My brother and I went out into the woods and we built a sort of lean-to, with the boughs down there. And we cut the snow and we'd put snow blocks on it. And I can remember that so clearly. And there was a family that bought the lot next-door. The Glovers. Claude and Grace Glover. And they didn't have any children and, of course, they were very, they liked to have me around, you see? That's the way it was. I remember Mr. Glover would bring me things home, sometime. I remember him bringing home red bananas from Washington Market, New York, though I never knew anything about red bananas. I remember the Glovers would always take a Sunday drive and they'd go out to northern New Jersey where there are lot of rocks and they were bringing home rocks from different places. So when I heard the car come in over there, I would go over and find out, "Where did he get the rocks from?" Well, they got it up at High Point, they got it up at Sparta, someplace like [that], and they made a drive out of all these, along the drive, along the walk behind the house. And I remember their house being built. Their house was a Sears house.

KP: Custom made…

TA: Yeah. They'd come in on a freight train and they'd get the carpenters to come out and put it together, although Claude himself did a lot of the work. And I could go over and watch him work, too. But then I remember, that there was a man that Pa bought the property from next to us. He had a big house, our house wasn't very big. It was on the different, it was down the hill from the Russell house, by example. I remember Pa renting a garage from him, before we had a garage for our car. The first car we had, incidentally, which I also remember clearly, was a Model T. It was a 1924 Model T. A black sedan, and Pa was so fond of it, that was Pa's car. And Pa also, I came to realize that the Masonic organization was very important to Pa. Pa always went to Masons, he was always interested in that. A Mason, I remember, a grocery man

came to town and he didn't really know how to do things. Pa was very handy. He knew everything about how to run a store and that type of thing. And I remember Pa telling this fella, "Put those cereal boxes up on the top shelf, you see. Like that. And this is the way you snap a string when you wrap up a bundle." And I remember, I'd go down, Pa would say, "Would you like to go down with me?" So, "Sure." I'd go along and sit on the bread box there, and just watch him do that. And he was very gifted that way. I can remember, he was also good at masonry. He did good, smooth work when everything was done. I remember his working in the cellar to chip out the rocks to give us more space in the cellar, and I'd hear him chipping away down there. And he had a nice, little, a small sledgehammer that he could [use]. And that always, that impressed me very much.

KP: When you went to high school, Boonton was a very big town. It still has a thriving downtown, but then, it was very industrial ...

TA: Yes, it was.

KP: It still has some industry, but even more so then. Could you maybe talk more about Boonton, and Towaco's relationship with Boonton.

TA: Well, I can remember Boonton. Boonton was where they had the lumber yard and we had to get the lumber from the lumber yard. Pa wanted to buy cement, had to go up to the Solmon's. Some people said Samons, but we always called its Solmon's. And I remember, for that, for example. And there was a movie, of course. There was also a Woolworth's store. And so, Boonton was much the center of that type of thing. And the paper, the bank, we always had to go to Boonton. The doctor, for example, the dentist. We always had go to Boonton. It was only four and a half miles away and I'd walk to Boonton. It was no big deal, you know. And this bus, you could take, I think it was five cents or something like that, that ran, if you got the bus, you could do it that way. And of course, we went to high school in Boonton. All the children went to Boonton High School, so that's where I went to high school, and that was much the object of things. Everybody went to Boonton High School. When you got to high school, but you were no longer a kid. I was really not a very good boy in school. I remember, I was always the, I don't want to boast, but I was always the brightest kid the class. That wasn't good really. I remember the teacher putting me in the corner so I wouldn't make so much fuss and that type of thing.

KP: Because it's interesting, one of the things I was surprised at, is that you were reading *The Herald Tribune* growing up. A lot of people confessed that they never read the paper except for the *Targum*, whereas you were really reading the paper.

TA: That's right. Exactly. I always knew what was going on. I'm still an avid reader of good newspapers. Conventional press disgusted me. I don't really pay any attention to it. I read some of it, but the rest of the paper I don't pay any attention to. I currently read the *Monitor*.

KP: *Christian Science Monitor*?

TA: *Christian Science Monitor*, yes. You know, [it] is an outstanding paper. And I also get a

weekly of articles from the Washington Post that I read, but I don't have enough time to read it all. For example, on this trip, I brought four or five issues, back issues of the *Monitor* with me so I can read them and that's what happens. So it's, as you said, it's the matter of getting reading, reading, reading, and I wish the children did that. All our children were readers. They all read. They all love classical music like we do. You know, that they've heard it. And not each of them has been a model child, as far as behavior is concerned, but they were all readers and if you give them a book, that's the thing you do. So that's part of it. Even some of their children do, but not all of them, in that respect.

JL: When you weren't high school were you involved in any college ...

TA: Yes, well, when I went to high school I had, I really didn't feel that I was really at home, as a child, at high school, when I first went there. I liked the teachers. I learned a lot from some of them after the first year or two. I learned …

----------END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE----------

TA: ... to study. The other thing is history, I loved, for example. English was great, you know, and all those things. There was no problem. But when you get behind in Latin, you're sunk, you know? You can't go back and learn everything. And, as Virginia says, I can remember more of my Latin than she does, you know, as far as quoting Latin. And I learned a lot. The teacher was a good teacher. And also, I had a speech problem that I was embarrassed [of] when I was called on. Pa had a speech impediment that might have been related to that, I don't know. I was always embarrassed when I was called on. I hated to be the valedictorian who had to talk for graduation. I did it because I had to do it, but I was very uncomfortable with it. And of course, with the foreign language, they call on you, you stand up and read, you see, and that's good stuff. But that was always an embarrassment for me. That's probably part of the problem. But when they had a question in history, I didn't mind talking about that at all, you see. It was great. I loved history. We had two history courses, let's see, Ancient History, Modern European history, three history courses, American history. [They were] deeply into history. And I didn't mind English. I liked English. It was reading, and I didn't mind writing and that was no problem, and I got into the sciences, I loved them. Biology, chemistry, physics and so on, and I got along well in those, but it was this Latin thing that bugged me up and I failed the second year. So anyway, after that I buckled down and I got good grades all the time after that.

KP: You became valedictorian of your high school?

TA: No I'd didn't get that far. Some guy, he worked harder than I had. His name was Joe Ignatsic But I remember getting elected to the National Honor Society, and I couldn't figure out why because I failed Latin, you see? But that's the way it was. And, of course, we had wonderful teachers, who I remember still very clearly, they're very clearly identified and what we did. I remember the freshmen English teacher once telling me, "Do you think you're Tom Sawyer?" She told me that once, and I didn't know whether that was a compliment or not. It didn't sound very good to me because of my behavior. She was trying shake me up a little bit. She was good teacher and I didn't resent it particularly. I respected her. My French teacher, that both my wife and I had, in high school, we didn't think much of. She was, Madame Sawyer we

called her, and she didn't know a hoot about how to pronounce French. She was bright enough and she could understand it, but she didn't know anything about how to pronounce it. But a little more about high school, if you'd like to hear that?

KP: Yes, please. Where did you meet your wife? Did you meet her in high school?

TA: I'll tell you about that.

KP: Because you had the same French teacher.

TA: When we were in high school, of course, the children came from around there, and a group of children came from Mountain Lakes, … and people came from Lincoln Park to high school, and, of course, all of Montville Township, people came to the high school, by bus. So I can remember sophomore year, when I was in high school, I remember these children coming from Mountain Lakes. There were twelve or thirteen of them. I had friends from Towaco in high school, but these were different and, of course, they'd grown up differently and they're all well dressed and they all had experience with things that we hadn't had. And I remember the girls particularly. They're very interesting to me, but I didn't feel like I was confident to make any overtures. But I can remember my wife very clearly, when she came, but I remember her looking at me, you know? I guess girls do. Do girls still do that?

KP: You should see my interns.

TA: I can remember sitting in the hallway in high school eating lunch, at the students desk we had there. Incidentally, Ma always made good sandwiches. My favorite was grated cheese, and that was a never-fail favorite, as far as I was concerned. So I was sitting there, eating my lunch, and I remember her sister had to come to the high school to take some kind of a course, I don't know whether it was Home Economics or something like that. It was taught at the high school and her sister was younger than Virginia, I don't know how much younger, four years or so younger, possibly, but I can remember her sister walking down the hall, looking at me. And she looked a lot like Virginia, so I knew that she was Virginia's sister. So I can remember that, you see. But I didn't invite Virginia to the senior prom, I asked a girl that I knew in town, from Towaco, Gay Crosby, and she wasn't much interested in me, she wanted to go to the dances. But we got along, it was a good thing. But another girl from my town, whose name was Esme Kirkwood, was a good student. She was always one behind me in the class, but she didn't seem to resent it very much. That was just the way it was. So I saw a lot of her. We'd go skating together, we'd go skiing together, that type of thing. But I was never very much interested in Esme. She didn't have very much physical attraction for me. But Virginia was different. She was a lady. She was very well polished and so on. Very informed about things. She was in the classes with me and I knew that she was a very good student. Virginia had her friends, of course, and I had my friends, and what happened was, she came down to a skating party in Mountain Lakes. Her friends invited her to the skating party. Her father had taken a job in Connecticut, Middletown, Connecticut, and so her friend invited Virginia and she invited me, too.

KP: So she knew there was some sort of interest?

TA: That's right. She knew all about this, you see. So that skating party, I wasn't interested in any other girl. I'd come here and I'd have dates at the Coop and so on, and I found one girl, in particular, we went roller skating and I thought, "Boy, she's a good girl I'd like to see her again," and so on. But then after that, that was my freshman year, it was in the winter, nobody else, no more dates, you know. I just didn't bother. They didn't interest me. So we became very fond of each other. And we exchanged letters, daily letters, until we got married.

JL: You got married right before you graduated?

TA: That's right, just a week before we graduated and, of course, that letter was the big thing in the day. Get the letter, give the letter to the postman. And my wife tells me, I still didn't spell some of the words right in the letter, but she felt the same way, you know? And, so, we saw a lot of each other while I was in college. I'd go up there, she'd come down for dances and so on. It was a big thing, and there was no question. Her family adopted me as Virginia's beau and they were very warm to me. I was very greatly impressed with her family. They were very cordial and genuinely, you know, adopted me. I can feel that.

KP: There was a really interesting mix of the Boonton high school at the time. Those areas have become much more uniformly middle-class. Boonton was a very industrial town, Towaco was very rural community, Mountain Lakes was very well-to-do. How did all those groups get along together?

TA: Well, we got together fine. It wasn't the question of how much money our families had, it was a question of, were you good student, could you conduct yourself properly, were you a gentleman or a lady and so on, and the other kids, we didn't have any time for. But Esme Kirkwood for example, she was one of us, and another girl from Lincoln Park, Barbara Loeffer, she's a very close friend, and Esme was a close friend until she died, unfortunately, a long time ago. And there was very much of a (piece?). The boys from Boonton, there were some boys from Boonton that were part of the group. One fellow named Andy Sabol who played the organ. He played the organ in the church and was very gifted fella. Another fella from Mountain Lakes, Billy Clark, was one of our group, so he was one of the boys, and I talked to them and so on. But the other children, we just didn't pay much attention to. Joe Ignatsic for example, who became valedictorian, we didn't spend much time with him. But Victor Hillary, who was the editor of the newspaper and, incidentally, came to write for the *Wall Street Journal* afterwards when he became a career man, he's one of us. He was going to pick me up and, come to Towaco and pick me up, to go to the junior prom. He was older and he could drive. But what happened was, the girl he was going take out, came from Mountain Lakes, her mother died suddenly, and he called me up and he said, "Tom, I'm not going to the prom. I'm sorry I can't pick you up." So my brother had to pick me up, pick up my date, you see. And I didn't like that very much. George had to come back and pick us up after the dance. And I didn't mind going home, but the idea of being picked up was kind of demeaning. And I remember about high school, Andy Sabol was older and he had a car, he drove a car, anyway, and he had the crank to start. I still have a scar on my hand from a when my hand caught on the license plate, one time, when I was cranking the car. But we kept close to many of those people over the years. Virginia's friend from Mountain Lakes, by example, we kept very close to her over the years. Well, she was in

kindergarten with her and, of course, that was the natural thing to do. We'd go see them and after we got married, we went to see them in Florida and so on. That was, one of us, we went to see one of our mutual friends, Esme Kirkwood, on our twenty-fifth anniversary, for example. We'd just take a ride out to go see Esme. So we kept close to them. As long as they survived. We're still close to Barbara Loeffer Brady, who lives in Vermont. We wouldn't think of going to Vermont, they'd come to see us or we'd go to see them. It's just part of the routine. She married a boy who was two classes ahead of us in Boonton and he's one of us now. He grew up there, he knows what it's like and so on. Just as much at home with him as with anybody.

JL: When you were in high school did you work in the summers or after school?

TA: No, I'll tell you what I did. I decided it was a good thing to join the service club, and the service club had to monitor the halls, wouldn't let the kids go upstairs during lunch hour, by example. You made sure that you stood in the corridors, so that when the traffic flows going the right way, there was no congestion, that type of thing. So I liked that, that was a good thing. And I remember … , one of our English teachers said about the service club, he quoted, I forget who wrote this, but he said, "They also serve who only stand and wait." That's Milton I think. Milton's sonnet on his blindness. I think he said, he wrote that. But he quoted that. The service club's motto was that "We'd also serve who only stand and wait." And I remember, when I was in high school, a boy, when I was seated at that having my lunch, pushed somebody against me when I was eating my lunch, and, of course, I just blew my top and so I stood up and punched him right in the nose. And all of a sudden, his nose was bleeding and I looked at him and I said, "I shouldn't have done that. You've got glasses." So I went with him into the boys room to help him and then I said, "I'm awful sorry I did that. I shouldn't have done it." He said "Tom, don't worry about it. I deserved it." But I never felt that I could hit anybody again, regardless. I'd try to find a way not to do it. It was just the way it was. And I was never admonished. I was never criticized. No teachers spoke to me or anything like that. But in high school, I was a very poor athlete. I was never a very good athlete. I'd love to run and jump and so on, as a child. I'd like to play baseball, but I was never very good at it. So I never got into athletics, but I liked the athletics. I like to watch them. I taught our boys athletics. We always had baseballs and things like that. I like that. And then I volunteered and I wrote for the *Targum*, a little bit, reporting, as a reporter. I didn't get into the hierarchy of the office. And I volunteered as a senior, I guess I was a senior, I volunteered for yearbook duty and I was appointed photographic editor. That was my job, and I had to organize all the pictures. I had to talk to the teachers about the time when they could have the picture. We had to go interview the photographer with our teacher, Ms. Price, and Esme Kirkwood, who was the editor of the yearbook, to make sure the photographer understood what we wanted, everything. He was good man. And so I liked that, and organized that very well, if I could say so myself. Nothing got fouled. When the photographer was there, the class was there for the picture and so on. And [there were] a lot [of pictures] to take, because of all the clubs, all the classes, all the teams and so on, wanted to get in the yearbook. So that was a very good experience. But, as you know, I think you both know, you get your kicks out of what you do well, and it's the best tonic in the world. If you don't do well, go back to something else. Well, that's pretty much what I did in high school . I got elected to the National Honor Society, which surprised me very much. I didn't think that I was eligible.

KP: You were also a Boy Scout, you mentioned. What rank did you reach?

TA: Well, I didn't go very far with the Boy Scouts. I liked it and I liked the club. I liked going to the Boy Scouts at the community room of the Methodist church. I remember walking in my Boy Scouts suit, one of the committeemen talking with him at that the time, and I remember marching as a Boy Scout in the parade and I liked it. We went to camp in the summer up at, there's a lake nearby, I forget what the name of it was now, where they had a Boy Scout camp. And I remember I went there and jumped off the end of the pier and socked my head on rock. I dove off the end of the pier. I loved swimming. I always loved to swim. I'd always love to skate and I was pretty good at that. Skiing, we just went downhill, so there wasn't much to do, at that time. That's the only kind of skis we had. I liked that and I got along pretty well with it. And there were lakes around Towaco. We'd go up to Surprise Lake, which was back in the hills. It was a big lake and the ice was always better up there, smooth and hard, you know. Or we'd go up to Gallo's Pond which is nearby. Mr. Gallo's used to bring the milk to the house, incidentally. He was a farmer, a Polish farmer. Or the Railroad Pond, [which] wasn't so good because it got chewed up with cinders, but we'd always go find a place to swim and go do it and it didn't get so much organized. You asked about the Boy Scouts. Well, I liked it and I liked what I did, and I got to be a Star Scout, and I still have a Boy Scout book that I rebound, you know? Tutored by the school principal, the local principal, on how to bind books. I had an awful hard time with the trailing requirement. I guess for a First Class scout, and I was at that time, and I had to do that over and over and over. I'm still that way. I don't see things. I don't notice. My wife says, "Why don't you see it?" And it's just a matter of how you operate and how you focus, and something about that, I didn't want to be anything particularly in the Scout. I didn't want to be a leader, especially. It wasn't important to me, and so I didn't really feel highly motivated. I remember, I thought it was great thing about Paul Sypolt who was an Eagle Scout, who went to Antarctica with Admiral Byrd, and I thought that was great. He was a scout, you see. My older brother was a scout. He didn't go further with the merit badges, but he got to be the scribe. Nobody asked me to be the scribe, I didn't really want to be the scribe, anyway. Well, that's just the way it was. I was just that kind of a boy. That's all I can say about it.

JL: When you graduated high school, you worked for a year, before you went to college?

TA: Well, what happened with me and after that, I was very conscious of the fact and very firm in my determination, that if you wanted to make something of yourself. you'd go to college. Both my older brothers went college. My oldest brother went to Columbia College and he fell in love with a girl and that was it. He had to leave Columbia College when they got married. That was my oldest brother. My next oldest brother, he went to Syracuse University, he wanted to be a forester, and wasn't a particularly good student, he couldn't get, family didn't have any money, so he came back the got his degree at Montclair State Teachers College, by example. And so there's never really any doubt in my mind about the necessity or the desirability of going to college. Well, I remember my brother telling me that there was an announcement in the paper, state scholarships had been established by the legislature to provide one scholarship for each county, and so I applied. And I thought I had pretty good shot, you know, the good record and so on. But I didn't get it. They selected a fella who was an athlete and that's the way it was. But I was bitterly disappointed when I got the letter, so I decided I better go work, and that's when I did. I applied for a job in New York and got my job at the Irving Trust Company as a page. I liked that. They put me for the Board of Directors meetings and so on, and that type of thing. I

got appointed to the executive floor, you know, as a page. I could read all the mail, that was open. I never opened any envelopes, but I'd read something like *Atlantic Monthly*, when it came in like that, or the credit reports on people. Fascinating. And we had an office there where nobody knew what I was doing, there's nothing to do.

KP: Just read a lot.

TA: I became an expert teeterer in that office, for example. I had, I could almost keep a, for seconds anyway, I could teeter on two legs from a four leg chair, which was pretty good. I didn't mind that. They sent me out for coffee in the morning. I'd go around the back street and get the coffee and bring it back and give it to the footman, fill up two carafes and they'd put it in a little place they had there and serve it. So I liked that. It was good work. I didn't mind delivering the mail. It was kind of interesting. And I remember we had a rule, if you have to go up more than two floors, you took the elevator. But if you had to go down, you know, you didn't take the elevator unless you had to go more than three floors. They didn't want the elevators congested. So there's never any doubt that I was going to college. What I did was, all I did, I got my pay and I banked everything but what I had to pay for the train ticket and my lunch at "Horn and Hardharst." The best thing to get me through the day was a pie, a cheese pie. Pineapple cheese pie. It tasted good and it filled me up. And I got a big glass of milk, that was another thing. And I remember when I was eighteen, I got to be eighteen when I was working there, the boys said, "Well, now you can get a beer. You're going out with us before you go home to get beer." It was legal at that time. And I remember the boys, I liked the boys in the page organization, and when I applied to Irving Trust after I got out of graduate school, they said, "Sure, we got a job for you. There's no doubt about that." But I liked that. It was good work. It was interesting to me. So anyway, I got enough money to pay every penny than I needed for the freshman year. I was very proud of that. I could get my room off-campus. I could get my meals at Callie, no, at Winants, and so on, and get my books. And the tuition was peanuts and I remember I went to see Dean Kirkland and I told him, I did that after the first semester, I think. I went to see him just to see what I could do, what I could get, and he said, "Well, why didn't you come in before?" And I said, "Well, I didn't know it was available." And so he gave me a scholarship that covered the tuition at the AG College, which was peanuts and didn't amount to much at all. So that was my experience with that. I worked, I was delighted when I started. I quit my job. The people in the office, one of them gave me a "Roget's Thesaurus," by example. So it was a happy time, you know. "Tom's going to college." It was a big deal.

KP: Did you ever stay in touch with any of those people at Irving Trust? Did you ever stay in touch with the page people. You apparently liked them and they liked you.

TA: Yes. I got to identify with the president. His office was there. His name was Harry Morgan and his secretary was kind of a cold person, but the chairman's secretary was a lovely warm-hearted girl, looked very much like you. And her name was Ada Geshwick. She was always pleasant to me. She was always nice to me. I liked that, but, what was her name? The president's secretary was Ms. Hartman, I think. It was strictly business with her. Do this. Do that. I had to go out and get lunches for the secretaries, and that was no big deal, was going across and bring it back, that the type of thing. And I delivered mail to all the places. It took me a while to learn the subway system. But then I went back to work at the Irving Trust Company

during my summer after my freshman year. I started with them after my sophomore year, but I found that I could get a better job, that didn't pay as much, but provided my lunch and I'd have to work only five hours a day instead of a regular day, washing dishes at the Metropolitan Life Company where my brother worked. And I liked that, too. They were interesting people. And I remember, we'd get together and eat after all the dishes were washed. They'd talk about their families and where they lived and so on, and there was a wedding among those people, I heard later on. I never kept in touch with any of them over the years, but then I never went back. I had ROTC summer camp after my junior year, so that cut that out and I never went back except to apply. But I thought it was a good bank. They were prominent. They were effective in what they did, and they knew what they were doing. So it was good, it was a good experience. They got merged with somebody and disappeared, swallowed up and they're no longer there. Well, about Rutgers? Well, it was a big deal. I always wore my beanie cap. It was a thing to do. Nobody ever told me anything more about it, but I liked my beanie cap. It never bothered me at all, to walk back and forth to the AG school to classes. That was fine. I used to walk, it was good walking. And I found the professors impressed me very much. They were good people. They knew what they were doing. They were excellent, you know, very effective in what they did, both at the AG college and here, and with my curriculum. I took a lot of my courses here on campus. I took a lot of chemistry, all the chemistry you could get. The only course that I really didn't do well in was the course I took in this building.

KP: Physics course, no doubt.

TA: Physics. I think that was the only 3.0 that I got while I was here. And I remember, about my grades, after the freshman, first semester, and I got some right, but they were not good enough for a better grade. And I think I got a 1.0 in something and a bunch of 2.0s and I got a couple of 3.0s and I thought, "Gosh, that's terrible." And I showed it to my brother and he said "Tom, you've done very well," you know. "What do you expect? They weren't going to give you good grades right away, anyway." And so that was a comfort to me. And sure enough, over time it built up, and I remember having my grades, I'd always go up to Connecticut whenever I had anytime to be with Virginia, and I'd have my grades sent up there on a postcard. The postmistress up there got very impressed with my grades, you see. I'd ask her, "Did I get my history grade yet?" She'd say "No, that's not here yet." She was lovely lady, lived right down at the end of the street, at a little town called Gildersleeve. But I loved the sciences. I just soaked them up, except for physics, and I don't know why that was. I think we had a good teacher. He was Professor Porter. I remember his demonstrations and I understood, I thought, but I couldn't give it back for some reason. And I think, I found over the years, that I'm not a good engineer. Something about my abilities that don't focus in that area. I thought they would. I was good in anything else, why wasn't I good at physics? Well, that's the way it was. I remember my roommate took physics and he failed it. And I've talked to other fellas, particularly at this reunion, that failed courses. They couldn't understand chemistry. And I remember talking with my son, when I was up there recently in Vermont. Our son, excuse me. He took chemistry when he was going to college after the war. He took Quantitative Analysis. I loved Quantitative Analysis. Professor didn't bother me, he gave us a good lecture, he told us about what we had to do, but many of the men in the class said they didn't think he was worth the dam, you know. He didn't help them at all. But I'd hit the formula on the button, you know, and I understood what was going on, in the formulation, and Tom told me, anyway, that he took a course like that when

he was in college and he got the formulas all exactly right, precisely. But he didn't go to class, so the teacher failed him and that made him so mad, you know. What are we here for? He didn't get anything out of going to class, but he didn't get along with the teacher. She was a woman. We're not all anti-feminists.

JL: Did you have a favorite professor here at Rutgers?

TA: A favorite professor? Well, I don't like to pick favorites.

KP: Although you did mention Professor Nelson on your survey form, so maybe if you can say little bit about him.

TA: He was among the top guys, yeah. He was a terrific guy and he made a big impact in research, on wildlife and the shore. He could put it out so it was very interesting and understandable, and I think in terms of ability, in terms of productivity in relation to teaching, I named him high. But the others I liked, I thought they were capable. It's awfully hard for me to pick of the best, except for Virginia. It's just, I'd feel it's discriminating, you see, and they really aren't better. Maybe I just don't know enough about them. That's how I felt about it. But if I had to pick, I think I picked a logical person. He was preeminent in his field. One thing I didn't like at Rutgers, when we got where, was a lot of lab work, and lab work gets to be highly individual. You look through the microscope or you'd dissect this, or something like that. And Al Schatz was in the class, and I forget what it was we're doing, whether it was zoology or what it was [we were] doing in the class, and he came over and he wanted to look at my microscope and find out what I had found. And I resented that deeply. He was intruding, so I didn't like it, in brief. And that's just me. If I'm going to do something, leave me alone. I'll do it. I'd love to build stone walls, but get out of my way. I don't want you around, you know? Just leave me alone and I'll do it. And that's just me. It's not a very social, desirable attribute, but that's just a behavior factor. And I didn't mind. As a younger child, I felt I had to learn from people and I didn't mind so much doing things, like my father for example. He was telling me how to hit a nail, that's a little bit different. But here, I felt I was eligible to be independent. I guess that's just a feeling. It's just a growth factor. I don't know if any other people feel that way or not. I remember after exams, taking the exams in the gym, for example. The guys afterwards, one in particular, I remember Carl Bosenberg, he was a very nice guy. Have you talked to him?

KP: Yes.

TA: Very fine man. I talked to him on the phone last night. He doesn't come to the reunions. He doesn't talk very well, he said. He doesn't want to come, but he's a good man and I wanted to find out how he was. I remember him particularly, and others after the exam, would say, "Tom, how did you answer this question. What did you put for that?" I wouldn't tell them. And I was telling Virginia about this the other night, she said, "Why didn't you tell him?" You know. "It doesn't make a difference. It's all over." But it's not a very desirable social attribute, you know. I know that. But that's the way it is.

JL: You had mentioned a female professor. Were there many?"

TA: A female professor?

KP: I think that was your son.

TA: That was our son. That wasn't me, that was our son. Well, I remember the girls in class here very well. There was a girl from NJC who took accounting here. She was a nice girl and I liked her. I remember walking with her. We went canoeing one time. But I was never really interested in her, particularly. There was a fine girl that was in my forestry class, my last year, when I was a senior, from NJC. A very fine girl, nice girl. She was a good student and pleasant to be with. Could communicate well, but I never felt a warmth towards her. But she developed tuberculosis, went home and died. And really, it hit me. I thought that was a pity. I wrote to her once, she wrote to me once, after she went home. How that affected me was, I had to go to the clinic and get checked out for tuberculosis and I understand the procedure, so it wasn't a big deal. Anything else about women, I can't tell you.

KP: Where did you live at Rutgers?

TA: Well, first-year I lived out on Richardson Street with a family. They were quite young and they rented rooms at a very reasonable price. 250 dollars or something like that, a week, and that was a good deal and I shared a room with Burton Rockcliff, who got to be a doctor. And Burt and I didn't have much in common. We didn't communicate very much. He had his bed and I had my bed and he got up and I got up and it didn't matter very much. I didn't dislike him. But I remember once he said about me, I was getting up and getting dressed to have a date in New York with Virginia. She was coming down from Connecticut and I was going into New York and I had ten dollars. So I met her at Grand Central Station, we went to Radio City Music Hall and we went a restaurant chain, I don't know if it's still around or not. I don't quite remember. They charged five dollars a meal, I remember. It was a big deal. Anyway, that was the last of my money. I had more than ten dollars, I guess. That was the last of the money that I'd spent, was only meal. Well, I was getting dressed for that occasion, and I guess I always felt that I should look right, except when I'm working, that doesn't make any difference. And so, I was getting up and I put on my shirt, put on my trousers, I hooked up the suspenders, I put on a belt. You know, a belt looks good. I put on my jacket so I could look proper when I went to see Virginia. And Burt said, all I heard him say that morning was, "Tom, you're not taking any chances are you?" I didn't know that he was even awake, but he remembered that at the fiftieth reunion. He came back, "I want to see Tom." He said "Tom, you remember that time?" I don't think I ever saw him very much after that first year. And I remember one fella, Wally (Hergit), that was in the house at that time, he went to a fraternity and I think he flunked out. I can't remember very much about the other people, I don't know what happened to them. I don't see them.

JL: What did you think of Greek life at Rutgers because I know that you didn't join a fraternity?

TA: Why didn't I join a fraternity?

JL: Yeah.

TA: I wanted to join fraternity, but my brother was the treasurer. If I wanted something important, I had to get the money out of George. And George didn't think a fraternity was necessary, that's all. And I was asked to join one, but I felt a little bit, frankly, that they'd like to have my grades in their computations. But I thought, well, I'll have a good time anyway, so it didn't bother me very much. I can understand that. But I wasn't asked by any other fraternity to join ...

----------END OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE----------

KP: This continues an interview with Mr. Thomas Adams, on May 18, 1997, at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Kurt Piehler …

JL: And Jen Lenkiewicz.

KP: You read the paper growing up, which I heard was very unusual, from what I've gathered from a lot of these interviews. It seems like you knew a lot about the New Deal, enough to paint a sign …

TA: Yes.

KP: But you must have known a lot about, from reading what was going on in the world just by your reading *The Herald Tribune* ...

TA: That's right

KP: What did you think was going on the time?

TA: At the time? I was very conscious of what was going on in the world. I remember writing a paper for freshman English, and it was forecast that, eventually, there was [going] to be a war in Europe. I knew that. So I researched the paper and I got back the paper with a good grade, except the professor said, "Mr. Adams you should strive to improve your handwriting." It was a good statement, but I never was a good handwriter, and am still not. I can't write neatly like a lot of people can. And even if I try, I can do it slowly, but it's still not very good. So, there is no question that there was gonna be a war and I was going to be in it. There was no question of that at all. It's just the way it ought to be. So I didn't mind ROTC. I thought it was good and I took the first two years. It was a pleasure. I got to be in Scarlet Rifles, I liked that. I remember being, I liked to drill and I remember they had a countdown drill to determine who was the best soldier in the Scarlet Rifles at the end of the sophomore year, I think this was. So I got almost to the top. A fellow named Clark Espenship from Highland Park got the top, and they did us repeatedly. They had a heck of a time deciding. But I didn't mind. I liked it. It didn't bother me at all. About the rest of the ROTC courses, I found that some of the teachers were really not very good. They didn't know how to communicate very well. They were doing their best, and I never minded the parades or the drills or that type of thing. I wore my Scarlet Rifles badge, I thought that was a good thing. I liked the uniform. I remember one time, I came into the class, I forget which, senior or junior year, where the professor was there, and I'd brought an umbrella from home. It was raining, and so I went into the class and the professor said, "Adams, officers

don't carry umbrellas." Well, okay, I won't carry an umbrella. But it just seemed to me like a sensible thing to do. And I liked the ROTC summer camp. That was very good. And remember they had a band up there that paraded the company street to wake us up every morning. And what I didn't like was, I was given kitchen duty as part of the routine and I was put on pots and pans, washing pots and pans, and there was a corporal in there, [thinking] that he was going to fix this kid, and I sensed that, in his behavior toward me, I didn't like that. But the other things we did I liked very well, and I felt that we had a good program and I learned a lot from it. I got to be an expert in the automatic pistol. I wasn't so good in the other weapons firing. It was worthwhile, it was timely, it was useful to me, and so it was a good thing. The fact that they didn't make me a company commander or something like that didn't bother me. That was just the procedure. So there was no question, when I was out, I was going to be a second lieutenant and I wasn't going to be around very long and that was it. But Virginia wanted to get married, she wanted very much to get married, and so we got married a week before graduation. And that was probably a wise thing, under the circumstances. I don't know. I think we could have gotten along if we got married sooner.

KP: Did you think of waiting until after the war was over, in terms of getting married?

TA: No, I didn't want to do that. I owed Virginia. We'd been sweethearts. And I knew she wanted a baby. I couldn't leave Virginia without leaving her with a baby. That was just it. But the fact that I had to go, I understood. She knew I had to go. I knew I had to go and that didn't bother me. It was just the thing to do. And what happened to me in the military, I was sent to Camp Croft after about six weeks. The graduation was early May, and I think I went on active duty on June 15th, so I went to Camp Croft, South Carolina, and that was a big thing.

KP: Before going into the military I want to ask you a few more questions about Rutgers.

TA: You want to hear more about Rutgers?

KP: One of my standard questions is, especially for the Class of '42, was, did you know Vinnie Utz at all? He was such a legend. Do you have any Vinnie Utz stories?

TA: Stories about people? Or anything like that?

KP: Yeah.

TA: Well I remember, for example, I was tapped for Alpha Zeta early, and I liked that. I thought it was a good thing. I got to be the cencor, the top guy in that, because I was the best graded guy. I remember I liked the Alpha Zeta thing, and going out to the meetings at the, it was the Short Course Building out at the campus in the evening, and our main job was to pick people who we thought ought to be in the Alpha Zeta and, [on] second thought, thinking about it, I feel I was unreasonably discriminatory in that situation, but that's what you had to do, and so I did it. I thought it was my duty. And I remember, too, I was in forestry, I worked at NYA, that was the usual way to earn money, and one of the things I was doing was planting trees. (Charlie Polk?) was the instructor, junior year, for forestry work and dendrology, was, I think, is what the class that he taught was. The senior class was general forestry. But there I was only one, as I recall, in

that curriculum. It was a tough curriculum, in part, I think, because people weren't interested in it. That was what I wanted to do. I wanted to learn about it. There was never any question about it with me. I remember sitting alone in the lab, Charlie Polk would come in and ask me, "What's this, what's that, what's in the lab? And otherwise, I'd just look at it and figure out what the hell was that. Is this a piece of oak or piece of black cherry or is it an elm or what is it, you know? But I did get to learn a lot. The thing about what I learned stuck with me. The details are fading. I have a problem distinguishing among oaks. I know a white oak and a red oak, for example, but there are some forty species of oaks, and I don't know many of them and felt I should know them all. And I knew, to get what I wanted to get out of it, I'd have to go to graduate school. And I felt that what I'd really have to learn, I'll learn in graduate school, so I'd do the best I can to get the best foundation that I can have. And that didn't bother me, that I didn't know everything about what I could have learned. I remember taking a trip with some Alpha Zeta boys out to a property the University owns up in Sussex County someplace. I don't know if they still have it or not.

KP: Yes, They do.

TA: They do?

KP: They still do.

TA: Good. And we planted trees up there, just for the fun, and I remember riding with some fella who had a car. I didn't have a car. But he said, "Come on, come on," and we did. And five or six of us piled into the car and drove up there and we had a good time. I can't remember all their names, though. They've kind've faded into the background over the years.

KP: What about Dean Metzger? Do you remember having any dealings with Dean Metzger? He was a very memorable figure, even if you didn't have a lot of contact with him.

TA: I sure did. You know, that's a good question for an AG. You ask any AG, and he'll tell you Dean Metzger was the best man. He was an excellent man. I knew he got his credentials by working with the dairy industry in Vermont. And he talked like a New Englander all the time. He was a very well informed man and he liked what he was doing. He believed in it. And we learned a lot, I learned a lot from him. And I remember going out to the round barn at the AG campus for lectures out there. And I remember going to the Short Course Building for other lectures in the bad weather, sometimes, by Dean Metzger. And he had a student assistant or fellow or something like that. I can't remember his name. He was always around, he was always in the class, he took care of all the stuff for the dean very effectively, you know. Just like you. And I remember him, and of course, I liked it, and it was all good stuff. Another professor I remember very well from the AG campus was a Russian man to who taught soils. He was an excellent scientist, very good man. And he was talking about the soils, he still had quite a heavy accent, and he'd talk about "the perfect oodzol," and he had a funny way of pronouncing loess, l-o-e-s-s , but he said it funny, but I have no memory of how he said that. But he was also an excellent teacher. And I didn't take a great many more courses. I took a bacteriology course that was taught by, no, I think that was taught here, on this campus. I took an entomology course that was taught out at Rutgers and I didn't think much of that. I didn't learn much about it. I knew

you had to have entomology. When my brother went to forestry college, for example, after his freshman year, he came home and we traipsed around the country catching bugs. And one of my best friends in school, the fella that lived next-door, that I stayed with the night my sister was killed, I wrote to him about coming to a high school reunion. And he's had a heart problem, he couldn't travel or something at that time. He was living up near Rochester New York, but he wrote to mean he said, "Tom, how is your brother?" He said, "Do you remember going around with your brother picking up bugs?" And I knew the bugs were important and I knew I would have to learn them, you know, if I focused on that area, but I didn't pick it up for some reason, but I got an acceptable grade but it wasn't the big deal. But I thought a lot of Professor Johnson, who was a botanist. He was an excellent teacher, and I got a lot out of his work, and I liked that very much. And I had friends here, some from fraternities. One of them, from the fraternity, was a usher at my wedding, for example. So I didn't feel a dichotomy, in any sense, you know, between me and the guys in the fraternity, except that they slept in the fraternity and that they had to pay dues, and you could bring your girl there, that was about it. We had a group that ate together at Winants. And I remember them very well. One was Frank Schafer, who got to be a doctor, and Frank was a good man. He was very tall, he was six foot three inches or something like that, six foot four, maybe, was a very good student, and I liked being with him. But he wouldn't come to the reunions. He felt, I don't know why, he didn't want to leave his practice. Another one was Alexander Edgar, a very nice guy, and he's the guy I see most of at the reunions. And he didn't want to be interviewed. And I said, "Alex, interview," you know. "It's not for you it's for other people." He's a stubborn guy.

KP: He lives out in Kansas. I wrote to him. I was even willing to swing up north, and he's very ...

TA: He didn't want to do it. And another fellow was Elliott Alexander, who was a journalism student. And he had polio, but he was a nice guy. Polio, looking at him, after I got to know him, didn't make a difference. He was a bright guy and he could quote things, and he had original bits of things that he wrote. We always ate in the cafeteria, so this little thing I'll never forget, went like this: "Cafeteria Catherine, she's the girl of my dreams, she is my honey, she never let me down, and she's got the cutest ice box in town." Another one was about Robert the Roue from Reading, Pennsylvannia. I remember that. So whenever we talk about, we have a friend that lives near Reading, the Roue, we always called him the Roue. He was a very smart guy and he picked up these words, which I thought I could add to my vocabulary. I think those were pretty much the guys that always ate lunch together or supper together. And we ate well, and we had a good time at supper, and then we'd quit and go back and study, or something like that. It was no big deal. Another one I'd forgotten about, and forgive me for forgetting about, another was Dick Harms. Now Dick graduated after three years, and he got to be Phi Beta Kappa, and we always talked about the war, and we said, "Well, we'll just have to do it, that's all. No question about it. We want to get into it." And he always took the, he wanted to be a lawyer, so he took the opposite point, "I'm not going to get into that. I won't go in, why do you want to go in for?" And so on like that. We talked about that. But he went in very early and was killed in airplane accident. And he's a brilliant guy and it's a pity. That's was just the way it was. And that's what bothers me about the war, all the good people, all the good people that were lost.

KP: You accepted the idea very early. So you signed up for ROTC knowing that there was

going to be a war. But a lot of Roosevelt was doing was very controversial, Lend-Lease and so forth. How did you feel about all the actions Roosevelt was taking in terms of foreign policy at the time?

TA: Well, it never bothered me. It didn't really bother me at all.

KP: For someone who had painted over a sign ...

TA: No, I wasn't anti about it. They had good people. When I went into the military, I had an excellent regimental commander. Very effective guy. He knew what he had to do and he did it. And I liked it. It was my duty. I went to Rutgers and I got tapped to go to the motor transport school. Now, Tom, the guy that's in charge of this program?

KP: Tom Kindre.

TA: Tom Kindre. He remembered, that we were outside, there was a motor school, in the place where we were ...

KP: Camp Croft.

TA: … at Camp Croft. And he said, there were guys standing around outside, and he said "I need six guys to go to motor school. You, you, you, and you." And I never could figure out why I was picked to go motor school. It didn't make sense to me. But they wanted me to go to motor school, and I liked motor school, and it was a good thing. We'd have to spend summer, awfully hot summer, in Columbus, Georgia. But so what? We'd peel our coveralls off, and get out there, the shirt's off, anyway, underneath, go out and play volleyball. But I can remember packing the rear wheel bearings on the truck, that you had to do. I don't remember it now, but I remember the procedures that you have to follow to determine the problems, whether a electrical problem, and the only bad incident I had, in my military career, was, we're going on a night duty, a night training thing of some kind, so I was out of the camp for a night and I wanted to call Virginia before I went out for the night, and I was in the room where they have the telephone. And I just picked up the phone, nobody was at the phone, and this guy came out, he been in the john, he was coming around a corner, he said, "Put that phone down, Adams. It's my phone, I got here first," you see. So I considered, what should I do? "It's not right that he should push me off that phone," I said to myself. I said, "Well, he's bigger than I am, and I can't really punch him because I'd get hurt." And I probably couldn't hurt him much anyway. And I thought I could pick up the phone and I can probably kill him with it. I said, "Oh, no." You know, that's not the thing to do. So I just left But apparently he bragged about that, to a big guy who was in our class, a fellow named Head, who came from Texas, and talked Texan. And a day or two after that, he [Head] came up to me and he said, "Tom, if he does anything like that, if he bothers you at all anymore, you tell me. I'll take care of him." And it was a touching incident. It turned out well, you see. But then, I went back to Camp Croft, and I was sent to the 100th Infantry Division, at Fort Jackson. And while I was at Camp Croft, I knew what my duty was, Virginia went home after Columbus because I didn't know what was going happen. And so, we were together drinking beer one night, with the old grads, you know, from Rutgers, and talking about how's things going, what have you done, what are you going to do, etcetera, and this fellow who

was an old grad, he must have been thirty-five or something like that at the time, was sitting next me and he said, "Tom, are you married?" And I said, "Oh, yes. I'm married. Very much married." And he said, "Where is your wife?" And I said, "Well, she's with her family in Connecticut." I thought that was the place where she should be, and he said to me, "Tom, she's not doing you much good up there, is she?" So I called her up that night, and I said "Honey, come on down. I want you here." And so she came down about two days later. I met her at the station, and that's the way it was.

KP: Where did she live?

TA: In Middletown, Connecticut.

KP: I mean, where did you wife live when she got to Camp Croft?

TA: Oh, I got this mixed up, excuse me. That was before I went down to Fort Benning. That was before that. So I knew where I was gonna be for three months. Excuse me, I got that mixed up.

KP: So this was at Benning where she came down.

TA: Benning. Well, what we did at Benning, we got down there and we couldn't find a place to live. We couldn't find a place to stay for the night, the hotel was filled up, and we went out to this extremely crummy tourist place, that had separate places like that, and that's where we spent the night. So I said "Well, Virginia, I'm going out to the camp, you see what you can do to get us a place to stay." So she went out and looked for places to stay, for a room with kitchen privileges, which was the standard procedure. And she looked at some places and she didn't like them for some reason, but she met a woman in this procedure, I don't know how she met them, they said, "Well, come out for the evening," or something like that. I can remember Virginia setting the table with a blue tablecloth, putting the candlesticks out, putting the silver out. When I would come home in the evening, boy, that was terrific. I remember, however, one time in the middle of the night, Virginia was out of bed, and she was beating against the wall with her slipper, and there's a big bug, a completely harmless bug, they call them a wood roach, I think. About that big. A huge thing. And there she was, trying to get that bug on the wall. I said, "Honey, what's the matter?" I can also remember seeing, there was a group of colored people that lived nearby, across a gully. And I can remember hearing them sing at night. And of course, I can also remember, Virginia had to put the pillows out, to hang them out to dry. And I remember we had to get a bus out to camp, which meant getting up at an ungodly hour. But a fella had a car, and he said, "Sure, help pay for the gas and you can come along." It was no problem. And it got better after while. So, we liked it. We got Wednesday afternoons off, and we'd go into town and go to the air-conditioned theater and have an air-conditioned dinner, and then go back by bus to our room at night. Well, that's the way it was. It was no problem. It was just the way it was. And the fact that it was hot, so it was hot. Virginia didn't complain about it. She bought a little black lunch box, to pack my lunch. Always gave me a nice lunch with fruit in it, like plums, I remember, sandwiches, a piece of lettuce, piece of carrot, something like that.

KP: Now this was at Benning. Were you in the advanced infantry at Benning?

TA: No. I went to the motor school.

KP: At Camp Croft?

TA: No. Let me try to get this straighten out. I went to motor school at Benning, for three months. After three months at Benning, then I went back to Camp Croft to be assigned someplace. We didn't know where. And then that's when I was tapped to go to Fort Jackson. And then I could have home-leave before that, before being assigned to Fort Jackson. So in the meantime, my brother had gone, he'd volunteered. And he said, "I've got that car at home, Tom, and it's not doing me any good, so why don't you just take it." So I did. And we drove back to Fort Jackson in George's car. So we had car after that, until I subsequently got my experience at Fort Jackson. You want to hear about that now?

KP: Yeah.

TA: Do you want to know more about Rutgers?

KP: I guess one of the questions is, you'd been in ROTC. A lot of people said that you learn a lot in ROTC, but once you're in the military, you're really, really learning …

TA: Yeah, I really liked that.

KP: Did you like motor school? It seems that you didn't have any problems. Did you have any problems?

TA: No problems down there are all. No, I liked it. And we had the guys that knew what they were doing. Some guy in the motor industry who'd been an engineer with General Motors or something like that. He ran it and he knew what he was doing. And I got to know the vehicles, the old trucks that we had, the three axle trucks they were. I even got to learn to drive it. And the jeeps, and the command cars, I knew all about them, you see. So there is no question I liked it and I soaked it up. So when I went to Fort Jackson, they made me motor transport officer, just zap, like that, they said, "Lieutenant, you're motor transport officer." I started there, I guess it was September, early October, probably after the home-leave, and I was with the first bunch of guys that got made first lieutenants. They made me first lieutenant right away. That was great. Get more money. So I organized the motor school. It all had to be set up. It was a brand-new division. And my incidents with the military at that time, I'll tell you about those. We set up a training program for drivers and mechanics, and we got assigned drivers and mechanics and they had to learn about the damn stuff.

KP: This was still at Fort Benning ...

TA: No, this was at Fort Jackson.

KP: Fort Jackson, okay.

TA: Where I was motor transport officer.

KP: So you were doing what you had been trained for at Benning?

TA: Yeah, I had been trained at Benning ...

KP: And now you're setting up this school, and you're doing ...

TA: Yeah, that's where I am. That's the transition. And I had a great respect for our colonel and the other people. The executive officer was kind of a lazy guy, but he was a nice guy. I got along well with my company commander, he left me alone, he didn't tell me to do anything. But I had a master sergeant that had been assigned from some division, because he'd been a good boxer, I think.

KP: You were with the 100th Infantry at this point?

TA: 100th Infantry Division, yes.

KP: Your colonel was ...

TA: Andrew Tychen. T-Y-C-H-E-N. Did I spell that right?

KP: I think so.

TA: Tom Kindre was in that division. A bunch of us were in that division.

KP: So you knew Tom when you were young officers?

TA: Yes, that's right. And, Tom has probably told you this, too, I don't know, but I will, too, to validate what he told you. So anyway, I was very proud of my wife. I was extremely proud of Virginia, you know, and I wanted to show her off, really. What a wonderful girl I had. And so I said, "I'd like to invite some of the boys from Rutgers [over] for Thanksgiving dinner." It was a family tradition. These guys didn't have anybody around, and so I asked her if I could invite some guys from Rutgers, and one of them was Tom Kindre. And at the fiftieth reunion, he told me all about his experience, of coming to the Thanksgiving dinner. He told me, at that time, that, "I really understood, I got a feeling, what wonderful thing it could be, if you could be married to the right girl." And, of course, Virginia had to cook the turkey. She'd never cooked a turkey. There was no question, you see, about that. And so, we had the platter, we had one of Mary Adams' platters in the kitchen we could use, and, so I think I held that turkey while she got it out of the oven. Well, the turkey had been pretty well over-cooked, and some parts of it were extremely crisp and hard, and she'd put it all on the platter and I didn't hold it right and it fell on the floor. But we were quietly sequestered, the guys never knew that, you see. So I carried in the turkey, and I was very proud for carving it. I put it on the table, and the turkey was really very good. It really tasted great. And Virginia had the cranberry sauce, she had the creamed onions, and she had another vegetable, and she had mashed potatoes, she had gravy, giblet gravy, and it was all very good. And she had said many times, that she had often watched her mother

cooking, but her mother wasn't the kind of cook that you could follow. She'd just put a little bit of that, and a little bit of that, of the other, but she's a very bright girl, and she learned, you know, that you follow the book. So if she had to find the book, she'd find the book and do it. So that was no problem. But that was a great day, when I was at Jackson. And then, I loved to exercise, I always loved to exercise. I always did pull-ups, and run, anything like that. I'd keep myself in shape. One of the best things I liked about the situation at Jackson [was that] they had a tumbling pit. Do you know what a tumbling pit is? Well, you think about it, and you think how could you ever do it? Well, it was a long pit, it must have been at least twenty-five or fifty feet long or more possibly, with wooden sides filled with saw dust. And so what you did was, you'd run, going in, and tumble. And it was wonderful. You'd turn over sometimes, three or four times, depending about how fast you did it. So the motor pool where I worked was right down the hill, and I'd always do that, going down to the motor pool. It was routine. I'd stop and do a few of chin-ups, and tumbling, that was the thing I could do quickly, and then you'd get down and get to work. And I liked the training down there, too. I'd like to go out and talk about the routines you'd follow when you're on a mission, when you took vehicles out on a night march or something like that. We had a sand pit, as far as a training facility. I remember going up in seeing how that jeep would negotiate that sand pit, and I could tell people what that was like, and I liked that. I liked the training part of it. I enjoyed that. But about this guy that came from the motor pool, who was my master sergeant, I realized after while that he was not the man for this job, so I went and talked to the executive officer. And this was about after six months or so, six or seven months, possibly. I said, "Colonel, this guy is not good enough. I need another guy to be the master sergeant." And he said, "All right, Adams. That's fine. You know who you want?" And I said, "Yes. I think I know what I want. He's a sergeant, and he's a mature man, and he's with one of the battalions. He was a staff sergeant, I think. I'd like to have him." He said, "Okay. That's what it will be." And there was no question about. So that was one of the things I knew I had to do. And I felt awfully sorry for this guy, the boyer, because the procedure was to break him in rank to a private. Of course, he couldn't do anything to me about it. He had to be perfectly civil. He knew the Army procedures. Well, he got to be a corporal mechanic before I left. I made him a corporal mechanic, and he could have been a good mechanic, sergeant mechanic, and that was his top, that was just about what he could do, I think. And that bothered me, but it was a necessary thing to do. They sent me down a guy, a lieutenant who had been sent in, they didn't know what do with him, so Colonel Stowe told me, "Adams, I want you to see if you can find something for him to do." So I tried to find something for him to do and he didn't do it. He didn't show up. And one night, I went into the officers mess to eat, and he was seated at the end of the table, and I didn't want to talk to him. I sat at the other end of the table, and he'd been drinking, and he said to me over the table, nobody else around, he said, "Adams, you're a sad sack." And I didn't say anything to him. I didn't want to involve myself with him. I shouldn't have said, "Well, you're drunk" or anything like that. Because, to heck with him, just don't deal with him. I didn't want to deal with him, I didn't have to deal with him, so I just told the colonel, "I can't use him, he won't do anything." So, that was good, and I liked that attitude. It held me responsible. And they gave me the job to do. And what happened to me was, our anniversary was in May, and Virginia's parents came down to see us, and they stayed at Mary Adams' house with us. I remember that very well. And that night, I'd developed severe asthma. And that's an awful thing. You just can't breathe. And Virginia was really frightened. I said, "Honey, take me out to the post hospital. That's the only thing we can do. Get the car, take me out." So she did, and we went out there and they gave me a shot of adrenaline. Gone.

Absolutely gone. So, after a week or two of that, going home and so forth, being in the hospital long enough, until they were sure I was out of it, I was sent to Oliver General Hospital in Augusta, Georgia. That was a big hospital, built on what used to be a country club, a place you'd come in and stay for the weekend and play golf. It had a golf course and everything like that. And they kept me there for three months, and they took out my tonsils, and they straightened a broken bone in my nose. It was horrible operation. Gosh, that was awful. But I survived it. I don't remember what it felt like, but it was just one of these things. And the board met on me and decided that I was fit for limited service. I couldn't go overseas. [I was] disqualified for overseas service. So they sent me back to Camp Croft, which is an infantry replacement training center. And there, I was assigned to the 27th Training Battalion commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Lotke who was a National Guard officer from New England. And they didn't know what to do with me. They used me as a guy to see what he could do. They assigned me to a night march one time, and I was out on that night march, and I was carrying three or four rifles, the dust was boiling up all over. And I came back, and I had gotten asthma, not severe, but I could feel the development of it, and I said I would do whatever I can, but I don't ever want to do that again, I'd better not do that again. I don't want to get sick again. And so I didn't get any duty like that again, but the Colonel made me supply officer. And so I [was] supply officer.

KP: It's not an easy job, I imagine.

TA: Well, it was interesting. I didn't know a damned thing about it, of course. But I had to learn about it, you see. I had to determine the quantities of rations that should be drawn. I had the supervise the layoff of the rations, the amount of beef that the truck put off, the beef, into the mess hall. They'd get so many cans of this, so many cans of that. And that was no big deal. And they sent me out, as a supply officer for the battalion, they sent me when our battalion had a group going out for field training. They sent me out as supply officer. So I just had to make sure we got the food and somebody was cooking it, something like that, somebody dug the latrines. That was my duty. And I liked that. A fellow from Texas, Lieutenant (Nederland), he was in our division. I remember, walking out at night, nothing else to do, and hearing men who had their hounds out, and they were after coons. And they talked about their coons, their dogs, and where the coon was, they said, “That coon is over there.” And the Old Pirate, or something like that. They identified their dogs, they could tell their dogs by their bark. And I believed it, I think they could. "He's getting close, so we better go," they said. So that was interesting. And I liked Lieutenant Nederland. He was a very nice fellow. He came from Nederland, Texas.

----------END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO----------

KP: … the advanced ROCT, into the advanced, specialized training programs, before Pearl Harbor, or even after Pearl Harbor, people couldn't get into, several people told me, "I couldn't get into the Air Force because I had bad teeth,” and they wondered what did this have to do, and some were obvious, like eyesight. But you had the asthma attack. Had it ever occurred to you before this incident ...

TA: No, I wasn't disqualified for anything like that. My eyes were good, my hearing was good, all that stuff.

KP: You never had problems ...

TA: I was fully qualified, physically, when I went in, and I don't think they really knew, at that time, what caused the asthma. It might have been psychosomatic. They didn't know. It could have been. They thought so at that time. I don't think they think so now, so much, but that was a possibility. But that was just the case, and that's why, I think, I wanted to get better physically qualified, because I knew that if I was going out into the field, I'd better be damned well be physically qualified. So that was just all part of the procedure. Well, getting back to Camp Croft, let's talk about that. The Colonel took a shine to me, apparently. And the fellow who was battalion adjutant, was moved out for some reason, he was sent someplace else, probably, [and] he [the Colonel] made me his battalion adjutant. And certainly after that, two to three months after that, he got to be regimental commander, so the fellow who was there, who was regimental adjutant, got shipped out, so I went with the colonel to be regimental adjutant. And I liked that. All I had to do was publish orders, you know, to people. I kept, a group of people who kept the records, to keep them straight. I had to approve a lot of things. I approved three-day passes, for example, that was one of my duties. I had to conduct parades and ceremonies. I loved that. Except one time, I was doing that, I fouled up the markers, where the units had to stop. And I always went back and checked on them and it didn't make sense to me, when I went back and checked on them. And I knew exactly how many paces, and where you put the pins and everything like that. That's what I did. And the guy who preceded me told me precisely what the procedure was. I always carried a card in my left hand but I never looked at it after the [parade] got started. And I thought, gee whiz, I told the colonel, "Colonel, I don't know what happened. I don't know how it happened. I did the usual procedure, but I don't think it's right." He didn't say anything. The parade worked out fine and I had to stand at the edge, I had to be the guide for the companies when they lined up, so they'd probably lined up on me anyway, and they knew the distance between the companies anyway. And so it probably didn't make much difference, these were experienced guys. And then, when I saw everybody was lined up, I'd yell, I could really yell, I'd say, "Guide's post." And so all the guides would all change their position, they'd rotate ninety degrees, from looking this way to looking that way. And I'd have to march up to where the Colonel was standing and salute him and say, "Sir, the parade is formed." And he'd say to me, "Take your posts, sir." And so I'd march around behind him and stay there 'till the parade was over, and salute the colors when they came by. So that was all good. I didn't mind. I liked it, you see. It was a good thing. I think soldiers should parade. I think it's a good thing to teach. I don't know if they do it anymore.

KP: I think they do.

TA: Do they?

KP: I think soldiers will parade until the end of time.

TA: A lot of people don't like it, but I thought it was good. You were part of a team. You followed orders, and all these things.

KP: How long were you a part of this replacement training battalion?

TA: I was there about, let's see, I went there in the fall of '43, and I got out in '46.

KP: That was a long time.

TA: Three years. A long time. I got to be a fixture. And we had good time there. The regimental officers would get their wives [and] go out at night. One thing happened, I remember. They were having an NCO party at the motor pool, where they trained people in motor work there. They had the beer, and the beer was in a big GI can that had been filled with ice. And so I was the lowest ranking guy at corporate headquarters, I was a captain, the placement and training officer was a major, and we had the executive officer who was a lieutenant colonel, and the Colonel. So I was the lowest ranking officer. So they all took their beer out of the GI can and drank it. Chug-a-lug, like that. And I never drunk beer like that before, and it was cold. But I knew I couldn't fail, but I remember that incident, how that cold beer, cruising down my alimentary canal. And it was not the most agreeable thing in the world, but I did it. So that was all good.

JL: You read newspapers a lot. How would you say the United States reported the war around that time?

TA: About the war?

JL: Yeah. How would you say the United States reported the war in the newspapers?

TA: Yeah, I did. I read the paper and I found out what they were doing. And we knew all about the war. The Army did a good job of communicating about the war to people. They had a good paper. One time, when I was with the infantry division, we were detailed to be an escort for President Roosevelt's train. So we had to be along the track between Warm Springs and Washington. Well, we were in South Carolina, so we had only about a hundred fifty miles or so. So that was a good duty, and it was good training. I didn't mind that all. People said they saw his dog, but I didn't believe it.

KP: This was the famous Fala?

TA: Yeah. "I saw Fala on the train." But I didn't believe that so much. Another duty we had, which I liked, I was detailed to go with a group of other officers and NCOs to pick up our motor equipment from Fort McPherson in Atlanta and drive it back to Jackson. And we did that. We went over one day and stayed overnight, and came back the next day. Went to the officers' club during the night, drank beer, the nurses were there and so on. It was a happy occasion. So that was an interesting event for me. It went all orderly. My duty was, I wasn't in command and of the [detail], but I was the sub-commander, for fifty or seventy-five vehicles, or something like that. I just had to be sure they kept their distance, that they didn't run off the road. They all knew how to drive, so it wasn't a problem.

KP: You were destined to be in an infantry division, and Tom Kindre and I have talked at length during his interviews, that if you had not had this asthmatic condition, you might well have gone overseas.

TA: I could have, yeah.

KP: And the survival rate for lieutenants in infantry divisions was very low. Even Tom Kindre has talked about ...

TA: I fully expected not to come back, you see. I knew what the real world was like.

KP: You knew that?

TA: I knew that. I was fully aware of that. The casualty rates [for] second lieutenants were the highest, by far, from any other specialty. I knew that's what it was. But, again, you know, I wasn't afraid of it. I didn't worry about it. I don't think Virginia worried about it. We're not the worrying type, thank God. It's just the way it is. So, when I was determined ineligible, I wasn't elated. That was when the guys congratulated me. And I said, "Well, sure, so what?" That's the way I felt about it. I felt better because I could be with Virginia. I was rewarded for doing nothing and I didn't feel that was right. So while we were living at Croft, our daughter was born at the Spartanburg Hospital. And I remember I wanted to go in and get Virginia a Christmas present once, while I was there, I probably did it more than once, I just went and asked Colonel Stowe if I could go into town and buy Virginia a Christmas present. He said, "Go ahead, Adams."

KP: You live in South Carolina now. Had you been in the South before World War II?

TA: I hadn't been there before. I'd been through South Carolina. My brother took me on the trip that went through parts of South Carolina and we toured. He was interested in forestry, and he was working for Metropolitan Life Company, where he was concerned about paper, before he went into the Army. So we toured the forest. Saw how they produced turpentine, what they did with pulp, and so on, like that. So that was a very useful thing. And of course, when I was in forestry here, we took at field trip. We didn't go into quite as many places to see things, but it was a useful trip. So I've been to South Carolina, and we knew what it was like in South Carolina. And we were very happy when we were in Spartanburg. The people were very good to us. We stayed with a family that took us out for rides on Sunday, and we knew their boys. They were going to Wofford College at the time. We corresponded with them until they died. They were just fine people. Of course, as an adjutant, I knew who was coming and going, you see. That was a big advantage. So we always knew when the apartments were getting vacant, or would be vacant, practically even before the guy knew he was going.

KP: And that's for coming and staying for so long that ...

TA: That's right. So we got an apartment, at first, that we liked. Then we got a house that was half a house. It was the best place that you could get at Spartanburg. And we could walk to the concerts at Wofford. At Spartanburg, we had a sandbox for little Tom to play in, and so on. It was all good.

KP: How much did your being based in South Carolina affect your decision to return to South

Carolina?

TA: While I was a Camp Croft, I was out with one of the majors one evening. They were at our house when the news came out about the GI Bill. So we talked about the GI Bill. I said, “That's great, you can go where you want, etcetera, do what you want.” So, I'd decided, by that time, while I was a Rutgers, I decided that forestry was not the career. Mostly for Virginia. It would have made a good career, but I'd just didn't feel that way about it, because I thought about going out in the woods, and she's not that kind of a girl. So I took business courses, I took accounting, I took the general business course, I took economics and so on. I thought they were the best I can get to prepare for business. So I decided that I wanted to get a graduate degree in the Master of Business Administration. So I applied to the three places that I knew had the best reputation: Princeton, Yale, Harvard. They had a program at all three places, but Harvard program was the best sales job. It made the most sense to me. So I applied. I told about my experience in the Army, etcetera. I went up for an interview, and the guy told me, we talked for a little while, and I told them about my situation because I wasn't completely de-mobilized then. I got out as soon as I could after, I think it was after V-E Day. I realized that the war is going to be over in a little while, so why should I do this anymore? There's nothing more to do that pays off. So I got out. I could get out on points. So, they wouldn't let me out of the Army. I was just put on some sort of duty. I got paid. So I applied to the three schools. I only went to Harvard. I told the guy who was interviewing me, "I'm not out of the Army. I don't know when I'll get out of the Army." And he said, "Don't worry about it, Adams. You're a lead-pipe cinch. Grades like yours from a place like Rutgers, you're a solid prospect. So just let us know when you get out." But they did send me back to Camp Joseph T. Robinson for duty. And it was a typical Army fubar.

KP: Camp Robinson in ...

TA: Arkansas. Camp Robinson in Arkansas. So I went down there, and I'd been an adjutant, so I went to the adjutant. I said, "Is there anything I can do?" He said, "Well, you can write to this congressman, you can write to that congressman, etcetera." I said, "Okay. Do you want me to come back?" He said, "Yeah, come back." I came back and he didn't give me anything to do. He didn't want me around. There wasn't anything to do. So, frankly, at that time, I commiserated with another captain who was down there. We'd drink beer and play the slot machines. So I think I was down there, anyway, about five or six weeks, until all the procedures had been accomplished nothing. I remember I had a room there that had a gas heater in the middle of it. And I was reading *Time Magazine*, that was the best source of news at the time, and I didn't like what they wrote about something, that I didn't think was quite right. They put too much fear into it, I thought. And I wrote to them, and I said "Look, I'm a soldier down here. My family is home there. I couldn’t be with them for Christmas, etcetera," and I just didn't feel right about it. Anyway, I got sent home, ten days before the class started, and then I reported to the Harvard Business School.

KP: This was in 19 ...

TA: ‘46. February of '46.

KP: So *Time* published your letter?

TA: What?

KP: Did *Time Magazine* publisher your letter?

TA: Yeah, that's right. Well, that was just an incidental thing in the history of my experience, of being at Camp Joseph T. Robinson, doing nothing, drinking beer, playing slot machines, etcetera, and reading *Time Magazine*.

KP: At any of the bases you were at, did you have any black soldiers?

TA: Well, they had a black battalion in our infantry training regiment that we had no contact with. We didn't see anything of. All we knew of [it] was, was that the officers they sent there were the least competent officers we had around. That was a common understanding. That's the only contact I had.

KP: You never had any direct contact, except that they're over in another part of the camp. What about at Camp Robinson, were there any black troops at the time?

TA: I don't remember anything about them being down there. I had no contact with them. They probably were there, but I didn't know it.

KP: How crucial was the GI Bill, in terms of going to Harvard, going to business school? Do you think you would have thought about the business school without the GI Bill?

TA: I don't know what I would have done. I think I would've gone to work for some bank and gotten my qualifications that way. That was probably what I would've done. But by the time I finished my MBA at Harvard, and I went back to the bank, they offered me a job. But the job I got paid me twice what the bank would pay. It was a good paying job. So I didn't ever work for the bank again. It was just one of these things. I liked Harvard, I got along well, we had a study group of people that were supposed to study together. The professor didn't give us a book or anything like that. We were supposed to be self-generating educators. It was a good system. But we had guys in our group the didn't do anything. And I thought, "Why keep them around?" But the other guys didn't want to do that.

JL: I'm curious to know, did you know anything about the concentration camps overseas?

TA: I'm sorry, I'm not hearing you clearly.

JL: When did you first hear about the concentration camps?

TA: Did I know about that? I'd never heard anything about it. I didn't know about it. I was shocked when the news came out. I thought it was awful. And I felt, well, I knew the Nazis were doing it, something, but didn't know exactly what it was. It was common knowledge that they were doing something. I remember, even when I was here at Rutgers, the Jewish people came over voluntarily. There was a little girl lived in the house next-door. They called her the

little refugee.

KP: This was in New Brunswick?

TA: Yeah. In New Brunswick. But we ultimately, about my experience here, the family finally moved to a bigger house on Bishop Place. And my roommate, at that time, was a fellow named Jim Belcher, whom I liked. He was a nice guy, and we visited, and so on. I think his mother had the idea that I might be able to help him because of my grades. I didn't mind that. I knew what was going on. I enjoyed his company. But he didn't make it. He got washed out after the sophomore year. I remember coming to the physics guy here, in this building. I wanted to know how we made out. I said, "Professor, how'd we make out?" And he said, "Adams, you passed. Belcher, you didn't." That's all he told us. So Jim knew that, he was not surprised. I didn't know what the grade was. I thought it was great [that] I passed. Well, ultimately we lived on Bishop Place, and we moved to Highland Park. My brother wanted to, he got disquieted by living with my father, I know he did. So he came down, and said "Would you mind if I get a place where we could live in the same house?" And I said, "Certainly not. Why not? I'd be glad to have you." So we stayed with a lady out in Highland Park whose name was Mrs. Hulbert. And her husband had been a professor at the University and had died sometime previously. She was a lovely lady. A bright, intelligent, sensitive lady, you know. She didn't interfere with us at all. I'd come in the back door so I didn't have to disturb her when I came back from class to get up to my room to study and she'd be cooking cookies at the kitchen table, spread out, she'd say, "Take a couple, Tom." And it was a very fine experience. So we'd take her out to dinner, and we knew her sister who came to visit occasionally, we knew her daughters, she had two daughters, and it was a very worthwhile, comfortable experience. We still have a nice little foot stool that has a needle point cover on it that she made for our wedding present. And that's in our living room.

KP: When you were Harvard, you knew you had to leave forestry. Forestry was not going to work for you. What type of career did you hope to get after Harvard?

TA: I stayed at the school for one semester, in the dormitory. I had a desk, a Harvard chair, desk of my own, two to a room, to sleep and study, and six to share a common john. That's how it worked. And they were all gentlemen. We'd go have dinner together and we'd help each other on with our coats. That was the procedure. I thought that was a nice procedure at Callie. You'd eat and then do that. Well, then at the end of the first semester here, they started to build, what do they call that? Tortilla flats? The buildings that are out here, what's now built up?

KP: Trailers?

TA: No. You hadn't heard about this. Well, that was at Harvard. No, it's not here, it's at Harvard. They got buildings that were used for construction places, probably, and they had nice little apartments, three apartments to a unit, or six to a unit, and three to a side. So Virginia came up with the children, and we got along fine. I remember taking little Tom with me to where we had to turn in our term papers, pick up what was coming up on the schedules and so on. Virginia's father gave him a nice little wooden wagon. We'd carry the kids around in the wagon. And a very memorable time with me was when Virginia went out with the children and a wagon

to shop across the river, the Charles River, and I'd gotten a confirmed offer from Atlantic Refining Company. And I ran out there and met her halfway across the bridge. It was a very big day. It was the job I wanted. Incidentally, it was a job I was well picked for. They picked people properly. That impressed me. I liked the work I did at Atlantic. I was an organization analyst. I was immediately given responsibility, there was no question about that. I was good as the other guys who had worked for Atlantic for five years. No discrimination. One time, we complained about the fact that we thought our grades were too low. We talked to the boss about that, and he said "You shouldn't talk to me about that," but we got our grades lifted. We three guys all got the same grade and a better salary. But I was always impatient. I wanted to do something else, and I liked the work I was doing. It wasn't that I felt that I was being held back, particularly. I was just, I wanted to do something else. I wanted to be stimulated by a new job. I didn't get a new job for about three years and my wife knew that I was impatient, so she was reading the *Times* one day, and she said this blind ad was in the paper, and I applied for the ad and they called me up and I when out to Ford to be interviewed. I didn't like the guy they had me interview, I didn't like the kind of work that I was gonna do, I didn't like the way I was going to be dealt with out there. I could've done the work, but I said, "That's not good enough." And I said, "No, thank you, I didn't want the job." So I went home, and one Saturday morning when I was home, a fellow called up and asked if I might be interested to come out again, "We have another job we think Tom might really like." So I went out for that job, and it was the same title that I had with Atlantic, but I was on a bonus roll, I got a new car every year, and all these good things, you see. And I got more money. So I took that job, that was enough bait to catch the fish, in other words. Same kind of a job title, organization analyst, where you go out, you study and you find out what's wrong and recommend what to do about it. Organization of people to a degree, too. Well, I liked that work. It was good work. I worked for a good man in Atlantic and I apologized to him for leaving but he said, "Well, Tom, you have to lookout for yourself. If that's what you want to do, go do it." So, I went to work for Ford. I liked the work. When I was working at Ford, I made a good impression with my boss' boss. And he liked the way I wrote. He gave me some jobs to do and they sent it to the president for signature just the way I wrote it, and that was a good deal. So when he got a new job, he took me to become his administrative guy. He got another job at corporate headquarters and he picked me [for a] comparable job there, and I got increases, more money, bigger bonus every time. And we lived in a lovely town there, Plymouth, Michigan. It was a very fine town to live in. And there were a lot of guys out there just like me trying to get along, with young children. We joined a church. They asked us to join a choir, I love the choir. They wouldn't let me in the chorus here, but I love to sing. Singing is a wonderful thing. And I get a real spiritual lift out of singing. It's a good thing. So we joined a church choir and we were in the choir for a long time and on our fiftieth anniversary, our daughter got a hold of old friends and wrote to them and said, "Please write something about Mom and Dad." And one of the people they wrote to was the choir director, and Virginia sang in the choir, too, and she has a good voice, and she has a good ear for the note, and he said, "Virginia, you were the mainstay of the alto group. Everybody depended upon you, etcetera. They wouldn't even start singing until you gave them the note. And Tom, you blended very nicely." And of course, at the church, I got into the, to be the top guy of the governing body of the church. And we had a wonderful minister there. Everybody who ever knew him claims he was the best guy they ever knew. It was a Presbyterian church, and our children joined the church, Virginia joined the church. Virginia got into the women's associations, she got active in that. We had a very good experience. We were in Plymouth for thirteen years and worked for

Ford for ten years. They picked me for a key job at the headquarters at Ford. Reporting to HF II. I had to be interviewed by HF II, so I had to be interviewed by Ernie Breech before it could be clinched, and before that happened, they told me another guy has been picked for the job. And so I said, “Well, that's what it is.” He had a higher, he was a more important guy to them than I am, they saved him, but he was not too good a man. Honestly. At Ford, I learned this on this job, I really learned this. The finance people really ran the company. If you weren't in with the finance people, you might just as well give up. And so I did something. I said, “If I was going to be in this job,” at the top, eventually, I knew that the fellow was going to leave sometime, I'm going to have something to do. I don't just want to sit around waiting for something to happen. I don't want to be ignored while important things are decided. And so I got a letter signed by HF II that really gave us that role to do. But in the process of doing that, my boss used, as an example, something that one of these guys in finance had done. And the problem was, they made too many phony jobs. They made a job to give the guy more money. And you could read it, you know. It was just plain. So anyway, I could have made the rest of my career for Ford, but I knew I didn't have a career anymore, because this guy would control my career. My wife said, "I know you'd be a good teacher. Why don't you do something about teaching?" So I thought, “Well, if you're going to be teacher you're going to have to have a doctorate.” So I went out to the University of Michigan, talked to the dean. I applied, I took the graduate record examination, I was qualified, etcetera. I went out there, and they'd started summer courses then, at that time. They didn't really have a schedule. I couldn't get the French I needed, and that kind of turned me off a little bit. So the dean asked me if I would work for him. And I thought about the prospect of short rations in the years I was doing the Ph.D. work, and we didn't have children to worry about anymore, they were all gone, and I said, “Okay, Dean, I'll take it.” He said, "What kind of a title do you want?" And I told them, “Well, if you want me to do something you better make me associate dean.” So he said, “All right.” He announced that I was associate dean. It was kind've a stupid thing. I don't mean to demean him, but that's the way it was. So after three years at Michigan, he decided he didn't want me around anymore.

KP: What was it like being a dean? What did you end up doing at that position?

TA: What did I do there? Well, I did whatever I could to help. I did whatever I could to be useful. The most useful thing I did was to do something effective about an evening MBA program we had, which the teachers didn't want to teach there, the students were not selected the way they should have been. I got to know the admissions director well, and so he and I talked about it a lot, and we rapidly reached the conclusion that we could work together and do something about it. So I said, “Len, you pick the guys to your standard, and I'll do anything I can to help you in the process.” And then over time, the faculty became aware of this, of what we were doing, and we could get the faculty. I'd go talk to them and I'd say, "Look this is a good thing. The school makes a lot of money out of this. Whoever of you would sign to this would make some extra money.” Your professors could use a little more money and they'd give me a guy. And after a time, it went very well. We had two sites, one in Dearborn and one up in Flint, and I authorized one person who worked for me full-time, a very effective German lady, who quit her job when she heard I was leaving the University. She was a very nice person and she got a job, anyway, somewhere else. She just didn't want to be around any more. Ultimately, the admissions director quit, the young professors quit, and the school's reputation went down. Until they got, the first dean they brought in didn't help very much. The next dean was effective, and

got its reputation up there again as one of the leading schools, which is what it was when I went there, you see. That's why I wanted to go there. They had good elder faculty, but you can't run the school just on a few good men. You have to have a staff. I also planned a parking structure that was there. I planned modifications to the buildings. I went out and made some speeches for a fund-raising thing. I went out and interviewed perspective students at schools that were around. I set up a meeting at the University for students from various schools, got the faculty. I got the best people to participate in that, Paul McCraken, you've probably heard of him. He's the economist. I got him to talk at a luncheon, by example. They really pitched in and helped out. I got a case from Chrysler Corporation because Chrysler would always talk about their business, but Ford and General Motors wouldn't, so I had a case, to give a case example. So we sent it to the schools for the kids to look at, you know, come back and we had a faculty panel that commented on their specialties, and a personnel guy and a finance guy, a marketing guy and so on, and they commented on the aspects of the case. And that was very popular. That went off very well. But I didn't get that idea until late in my tenure, so I don't think they ever did that again. I've learned since they'd decided to close the Flint operation, being more remote, and disappointed a lot of guys who were up there, but they didn't pay much attention to the program after that, that's just a fact. So that was just something I feel proud of, as you can tell.

KP: At Ford, did you ever run into Robert McNamara?

TA: I did. I'll tell you about my opinion about him, shall I?

KP: Please do.

TA: You'd like to hear about him? Well, he was a finance guy, you see. He was a fair-haired boy. And he came from finance, where he'd been a controller, and they sent him to run the Ford division. And they fired a very able man Lou Crusoe, who had been vice president, a general manager, of Ford division, who helped Ford a lot. And I knew what he was doing and I had great respect for him. He knew the business, he knew very well, about design and cost and so on. Products, the like, and he did very well. Bob McNamara was a fellow that I'd call a "cold fish". He didn't care much about us in the process. But meantime, shortly after he came to the Ford division, my mentor took me to Ford headquarters so I didn't get to know him anymore about that, after that. He made a good reputation for himself. They brought out the Thunderbird and so on. He knew how to get people to do things, if he liked them, if they were important to him. And they decided to make him president of the company. But before he could really function as president, he was called to be Secretary of Defense. And I thought the idea of leaving at a time like that, after being given all the opportunities he had, being, in effect, picked for the top job in a company, I didn't like that. I didn't think that was the thing to do.

KP: Did you ever meet him at Ford?

TA: Did I ever meet him?

KP: In person?

TA: Oh, yeah. I saw him often. I heard him talk, but I didn't deal with him much personally,

you see. He wasn't that kind of a guy.

KP: It's curious that you say that, because that is the account of him working in the Defense Department.

TA: You know what we called the accountants at Ford? Bean counters. So when I got out of Harvard, I thought, I had a very good grade in accounting, a very top grade, and I probably would've been a pretty good accountant.

KP: You mentioned that you had a little problem with quantitative, so you would have been a good ...

TA: Then I interviewed, and I could have gotten a couple of jobs in that field, but this other job that I took paid better, and had more appeal for me. That's all.

JL: That was the National Bank?

TA: No, I went to the Irving Trust Company out of high school.

JL: Okay. I'm sorry.

TA: Oh, excuse me. The National Bank of Boston after Michigan. So what I did, I went to work getting for a job, and I said, "Honey, we've to get out of this house, we have to stop the drain on our cash." She said, "What do we do?" I said, "How about going to your parents?" No problem. Her father had married again, a lovely lady, and so, before I left, I sent out resumes. I did it by kind of industry. I picked industries, and I figured the best job I could do would be a top personnel man. And I thought I was best qualified for that. I'm not an inspirational leader, I know that, but I figured I could do that and get on well with it. So I applied for a job as head of personnel with companies and a headhunter found me. He was looking for guy for a bank, after I sent the letters out to banks. I was interviewed by a bank, and he said, "You're a very good prospect for that bank." I don't know if they tell that to all the people or not, but they picked another guy who was a better salesman, I think, probably, but he was a dope, really. What I saw, what he did afterwards. He shouldn't have been picked. But then I got another call, in the meantime, from the First National Bank of Boston, from the top personnel guy there. And he said, "We have your resume here, how about coming up for an interview?" "I'd be delighted," you know. So I went up there and I got along very well with him. So he said, "Well, there's another guy who's going to get my job in a while, six months or year or something like that, and you have to be interviewed by him." So he passed me, he accepted me for the job as training director. And they didn't really have anybody on the training, they didn't have anybody that ran it, and they had people doing training and they had programs going, pretty good programs, because the guy that had been promoted had paid attention to that. He's a very intelligent guy, and very bright. So, he said, "What I want you to do is to set up a suitable training facility, and get out of that room that you're in at the bank, where everybody is in the same room." So I set up the training facility by getting rental floor at a vacant building there. We mobilized all the training, except the computer training. Now, I don't know why I didn't decide, recommend that we get the computer training, except that computers never attracted me very much. I guess that's

why. But we picked up the teller training and we had secretarial training and training for other people. A bank is a funny place to work, though, it's different. The guys were very cooperative, helpful, effective people. It was a good bank. The chairman was a conservative guy, and I put in a recommendation that we set up a training program for officers, for junior officers. Once you get to be an officer, your sort of one of the elite. They made me in officer as a training director, for example. I didn't know what it meant, but I ate in the officers dining room. But in the course of something I did up there at the bank, I invited people who were doing actual training. I wanted to get to know them, get acquainted with the people who were on-the-job trainers, you see. Those were people I was really interested in. So I invited them to lunch at the Parker House. I checked with my boss, "Can I do this?" "Good idea. Go ahead and do it." "I invited these people?" "Fine. Go ahead and do it." But in the process of that, a fella that was in charge of computer training was not invited.

----------END OF SIDE TWO, TAPE TWO----------

KP: So you invited all these trainers to your luncheon, but you didn't invite the supervisor?

TA: Yeah. And I had a very effective lady who was in charge of secretarial training. She had been raised with a colored family, a family of color. And she said that she considered herself a person of color, but she was white as a sheet. You know, a lovely lady. A very intelligent, effective, confident person. And she was the best trainer I had, really. And so, I asked her would she be willing to setup a program that would give the bank a better reputation in the city of Boston and to try to pick people of color for training, for the bank? She said, "That would be wonderful." So we set that up. The PR people loved the idea. She thought it was a great idea. My boss thought it was great idea, etcetera, etcetera. So she recruited the people by posting in churches, posting around, interviewing the people, telling them what it was going to be like. She was very careful about that. And she picked ten or twelve young women, very bright. They can handle it, no question about that. So that was one of the good things. Meantime, they told me to hire another young lady whose father worked for a bank in Chicago. She was a good person, and I didn't mind hiring her, and I used her. But I wanted her to have a job, and I wanted her to have a pick, to participate in picking these people who were going to be in this program. Well, there was a lady that did that work for personnel, and she made such a fuss about it, and I was told, "Don't let her do it." That's all. They didn't want another person, you know. And so, I had trouble in finding things for her to do, but she was a good person, she'd do whatever I asked. That was [what] the bank was like.

KP: It sounded very territorial.

TA: Yeah. That's right. And incidentally, this incident with a man who supervised the computer training, he complained to his boss who complained to my boss. My boss, at that time, was a young man who said, "I want you to go apologize for what you did." Well, I knew I had to do it. And I thought, "Well, it won't bother me." I went down to the number two guy in this area, the supervisor of the guy who complained, because the guy, the vice president, the top guy said that he won't send anymore people to the training program if you don't get Adams out of there. So that was the gist of it. So I went down to see him and said, "I'd been sent down here to apologize. I apologize. Is that okay?" He says, "Sure." That was all there was to it. And

another thing about the bank, the chairman was this conservative guy. I prepared a letter that recommended the training for officers. So the letter had to go to the chairman for approval, anything affecting the officers had to be approved by the chairman. I didn't mind that. Well, he sent the note back, saying, "Our officers don't need any training." So that killed that idea, you see. Well, that was okay. I still liked what I was doing. But meantime, a headhunter who'd got me an interview with another bank said, "I've got the job for you, Tom. And I know the guy you'll be working for. And you and he will get along fine." He said this and I had faith in this guy, he was a very good headhunter. So I went out for this interview with the construction company out in Des Plaines, Illinois, to be the top personnel man. My boss wanted me make me vice president. Well, I couldn't make a vice president because the personnel guy at the headquarters wasn't a vice president, which is stupid. And besides, you're making more money than he is. So I got him a salary increase, anyway. But over time, I got acquainted with a fellow who was the executive vice president of the company. He was a very good man, but he couldn't stand the chairman, at the time, and he got sick. And so he was demoted to be the number two man in our subsidiary company. And he said to me one day, he said, “You're not very popular over at headquarters.” I said, “I know that.” “So why aren't you.” And I said, “Well, the guy in headquarters is just not up to his job.” He didn't say anymore. But a month or so later we got a new man to run the personnel department at headquarters. I got along fine with him. He was good man. He made all the rop personnnel people in the divisions vice presidents. Took him a little while do that. A man that became very popular with the chairman. “This is not the best man you could find in the industry.” My boss was told to find a man to back him up as Executive Vice President. He wanted to bring a man back who had been running the company in England. I said “Boss, you better not do that. That guy is not the man for the job. He doesn't know how to pick people,” you know? And so on. But he did it. He was in a bind. And so he brought this fellow back, and this fellow offended the construction man. The construction man quit and my boss got sacked. So that was that. He told me later on, "If I had listened to you, Tom, I would've been with the company all the time." And he knew it. He knew that, but they squeezed him. In that business, they had a tremendous investment, not just money, but reputation, in what they did. If you didn't do it well, you lose money, and most importantly, you lose reputation in the industry. They say, “This company doesn't build a good job.” So the construction man running a construction project is probably as important as a general in an infantry division. He's a key man. And you’ve gotta be very careful about who you're picking and you can trust. And that was the way it was.

KP: In construction, things can really go wrong.

TA: Oh, you know that.

KP: People will know if it is really wrong ...

TA: You know that very well. That's right. Another key man in the construction business, though, is a project manager. And the project manager is responsible to follow a job, from the inception, when they get a contract to completion, to keep informed about it, to find out what's going on, to report to management about it, and so on. And he's a watchdog. And some of them were good and some of them weren't good, but the effective construction man is another key man in the construction business. And finally, the key people are the guys that sell. They're very

important. They have to be known in the industry, they have to be good salesmen, you know, any good salesman, and they have to be effective, you know, in what they do, get a good contract. The best salesman in the company was the fellow who was chairman when I was hired. And he was a good man, he knew the industry very well, he did the sales for all the big jobs that were there when I came, that had attracted the president and made it a really interesting job. They made a lot of money, and the bonuses were good, but one year they weren't good, and we didn't get any bonus that year, which wasn't reasonable. We couldn't do anything about it. The workers couldn't do anything about it. They never did that again. I told my boss, I said "Boss, that's bad business." My boss wanted to cut, the finance people wanted him to cut salaries to save money, and I said, "Boss, that's bad business. You lose your best people." So, he was a very intelligent guy. We did get along fine, you know. He listened to me. He gave me a job to do and let me do it.

KP: Was that your last company?

TA: That was the last company I worked for. Yes. And we were retired at sixty-three and a half, I was.

KP: Was that the retirement age at the company?

TA: No. It wasn't quite. Retirement age was sixty-five. At that time, I talked to Virginia. Virginia decided that we'd like to go to England. He went to England and he got to know of family there, a relation of Virginia's step mother. And so I went to England. I had to go to England often. That was our principal foreign subsidiary, and I had to keep an eye on it. I went there often. And so, after a while, I found that going to England, one of the problems, is that you go on Sunday, and you're arriving on Monday, and Monday is a waste. What I did, over time, was, I'd go, I'd ask Virginia, "Is this all right, if I go for another weekend?" So I'd go Friday night, and I'd go out to this farm, in western England, that we got to know. So, over time, we got to know them very well. They kind've took us into the family. And they're fine people. They're farmers, hard, solid, you know, dependable people. We still love England. England is the place we still like to go. The lady that we knew well helped us get a house in England in Gloucester. It was a choice house. An old house. A lovely garden. And we got to know the neighbors well. And we're still friends. One of them, they always want to see us. We always have a couple of dinners with one of them. Some of them have died. But we've kept in touch with them. We've kept in touch with their children. And it's a very satisfying experience for Virginia and me, we feel great about that, a very good thing.

KP: How did you end up in South Carolina?

TA: Well, we decided we'd go to live in Charlottesville. It's called one of the nicest places to live.

KP: Yeah. The University of Virginia and ...

TA: Yeah. The great hospital, you know. Good medical facilities, and everything. Well, it has a lot of the good things. We had an excellent doctor. The very reliable man. Top man in his

field, at the Medical School. And we had a good lawyer. We rented a place for a while and we were comfortable with it for a year, and our niece was living in the town, at the time, and she spotted an area she thought we would be interested in. So we had a house built there. It was a very nice house, well built house, and we liked it. But over time, we'd lived there five or six years, we got an advertisement in the mail from this outfit in South Carolina that was developing a planned community. And they urged us to come down spend three days with them at no cost, while we were there, and "We want you to listen to our story and see how you like it." So we went down, and it's an area of some 6000 plus acres that's been carved out of the forest, that took over from the old cotton fields. I fell in love with it. It was where I wanted to be. I don't think Virginia necessarily liked it as much as I did, but she sensed my enthusiasm and she took hold. She's always been that kind of a person. And I still like it. It's a nice place to be. But now, Virginia feels we're getting on and we better get someplace else, because she doesn't want the children to have to worry about us, she said. The children say, "Come live with us, come live with us, etcetera." She said, "I don't want to do that." Besides, Montana gets cold in the winter. It's lovely country.

KP: It gets very cold in the winter.

TA: Vermont also gets very cold in the winter, you know. And we couldn't afford to stay where we were living, in Chicago. I felt that. I mean, I didn't have the income. I knew we wouldn't have the income. So that's why we shifted to Charlottesville. And we got a good house. We sold it for considerably more than we paid for it. So that was all good. But about Charlottesville, now. There are very isolated communities there. There's the medical fraternity, there's the legal fraternity, and even the church was like that. They didn't really want us around very much. But we have a lot of good friends, a lot of people move down in that place. The senior center, they called, which was a volunteer outfit. No government support. Their obligation was to the people who were their members. They attracted people, a large number of people, and I was active in that. I had a men's club and so forth. I love to hike up there, the Blue Ridge, just nearby. And we had a wonderful time hiking. I liked that. Virginia never liked the hiking, but she'd come to the annual dinner we had and she liked that. And she got along fine there. But when we were living out in Barrington, when I was working for the construction company, Virginia didn't have anything to do when she was out there. No children. One of her friends worked for school as a teachers aide, so she said, "Come try. They needed teacher's aides. Come try it out." So she tried it out and she liked it. And she worked at that for ten years. And she was an excellent teacher's aide. I told her she ran the school, but she didn't agree to that. But I know she told the principal what to do, you know. And the teachers were her best friends, in terms of what we did together, what we liked to do together. About Charlottesville, I didn't like the situation. The county was always arguing with the city about who was going to do what and who was going to pay for what, who was going to let the roads go where, and this isolation factor, and the church, we couldn't get really feel comfortable with the church. We wanted to be in the church. And so and all these things. We had friends there, and the idea of moving down to South Carolina was a very attractive proposition. So we came down initially and bought a lot. And then we talked about it and talked about it, and I said, "Would you mind if we go down to talk about getting a house built down there?" She said "No, let's do it." Virginia always liked that idea, a new house, you know. So that's what we did. And we had, we were about the fifth or sixth house built there. And we had a good house built, but

nobody wants to live where we bought our house. It's interesting. The development is centered on golf and I'm not a golfer. I don't want to live on a golf course. And most of the people want to be on the golf course. And we just didn't want that. Other people didn't either, but that's why we have to be where we were. Still alone, down at the end of a long cul-de-sac which is our private drive. Nobody else has built on it.

KP: And you were, in fact, in a forest.

TA: Yeah ...

KP: Which is ironic. You had originally been interested in forests.

TA: And I love gardens. We always loved flowers. The only thing I didn't like about the building, was the fellow that did the grading and put the soil down. I paid for topsoil, they didn't deliver topsoil. So the garden's been a problem. I had to create the garden. But things flourish. The growth rate down there is amazing. You plant a tree and it's four feet tall in two years.

KP: I plan to build a house in North Carolina ...

TA: And, of course, I loved the tall trees. The tall trees were all behind our house. Our house was framed by these huge, tall pines. And it's a beautiful scene. They're not the only trees. There're oaks, there're red gums that are colorful. Our son says they're not as good as the color in Vermont, but really they are. And we like it there. So now we're thinking about going to this retirement community in Greenwood, South Carolina. And we checked them out. We went to one of our faith and we weren't too impressed with it. We went to another one, it was a Methodist kind of place, and we were very favorably impressed. Virginia likes that. She likes the atmosphere. And now we just wonder if we can get the kind of place we want to live in. That's a problem, a typical problem. We've targeted the fall of '98 to sell the house, and Virginia's brother is in the real estate business, and he said that he feels that the people of northern Michigan would just love that house, and they've heard about it, and so he doesn't think that there would be a problem selling it.

KP: Is there anything we forgot to ask you?

TA: I don't know. I've talked so much, I can't think of anything else.

JL: The only question I have that we didn't touch on was about your children. Do you want them to go into the military?

TA: About our children. We have the three children. And our son was having difficulty when he was in high school. Behavior difficulty. And so he was sent to a boarding school in northern Michigan. And it was a fine boarding school. And he did well there. He got into some difficulty but they didn't sack him. And then, after that was over, he became in love with a girl that he met there, and he wanted to go to Ripon College because it was close to her college in Wisconsin. Well, in the course of his career, he'd been in the Army. Subsequently, we heard about this, he majored in beer at Ripon and he got tossed out. And he had married, in the

meantime, up in Boston, he had married a nurse. And so, he went back to college, when we were living in Boston. He lived with us for a while, then they lived nearby for a while, and she had a baby, soon, but not too soon. He's a very bright boy. He's much like his father. And, now, he's twenty-five and he still hasn't fully oriented himself with the world. He's a very nice boy to be with, very bright, articulate, intelligent fella. Tom has a daughter, Tom and Patti have a daughter who's also extremely bright, who also went to the boarding school, went to the University of Rochester, very bright girl, she got a job with a law firm in Boston right away. She didn't like that job, she got another job. That's just the way it is with her. Our younger son Jonathan had apparently told a girl, when he was in high school, that I'll marry you. And so he went away to college, and I don't know all that happened, but he left college and he went back to work. He joined the telephone company, had a good career in the telephone company, and he realized that women were being preferred, that weren't qualified for jobs. He wrote something that was critical of that, and the management had found out about it, and they demoted him, and he gave it up. He quit. He always wanted to be a nurseryman. So, he decided, he went to work for a nursery, and he liked that, and, over time, they promoted him to a job, but he wasn't handling the plants there, and he didn't like that. He was selling merchandise. He didn't think much of the merchandise, but, now, fortunately, they've given him a job handling the trees and the plants. And he knows them. He has a bookshelf, that's about as big as that one, of books about trees and plants, and if he doesn't know, he'll go find out and tell people. He's very effective, very effective personally, in personal contact. And his first wife divorced him, which was a difficult time for him. Another girl fell in love with him. He married her and they were married for ten years, and he got into difficulties, financial difficulties, so she left him. And he met another lovely girl, a young girl, but she's too young. She loves him, she's a fine girl but they just don't harmonize very well. So that's just the way it is. Now, about our daughter Judy, she went to college, did very well at Muskingum In the meantime, she'd gone on a trip to Europe where she met a young man who went to the Naval Academy. So after two years in Muskingum, she said she wanted to go to the University in Washington, what's the name of that?

JL: George Washington?

TA: No, not that one. It's another one.

KP: American University?

TA: American. Good. Good for you. You get the cigar. And, of course, we knew what was going on. And unfortunately, she went to work for a Democratic senator from Pennsylvania, and she became a confirmed Democrat at that time, so I'm forbidden to express my opinions in her company. And she loves me, I know she does, but Virginia doesn't like it, so I don't do it anymore. Well, she decided she wanted to be a law librarian, and in the course of that experience, she became disaffected with her husband. I don't know why. It was a surprise to us. She left him. And she's married to another man, a fine man, and he's in the financial consulting business. And she got herself qualified as a law librarian and she was recruited for a job out in Montana as the state law librarian, and, I hate to say all this, but you want the facts. She's the current president of the National Association of Law Librarians. She's in the "Who's-Who in America." She goes around visiting. She talks to lawyers about how they should do their work, you know. That type of thing. And she loves it. And the people out at Helena, we met the

judges she worked for, they say "Judy, just run the library. Make sure the library runs. You do whatever you think you should do. And that's fine. That's good for Montana, you see."

KP: She seems very successful.

TA: Yes, very successful. And her husband is successful. Our son, Tom, is very successful. He went to college. He was attracted by a wife's cousin to help run the family business, a tire business in Rutland. He was a young man there. He knew he was going to inherit the business and he knew Tom and so he said, "Tom, you come run the business and I'll sell." And that was the gist of it. Tom has run the business very well. But unfortunately, the guy, the salesman who hired him, had a family tragedy and it threw him off completely and he drained the money out of the business and the business was going downhill, downhill, downhill, and finally, he said, "Tom, there's no room for two of us." So Tom was out of it for a little while until the company went bankrupt. The industry people said, "Tom, we'll get you back in the business. Give you a hand." So Tom's back in the business. He runs this business in Rutland. He's picked the guys, he's very good at picking people, and he picks the people that he knows he can trust, and who know, that he's had some confidence in what they can do in the tire business. And so it's gone very well. But right now, the tire business is not doing too well in Vermont. The Canadian free trade situation had cut into the truck business there considerably. It hurt Tom's business and it hurts him, you know, in the course of that.
KP: It's ...

TA: He feels that. He feels that, you know, a deep responsibility to the people, mostly, that works for him. He said that, "I think about the people." I'm sure he does. He loves the woods. He bought this place out on Lake Dunmore in Vermont. He made a friend in the real estate business and he got this place for not very much money, and he loves the woods. When he was out of work, a fellow came in and made him an offer that he literally could not refuse for his camp and the tennis court that was built to the camp. And he, it was a wonderful time to get the money. He couldn't refuse it.

KP: You've talked very honestly about the problems in your children's marriages. Why do you think your marriage has been so successful and why do you think your children have had a more difficult time?

TA: Of course, I don't know why they acted the way they did, you see. I told Jonathan, for example, the younger boy, that if he's gonna do anything, to be a nurseryman, he better get trained as a nurseryman. Well, he didn't like the training. He didn't like the classes. He knew more than they did and so on. And I wasn't worried about Tom at all. He volunteered for 'Nam before I left my last job. He volunteered for it. And he was in a armored cavalry unit in 'Nam, and he knew what was going on, and he's a very good man with people, and he got along well with them. And he was working for the fella, his company commander was the cousin of the lady he married, who was a nurse, that's how that worked out. And he didn't want to talk about 'Nam for a long time. He said "I had a sergeant who was a very good man, and the kooks, or whatever they called them, were lobbing mortar shells at us. We knew exactly what their location was." And he said the fellow who was in charge of the company, at that time, told them, "Do not return their fire. That's an order." So he had a sergeant who was his number two

man, and he talked to Tom and he said, “Look, Tom. I’m going to put a mortar shell on that.” And Tom said, “Well …” Nothing. The sergeant said, “Don’t worry about it. Don’t worry about it at all.” So he lobbed one shell at that machine gun, they were shooting machine gun fire. No more machine gun fire. But a senior officer came by and he asked who was responsible for firing that mortar shell on that machine gun? Tom said Sergeant something-or-other, and he got decorated. Well, are you satisfied?

KP: Well, I think so. I’m actually delighted that the equipment didn’t work, I thoroughly enjoyed the interview. In some ways it was a blessing in disguise.

TA: Well, I want to be helpful to you and Rutgers.

KP: This concludes an interview with Thomas T. Adams, on May 18, 1997, at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Kurt Piehler and Jen Lenkiewicz. Thank you again. We really appreciate it.

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------

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