

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH CHARLES FLETCHER BISHOP, JR.

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

SHAUN ILLINGWORTH

and

SANDRA STEWART HOLYOAK

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TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Mr. Charles Fletcher Bishop, Jr. on September 10, 2001 in Orlando, Florida with Shaun Illingworth and ...

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: Sandra Stewart Holyoak.

SI: Mr. Bishop, thank you for being with us this morning and we'd like to begin by asking you a little bit about your family history, and your parents. Your father was born in Pennsylvania ...

Charles Fletcher Bishop: He was born in Philadelphia, in 1900. Well, his father, his grandfather was John Charles Bishop and he came probably from northern Holland, it could even be a part of Germany, up there near Denmark. He came to Philadelphia, I think he was a young man when he came there, I have not found out who his parents were, but he lived in Philadelphia. He was, I believe a broom maker and he raised his family there. That was my great grandfather and my grandfather was John Charles Lewis Bishop and he was a traveling salesman or supplier for grocery stores and things of that sort. My father was born there, he had two sisters and he, they eventually moved to East Camden. He met my mother there. He went Lehigh and he graduated probably 1923 and he went to work in Pittsburgh, he married my mother, who he had gone with for a while and then went to work for Philadelphia Electric Company and he worked there for fifty years, I guess, and he retired and when I discovered that I didn't feel they were driving too well in the snow and so forth, I had bought a house down in Florida so I asked them to come down and live in it for a while and looked for something for themselves and I would follow soon thereafter, and I did. That's his history.

SH: And your mother is from Detroit?

CB: My mother was from Detroit, that's where she was born, and her father was in charge of a sugar beet factory in Tuscola County, Caro, Michigan and he, I think he had a little drinking problem and I don't believe he held a job very well, so they moved. They followed, really, my mother's mother, who was a nurse, to South Dakota and then to Texas, where my grandmother and my grandfather both took chiropractic courses and they became doctors and moved to Camden, New Jersey, which I believe, although I haven't found out, is where my grandmother's mother was a nurse at Philadelphia Hospital and they did quite well until the time of the Depression. My grandfather invested, this is my mother's father, in copper stocks and bibles and flags and cemetery lots and they all went downhill. My mother, meanwhile, had a good education. She went to Glasboro Normal School and started teaching probably with just one year of college and she got a permanent elementary certificate and she taught off and on the rest of her life. She took time off to have my second brother and then she went back to teaching and she taught most of the rest of her life until she retired. I do know that she went back to school. Glasboro became a State College, or something of that sort, and she went back and got her, she finally got her degree in special education and actually she graduated from Glasboro about four days after I graduated from Rutgers. We celebrated together. That's her history.

SH: Do you know how they met, your parents?

CB: No. Probably in high school. They both went to Camden High School and I don't know exactly how they met, but they met and I guess, they romanced for a year or so and then she must

have followed my father all through college and then they got married after he graduated. What else can I tell you about them?

SH: We wanted to ask you then about your family. You had a younger brother?

CB: Yes, I was born in 1926, my brother was born in 1932 and then I have an adopted brother and he was born in 1937.

SH: What do you remember about growing up and going to school in the area that you lived in?

CB: Well, I went to school.

SH: Where did you go to school?

CB: I first went to school in Berlin where my mother taught and the reason I went there was there was no kindergarten in our school system, which was Haddon Township, and she was didn't mind going to kindergarten, plus this was the Depression and she was teaching at that time, so we had two incomes in the family. So I went down with her everyday to Berlin and I had to be five and I was five in January so she started me down there in January. The following year, she got pregnant and I went down with her all through first grade in Berlin, but then she had to stop teaching, so I was back to my real community school, which was Strawbridge Avenue School in Haddon Township. I went there for second grade up through sixth and then we had a junior high school which was a separate school, that was Thomas Edison Junior High and I went there for two years, then we ran out of schools in Haddon Township and we had a choice of going to Haddonfield schools or Collingswood schools and I chose Collingswood and I went to a junior high, ninth grade, and then I had another graduation and I went to senior high there for three years and I finished my high school career. Now you want to know more about it?

SH: We love these stories. One question I had, though, is your memory of the depression? What do you remember about it ...

CB: I was very happy during the Depression because we had two working members in the family. My father had a good job. The people who lived in our neighborhood were not as lucky, as I said before, my father worked for the Philadelphia Electric Company. The other people in the neighborhood mostly worked for RCA or Campbell Soup in Camden and as the Depression came along, many of them lost their jobs and I always felt, even though we were in a very modest circumstances by today's standards, I always felt we were sort of like the wealthiest people on the street and it was not a lot of wealth, but we had no problem eating. We had no problem really with anything. When I wanted to do something in school, both of my parents were adamantly interested in my getting everything I could get out of life, so I never had to, I didn't get an allowance, but I never had to ask for something. I'd come home and say the school is going to do this and the money came forth. So the Depression itself did not touch me. We had an automobile. We only had one automobile and my mother used to have to drive my father down and put him on the train to go to Philadelphia and then if she was teaching then we went off and I went off with her and we taught. So then, let's see, this is bringing me up to, by 1934,

Roosevelt had gotten in, WPA started, and my mother had a friend from high school ... I forgot this. My mother had a friend from high school, Leona Kramer, and Leona was a political person and WPA was, the hierarchy in WPA were political people and my mother had learned to sew early in her life and she sewed many of her own clothes and she even sewed once in a while for this Leona. Leona said, they had the women's projects in WPA were mostly in sewing groups and so forth and she asked my mother if she would like to stop school teaching and do all the projects in South Jersey. So my mother got a new car and she drove all over South Jersey to these projects, showing people how to sew and run sewing machines and so forth. That to me ended the Depression because people were sort of back at work and I wasn't touched by it.

SH: You brought up the political person that you knew as a young man, what were the politics that were discussed in your home?

CB: My father was just a born Republican because his parents were, I suppose, and my mother, she should have been a Republican and she was until this WPA thing came along and then she switched and she was adamantly against some of the Republican people who ran. She thought Roosevelt was great. She did not care for Wendell Willkie, I don't know why, but she didn't and but later on she became a staunch Republican and very conservative, so people change back and forth. I never was involved in politics with my family. I didn't go one way or the other. I didn't become political until probably when I came back from WWII, 1946 maybe '48, whenever Harry Truman ran and someone gave me tickets to the Philadelphia Convention. I went to the Philadelphia Convention and no one expected Harry Truman to win. He came in a white suit and a white Panama hat and he made a miraculous speech. It was midnight, I believe, and he made this speech about calling the do nothing Eightieth Congress and he just had them. If they came back and decided to do ... oh, he listed maybe forty things that they had said in their platform, that was Dewey. Dewey had said in the platform, "We are gonna do this, we're gonna do that, we're gonna the next," and Harry said, "This is fine, I'm gonna call that congress back into session and they have time now to do all of those things before the election." Well, of course they couldn't do them. If they were done, he would get credit and they lost. That was my whole political thing then. Plus I had a Portuguese professor at Rutgers and I can remember ... I don't even know why I took Portuguese, yes, I do, I was gonna go to South America, I thought Brazil was up and coming and they speak Portuguese there instead of Spanish and we had this neat little professor with a big nose. We were in Quonset huts down below Pell Hall on the River, on the Raritan River, and he would spout all those Portuguese to us and it was just about that time that the convention came along and he asked something in the class and you know, there were probably thirty-five of us in there and they were all Republicans but me and he started in, he said, "How can you possibly, you're young, you cannot be Republican if you're young," and it was fascinating, 'cause we didn't have to learn Portuguese that day, and I agreed so with him and I've been a Democrat ever since. My parents have all been Republicans, and I live in a Republican town. We don't want to go into politics. It gets too long and involved. I told you I talk too much.

SH: No, because you are the first person that we have interviewed that actually attended a convention as a young person.

SI: Let's go back to the Great Depression, it didn't impact your family but were there like people moving through Haddon ... people knocking on the back door, or that sort of thing?

CB: No, not really. We knew when the people on our street were out of a job and I really don't know how they survived. Most of them survived by having a parent. I only had two young people on my street who I palled around with. There just weren't that many young people there. One of them, his grandmother had money and she came to live with them. The other one, the grandfather had money and he came to live with them and I figured that that was how they survived. Otherwise, to go back to your request, what did you just ask me?

SI: Were there any other signs of the Depression ...

CB: I can remember there was a lady who lived way down in the corner and she took care of an elderly man who was an artist. He layman died and left her his house, but she had nothing but what he was paying her to take care of him. Her name was Mrs. Goodman and our community had what you called welfare, and welfare was a little deal where you went around on your street and you knock on doors and you carried this little cardboard box with the slit on the top like a bank and you said, "I'm here for welfare," and they would drop a quarter and or a nickel and once in a while somebody would put a dollar in and this really, I did this, I went around and did the collecting. I can remember when somebody put a dollar in there, I was really impressed and I began to think maybe there were people, richer people, in the neighborhood than mine, because I think my mother always put a quarter in, so people had to be taken cared of and that was the way it was done then.

SH: Now do you know where the welfare little cardboard box, where did that originate from?

CB: There was a committee in the town. I lived in a little section of five or six streets called the Blue Birds and we had our own little community group. They put on Fourth of July parades and games and things of that sort and this group, I would just turn the money over to whoever was the president of this little community group and she had a committee and they would go down to the grocery store and they would buy this Mrs. Goodman things. She couldn't leave her house, this little house that she live in, and they just took care of her that way.

SH: Were you involved with the church at all as a young man growing up?

CB: Not really. I went to ... I was a Lutheran, because my father was a Lutheran and you know ... I went to Sunday school and I had perfect attendance. Do you remember pins? You're much too young but you got your first pin for your first perfect attendance and then you got a little guard or something underneath that and then you got a series of things and I had them all until I graduated from high school. I went to Sunday school all the way through high school. I can remember we went on vacations and we would have to stop in a town and I would have to go to Sunday school in Montour Falls or something like that and I would go for the hour and they give me a slip and that counted for my attendance, but that was my full church going. I was not terribly interested in it. In the summer I went to bible school at another church, at a Presbyterian church, because you had ice cream cones on Fridays and there were other little gifts and so forth

and it, you know, occupied the summertime, instead of just sitting around and building huts or something else. That's my religious experience.

SH: Can you talk about, we want to ask about Boy Scouts and then we'll go back to the vacation story. Were you involved in Boy Scouts

CB: I was not in the Boy Scouts. My father was big Boy Scout but I was not. It never really appealed to me. There weren't too many young people right back where I lived, and, of course, since I went off to Berlin to school for my first two years of that particular age group, five and six, I didn't go to school with the kids in the neighborhood and by the time I started in second grade, which was probably not until mid-year or so, I was sort of an outsider in my own school. So I didn't get into the Scouts. I went to YMCA Boy camp every summer for three or four summers. My father wanted me to do everything and I did that and I enjoyed it but it replaced the Boy Scouts for me.

SH: Where did you go to camp?

CB: It was called Ockanickon and it was in Medford, New Jersey, Medford Lakes and there was a girls camp that came, we went first and then in July and the girls came in August and I think that camp is called Matollionequay, I used to love those names, it will roll across your tongue.

SH: You will have to help us spell those.

CB: I don't know how to spell them.

SH: You talked about family vacations, can you tell me what vacations you remember and how far you went up?

CB: Ok. We used to go to the shore many times, this was down visiting people who had places at the shore and they invited my mother and my brother and I down there, by the shore, I'm talking about Beach Haven or Ocean City. We went down and visit them during the week when the husband wasn't down there. Many husbands commuted to the shore and we would go home by the weekend. My father took me camping several times. We would go up and visit his, one of his sisters and the other sister would come down and the whole family would get together on a river up near Carlisle, Pennsylvania and we'd all sort of bunk out, there were houses out there and my father taught me to canoe. He always had a fit, though, about the third day, which made the rest of the week very unpleasant because he couldn't stand babies crying and there were always babies around and by the third day he wasn't talking to his sisters and by the fourth day he wasn't talking to my mother and by the fifth day he wasn't talking to either me or my brother, so they were sort of traumatic vacations, although it was fun ... and then in 1937 we got a new Chevrolet and we decided, we didn't decide, my father decided we would go to Canada, so we drove up to Montour Falls and Watkins Glen and then on up to a Thousand Islands, oh, no, we went up to Skaneateles and ate at Krebs, which was famous in that day and then on up to the Thousand Islands and then to Montreal and then down along Lake Champlain to Saratoga and then on home and that vacation went very well until the last day and then we had another fight. We won't go into that. Those were my major vacations. We did, he took my brother and I up

camping to Eagles Mere, there was a camp up there. We would spend two weeks up there in camp and then I went back ... I met a friend up there and the friend invited me to come back for a weekend. I remember I went back a week alone and that was the first time I had been alone except to be at camps with the YMCA. Those are the major vacations I can remember. Mostly I wanted to go to the shore. I loved the beach. I would go there every year if somebody would just invite me. We did rent a place down in Beach Haven a couple of times and that's about it.

SI: Did your family or maybe you when you were a teenager often go to Camden or Philadelphia?

CB: Oh, I spent all my time going into Philadelphia. I was very self sufficient and I love to get on the bus and take the bus into, you can take the bus all the way to Philadelphia, but I would take it to Camden and they put a rail line on the bridge, and which was part of the subway, and I would take that. I just loved that. My father was good to me. He decided I had to see a show, so I had to go to the Walnut Theater for an evening show one time and the Mummers parade and I did a lot in Philadelphia. In junior high, ninth grade ... I have a lazy eye and in ninth grade they decided I would take some little exercises and it would improve this eye, so I went in every week on Thursday or something and then after I finished with my eye exercise, I'd meet my father and he would take me to dinner some place or something. My brother and mother stayed home, shifted for themselves. I used to call Philadelphia "my city" and I still sort of think of it that way, although I haven't been there in a long, long, long time. More?

SH: What were your interests as a young man, I mean, you talked about camping and the beach being your great thing for the summer, but what interested you in elementary school and going into high school?

CB: I don't know. All I can remember, I just palled around with this kid across the street. There were a lot of vacant lots. This was a subdivision that had been started in those days and they built a house here and a house here and one here and one here and then I guess when the Depression came along, they went, 'pfft,' so there were a lot of vacant lots around and we used to dig down in the lot and make huts and put boards over the top. We would make rooms and you would crawl in these things and you know and we played 'kick the can' on the street. The street was a place to play. We had all sorts of little games that we played, and then when we grew up a little bit, we got into, we put up poles and put nails in it and put a bamboo thing across it and high jump and that sort of thing. I was reasonably good in school but I was not stand out at all and I went to junior high school over at Thomas Edison and we shifted classes and I really liked that and I discovered I was very good in English grammar and I have no idea why ... but I discovered I was good at it because the teacher called on me all the time, and this is one of those things, if you're good at something, and somebody tells you this, then you get even better at it and we got into subjunctive mood and all of that, all of which I have forgotten now, but I was a wizard then ... and I had a friend then and I had a girlfriend and a boyfriend ... and I never made, it was very interesting, I never made the honor roll and I was always a little disappointed in that. When it came to the end of my seventh grade, they had a yearly honor roll and I had never made an honor roll but I made the yearly honor roll, because they just averaged out. Well, this impressed me no end, so I made the honor roll from then on. I think I was just, I wanted to

be good, and that was my sole aim all through grade school and high school, well, junior high school and high school.

SH: You talked about having to choose between two high schools, what made you choose the Collingswood?

CB: Well, it was much closer and also Collingswood was a class four school and had a class four football team and Haddonfield was a smaller school and I think it was class three or class two, so if you had your choice you chose four and that's where I went. It was closer. It was a distance. I couldn't take a bus because the Collingswood busses didn't come there so I walked to school all the time and I thoroughly enjoyed it. It was a mile and a half or something, but that's why I went there.

SH: Were there extracurricular activities that interested you in high school?

CB: Yes, well, first of all I heard about the National Honor Society so I decided that's what I wanted to do, so I didn't quite know how to do that, but I knew I had to get involved in things so I got involved in things and the one I did the most was the newspaper in high school. I thought maybe I'd be a journalist and I didn't turn out to be a journalist but I had fun then and that was my chief aim. Then in my senior year, I took solid geometry and trigonometry and, well, I didn't exactly take them, I taught myself. About the third week in the semester, this was, I think I had solid geometry first, about the third week into the semester my geometry teacher, Ms. Latimore, fell down the stairs and broke both of her legs. It was a terrible story but she had this perception that she couldn't remember which foot she put forward the last time so she would get down, she put this foot on the step then you bring this one from the step above and down to the next one. Well, she forgot and she moved off with the foot that she was down on this side which is still back here, so she fell. Well they had nobody, this was wartime, it was 1943, '42 and '43 and there were no men around. We were in the height of the war then and they couldn't find a solid geometry teacher and the plain geometry teacher had a full set of courses and so they brought up the guidance counselor, who was an algebra teacher from the junior high school, and first there were only two sections, there was only one section of solid geometry, so I had, they looked in the record book of Ms. Latimore and I had all these A's in these little quizzes and so forth, so they asked me if I thought I could teach a little bit of this. I said, "I don't know it myself yet." But my father was very helpful, in fact that was the time I was closest to my father, I mean how nice that I had to teach this class and we did. We went through the book and he was very good. He was a very good teacher, very patient, and so forth, and he also let me do my own thinking and he would only help me, he did this Socratic kind of thing and eventually, you know, I learned and I went in and we did a whole week's worth of lessons and we lined the problems and the homework they would do and I taught all the rest of solid geometry and then trigonometry came along and my father said, "Let's teach that, too." So I taught trigonometry, which merely put me in bad straits when I got to Rutgers University. But that's another story.

SH: That's a wonderful story. I have never interviewed anyone who had to teach in high school as a high school student. To go back, I want you to talk about the war and what you knew as a young man who would have been in junior high, I think, if my math is right. Since you teach

math, you have to help me, talking about what was going on in Europe and in Japan and how aware you as a family, were of what was going on and what you expected?

CB: Okay, my first recollection of being associated or thinking about the war, oh, I remember when they bombed Pearl Harbor. I was off ... my parents did not take Sunday rides around, leisurely rides, you know the kind that when you drive ahead, you think that these people would get off the road, they're just Sunday drivers? Well, Charles Scooley across the street, they had a big Buick that belonged to his grandmother, who had come to live with them, and they liked to travel around, so I, Charles used to come over and say, "We're going down to Salem today, or we're going here, or we're going there, do you want to ride?" and I went and I can remember we rode all day and had a wonderful time. His father was a decorator of sweet shop windows, with crepe paper, and you put it, fan shapes and all sorts of things. He's very talented that way, but he worked for Breyer's Ice Cream and they did this free, if you served Breyer's Ice Cream in your restaurant or your store. I can remember we went off all day and we stopped several places where he worked and he would stream these streamers, and so forth, and then we always had ice cream cones. It was just a wonderful day and we got home, we pulled into the driveway and something in my neighborhood didn't feel right and there were people all sort of standing on the street and talking to each other and we got out of the car and they told us that they had bombed Pearl Harbor and that was my first real association with war. I didn't follow what was going on in Europe with Hitler going into Poland. I knew England was at war and they were our friends and, therefore, Hitler was bad and Mussolini was bad and then we had a third one, Tito, no, Tito was in Yugoslavia, I'm thinking of the Japanese, Tojo, right, he came in and you know, there were billboards all over of these three ugly faces looking at you and I knew we were at war and we didn't like all these people and we had to go on rationing. Well, then, once we were at war, everything changed. Everybody was marching off to war and Rosie the Riveter was working and it was a marvelous period because everybody just drew together. Everybody was your friend and you really saved your money. I gave up ice cream cones, so I could buy stamps to save and when you saved enough of them you got a bond and people hung these little flags on the windows and if their sons went off, then they were just sort of blue. They had blue center or something and then if one was killed in the war, it would be a gold star went on it and you sort of, when you walk to school, if you saw one of these in the window, you got very silent and passed the house sort of in bereavement, and there were bond rallies, it was a really neat period. You all felt that you were part of one big family instead of just your own little family. It was like that, it was great. High school was like that all through high school because, you know, I was in there from '41 to '43 when I graduated and that was it.

SH: What discussions went on in school about the war?

CB: It didn't. We didn't have to take too much history in high school. I did not like history. Later on I learned to love it but I did not like it and I can remember ninth grade was medieval history, tenth grade, I think I had such a full course that I didn't have to take history and if I could avoid it, I didn't take it the rest of the time. So I was focused on myself. I hate to say this, but I didn't see it then, but I was focused on what I was doing with my life and I wanted to do this journalism bit and I wanted to get on the National Honor Society and wanted to do a good job of teaching these subjects and it just didn't move me. I had been much more interested in the floods in Johnstown and so forth, which were probably in '35 or '36 or '37 and I made

scrapbooks and so forth on that, than I ever was with the war. The war was far away from me. The only thing you saw about the war were these people who were going off and they came home in uniform and everybody was happy. It's a terrible thing to say, but it was happy period for me and exciting, as opposed to something I was really upset about. I had no concept of the Jewish situation. I know that I had absolutely no concept of that at all. I don't know when "Anne Frank" came out, but I don't remember thinking of her anytime during that period, nor anybody like her. I just know that it was awfully bad over there and the English were being bombed and the French were having all kinds of trouble and some big long line, the Maginot Line, was supposed to be something that stopped everybody and it broke down and I had ... my mother's sister married a doctor, but this was her second marriage, she had a boyfriend and she did not marry him, she married a ne'er do well, and then she managed to divorce him and then she married a doctor but he was on a troop ship. He was a lieutenant commander in the Navy and he was on the troop ship that carried troops back and forth to North Africa and I was interested in that and I can remember thinking about Rommel down in North Africa and I had a concept that that's where we were gonna start to win and then we went ahead and the next thing I can remember, all of a sudden we were in Italy. Is Anzio in Italy? Well, we did a landing there and I was very pleased. This was like hearing that your football team was winning and that was the last big thing I can remember then, until I went off to war in '43, because ... When did we land in France, that was '44 or '43, I don't know, but '44 probably but and then I was no longer interested in what everybody else was doing in the war. I was interested in what I was doing and what was going on out in the Pacific.

SH: One of the questions I'd like to ask was, when did it dawn on you, I mean, I know you had to register for the draft at eighteen, did you enlist or where you drafted?

CB: I don't know what I really did. I'm sure I was drafted. See, I started school early enough so that when, I was seventeen when I graduated, and I didn't have to register then. I got a scholarship to Rutgers, which is why I was in the Agricultural School. I had decided on my own little fertile mind that if I was going for a state scholarship, there were probably ... I didn't know how they divide them up, I was really an innocent as far as things go, but I had in my mind that if you went to the Ag School, you're much more likely to get a scholarship than if you went to the regular school, so I decided I wanted the Ag School and that's what I applied for and I got a state's scholarship and I graduated from high school the second week of June and I was up at Rutgers the first day of July.

SH: As a high school student, did you think that you would ever be in the war?

CB: No. The war was removed from me. This was something that happened to everybody else and not to me, but I was all for it. That was like you feel about a football team, your college football team, you know. I'm not out there playing on the field and I don't have to take any of those bruises or anything but that is my team and we were at war and that was my war and it was exciting.

SH: Why did you go to Rutgers being so close to Philly ...

CB: No state university. We were only state affiliated then. It wasn't a full state university, but I thought I'd get in a better scholarship there. I didn't have, I could have gone to any school I wanted to but I knew it would be a strain on my, any school was a strain and if I could get a scholarship, it would help and I just figured it was much easier to get a scholarship at your own college, at your state. They called them state's scholarships in those days and there seemed to be more of those available than I thought there were others available and I did not know. This was in my own mind. I think some guidance person, we didn't have a guidance counselor per se. We had an English teacher who did some guidance. She was college prep adviser or something and she called us all in one day and said, "You know, some of you should take the state exams for scholarship." You took an exam just for Rutgers, you did not take an exam like they do scholarships now, SAT or whatever you call it, and they gave out a lot of scholarships. The other thing was there were a lot of people going off to war, so they didn't have to give too many out. Anyway, I got one and I went to Rutgers and I moved in to Winants Hall and had a little suite of rooms and there were four of us altogether.

SH: You remember your roommates?

CB: Some of them. I remember each of them, Don Braly was one of them. Another one was named Frank. Don Braly and I ... there were three rooms there, a sleeping room, a sleeping room and a central study room in Winants Hall and Don Braly and I shared this room. It had bunk beds and Frank and this guy named Charles shared the other room and this is the first time I had really been associated with four males living together, other than camp which was just a two week thing and I thought it was delightful. The cafeteria was downstairs in Winants. We ate there. The bookstore was down there. The campus was loaded with army people. They marched. They marched to class and all of us were eighteen years old, seventeen year old except for the people who were 4F at the time and but that was just a sprinkling and we came in strong and we had a great time. I can remember that Charles, about the third week there, he invited us to go home with him. His parents drove all the way down from Washington, drove us all the way back to his house and I thought this is college life. You go home and visit your roommate and so forth and by the end of the first quarter, which ended in September, he was eighteen and drafted and he went off to France and got pneumonia and died. Meanwhile, I had pledged to a fraternity [Theta Chi] through Ralph Kleinschmidt, who was in the engineering department, and my roommate, Don Braly was an engineering student. The fraternity was in dire straits on Union Street and they wanted to pledge people as fast as they could, so this engineering man just invited everybody in his engineering classes over and Don Braly said to me, "Come on along, they don't know you from an engineering student." So I went over and I pledged the fraternity eventually and by the time that second quarter started, which was the September quarter, Don and I moved out of Winants Hall and moved into the fraternity house which is what they wanted and I lost track of Frank and the other one had died. I don't know whatever happened to Frank. But he was a nice enough guy. He didn't get over there.

SH: Well, can you tell us about what your first experiences were at Rutgers, as far as, you went there in July and this is in July '42, '43? In '43 the ASTP program is there.

CB: I forget the name of that, but that's right.

SH: Tell us a little bit about what it was like to be integrated into these classes with these ... and you're taking ROTC ...

CB: No, well, yes, somewhere I took ROTC. I don't know that I took ROTC at Rutgers, now that I think back at it. Some people did. I had the problem because I had courses over at the Ag school and I had to, between classes, get from the main campus over to the Ag school and nobody had cars in those days. Rationing ... even if you had a car, you couldn't get gas and you'd save it for the weekends, so I really didn't get associated with the army except in one class and I told you a little while back, that was my problem with teaching math. When I got up there, they put me in, I went over to see the head of the math department ...

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

CB: Whether I had algebra in eleventh grade. So he said, "Okay, I'll put you in analytical geometry." So I went into analytical geometry. Well, I discovered in analytical geometry, I wasn't quite as good a math student as I thought I was, and I didn't have my father to fall back on, but to get into that class, none of the other college freshmen were in there, none of the civilian freshmen were in there. All they had in there were these army people, so here I am in this class with all these army people. Well, I muddled my way through that and I think I probably got a C and the next thing they put me in was differential calculus. That really blew my mind. So after about the third week ... that was a terrible professor and there must have been sixty of us in the class and I was the only one that was in civilian clothes and he would get up and he'd assign these problems, the previous lesson, then he would get up and he'd say, "Anybody had any trouble doing those problems?" and somebody would raise their hand and he'd get up on the board, and write this problem all down on the board all the way to the answer. I had no idea what he was doing. I had no concept of it. He could have been talking gibberish. Well, after I had been there for two weeks, six lessons, I decided I didn't like this course and I was paying for it, or my scholarship was paying for it, so I just wouldn't go. I did not know you could drop courses and that wasn't that, I didn't know that you had to go to a course you were paying the money and then you went and if you finally pass the course, you pass the course. If you didn't go it was just as if you didn't go to the course, so I never went. At the end of the semester I had a big old F on my record. I had a terrible time and I never could talk to the Registrar out of that, Luther [Martin] somebody or other. That was the name of the Registrar, and anyway, I still had big old F on my record. I did finally get through calculus, but it was after the war. So, I associated with the army only in that respect and the fact that they marched around. I think they lived in Ford Hall. Is Ford Hall still there? Okay, I think that's where the army was, and I was living over on Union Street, most of the fraternities were closing down. In fact, a couple of them where there were some stragglers, 4F or whatever they were, they would come over and eat in our dining room, so somehow we put together enough people to have a chef and cook there.

SI: Before you joined the service, did you feel any hostility from the army men and that you were in civilian clothes?

CB: No, I just felt peculiar. I felt out of place and not badly out of place. I wasn't thinking I should be with them. I just felt that I looked funny and I don't like to look funny and this was

my whole concept and I didn't get in with any other army classes because I went over to, one more I did get in, meteorology with Professor Biel, and they gave that under the agricultural department. I don't know why. But I really liked that class and that was mostly army, but it was, he came over the campus and taught and then he flew to Chicago and taught classes out in Chicago then flew back and this is the day you didn't fly back and forth to do things, and that really impressed me. But I was gonna get back to your original question. It slipped my mind, it will come up again.

SH: How was the social life maintained at Rutgers?

CB: Hold that. I just thought of what you asked me before that I didn't, now I have forgotten it again. All right I'll get into the social life. Oh, you asked me about being drafted and so forth. All right, I should finish that off because it came into my mind. When I got back in September, some of my fraternity brothers were gone. One of my fraternity brothers who I liked very much was guy named Charles Heilman and he, we palled around a lot together, I had a girlfriend over at NJC named Lavinia Burns, we called her "Vinny" and you know I dated her regularly, once a week, and you had to walk everywhere. We went down to the movies on Livingston Avenue across from the Hotel Roger Smith now and once in a while Chuck went along but he did not have a lot of girlfriends. He wasn't that interested in girls. Anyway at Christmas time, we broke, it wasn't quite the end of the semester but we broke and when I came back from Christmas, he was gone and there were about seven of us left and then we had the break, then I came back and two more of those were gone, I think we were only five of us left in the fraternity house and just as few on campus. The numbers went way down and then April came at the end of that quarter and when I got back, there were only three of us. I had reached eighteen by that time and my mother had gone down to the draft board. I had to register, I was eighteen in January and I had started the third semester, third quarter, and she went down and told them what I was doing and that's why she was bringing in my registration thing and I would like to finish out the semester, the quarter. They said, "Fine." I didn't even make an appearance. Well, then I didn't hear from them, so when the next quarter began, I just trundled my way back to New Brunswick and went again, and then, there was nobody on campus, just army, absolutely nobody and we had to close the dining room at the fraternity house and I made a new friend, a guy named Charles Edward Lipartito. He had a girlfriend in South River and we used to go out there once in a while and eat and then I got to thinking, "You know, everybody else has gone off and here I am still struggling around here, I am able-bodied," and all of this and then I can remember one night I went down to a movie on, I remember this as clear as can be, a movie, Johnson and Johnson was on the river and then, what was that street that ran off from there?

SH: George?

CB: Right, and there was a theater before you ever met the cross street which went out to Highland Park, there was a theater in there and I went to the movie. I went to the movies and I enjoyed the movies, and I think we even had newsreels then, Pathe News or something, I'm sure we did, and I came out, it was about the war and I came out and I got back to Queens Campus and I walked past the chapel, what's the name of that chapel, Kirkpatrick, Voorhees was over at the girl's school, Kirkpatrick Chapel and I got to thinking, "Fletcher Bishop, you are a very lucky person. You've gotten everything you want out of life. You got on the National Honors

Society,” I don’t why I had this thing for the National Honors Society, but I did, “you got on the National Honor Society and they put you in a book and you came out here and you got a marvelous education. Your parents were never out of work, you ate well, you went vacations and all of this, it’s, you know, you’ve had a good life. It doesn’t matter if it’s all over” ... and this is right on campus. It wasn’t snowing but it was raining and ... I love that chapel. I hated going there because I didn’t like whatever they talked about. It was Dutch Reform or some kind of, but I loved all those pictures on the wall, of those people looking down at me and the stained glass windows. I sort of felt very religious there and then you walked past, the next building was the long Old Queens and I just decided, “I want to call my draft board and find out why they have not drafted me,” and so I got home and I called my mother and she said, “Are you sure you want to do this?” and I said, “Yes.” So pretty soon I got a notice that said, “report,” and this is the end of June. There was one other reason then, I’ve wanted to go in the navy and somehow, I got the assurance that my draft board was sending people to the Navy then. I don’t know how I got this assurance but I got this assurance in my mind. I often assumed things. I may have just assumed that, but I got in the navy. So that was the end of that. Now you want to know about dating and girls.

SH: On campus, before you go off to war ...

CB: Well, I had this one girl, Lavinia Burns, and I wasn’t terribly interested in girls but you had to have a date and she was my date. I had gotten her from the president of the fraternity. He had a bad leg, his name was, Bob Smith, Robert Graham Smith, and he had a very bad leg from infantile paralysis, or something. So, he had this girlfriend named Lavinia Burns and she got too serious for him. She just got very serious. Well, I was going with a little girl named (Sweetsie/Switz?) then and I thought Lavinia was the prettiest girl I had ever seen, so when Bob Smith said she got too serious, this didn’t register with me that she might get serious with me. I thought this was just, you know, so I got rid of (Sweetsie/Switz?) and I got Vinny. Well, I went with Vinny till I went in the Navy and then I went back and went to dances at NJC with her and then I went off to war and she wrote me everyday, everyday, some of them are little short ones, but she wrote me everyday and then I hate to say it, I dumped her after the war, and I don’t know a way to explain it but I did.

SH: One of the questions that we ask is what kind of activities were there, the military balls or things for you to attend? Did your fraternity host any social ...

CB: The fraternity had fraternity parties, but they weren’t as wild as the parties were after the war, and they were more limited in scope, plus people kept disappearing. It was mostly going over to NJC and they had to be back at something like eleven o’clock and that was only on the weekend. It was seven o’clock during the week and it was eleven o’clock on the weekend and you could go down to the movies and you could get an ice cream or something. I didn’t do a lot of drinking then, and you walked all the way back and by the time I got involved in this dating, it was fall and then winter came along and New Brunswick is terrible in the winter. I think it was one of the worst places in the world in the Winter. It’s damp and dreary and oh, ... anyhow, it was a chore walking all the way over to NJC to pick up these girls and then walking all the way downtown and blowing on our hands, because you didn’t want to wear gloves, you look like a freak if you wore gloves, and then you went to the movies and you held hands, you got nice and

warm and then you came out and you made the terrible, cold walk back and you kissed her goodnight and you had to walk all the way back to New Brunswick and that was it and going on a date was a chore.

SH: Were there activities on campus such as concerts and ...

CB: I don't remember any during that period. I don't remember, I really don't. The thing we had, I really don't even remember much about football. I don't think we had a football team in 1943, fall. I just don't remember it and I should because after the war, when I came back for the next three years, I went to every football game we ever had, away and home, and the last football game I went to ... I only went to one football game in my life after I left Rutgers and that was at the University of Florida when Rutgers came down to play them and I went to that because somebody invited me and that's it. I'm not a football freak.

SH: Did you find, you talked a little bit about mandatory chapel, there was mandatory chapel when you went in '43, did they continue that when you came back?

CB: I think they did continue that. I don't remember it up through my last, senior, year, but I think maybe in sophomore year, we had to. I call sophomore year when I went back, '46, '47. I think maybe we did, but don't quote me on that. I mean, you can listen to me but I don't know for sure.

SH: Do you remember some of the speakers that came to your chapel?

CB: No, I don't. I think Clothier was president at that time and I think he talked to us once. I think the minister, there was a Dutch Reformed Church right on College Avenue and I think he came over and talked to us, and I'm sure, Metzger, was he a dean? I think Dean Metzger talked to us. They weren't dignitaries, or at least if they were dignitaries I didn't know they were dignitaries, plus I thought they were boring. So I wouldn't have known anyway.

SH: Were there any musical programs that you remember?

CB: No. I really don't remember a thing during that early period.

SI: Do you remember if Camp Kilmer was right there? Did that have any impact on life in New Brunswick, on the campus?

CB: No. I knew it was there and you would, but see we had all these army people that were on campus and I really didn't differentiate Camp Kilmer with these people. If I saw them in town, I just saw them. There were soldiers everywhere and there were sailors, you know, they were home on leave or something. All I knew with that was in my mind, that was a disembarkation camp and it had no influence on me at Rutgers at all. I didn't know it was really close at hand.

SH: Did you keep a job at all while you were on campus the first year, or first ...

CB: I think I did. I think I worked at the YMCA and I don't know how I fell into the job. I think it was through a fraternity brother, but this may not have been before the war, or before I went to war. This may have been my first year back. I didn't work there terribly long but I worked just sort of like a little desk clerk at the YMCA and it was an evening thing. I would eat and go down there at six and the desk stayed open till nine, maybe ten. This was right near the theater on Livingston Avenue, the YMCA was there. I don't know whether they're still there, but they had like a little hotel there and if I had a job, that was the only one I had.

SI: You mentioned that you had in your head already, you wanted to go to the navy, was there a particular reason why?

CB: No. Yes, I just figured being out on the sea, you know I loved the shore and the beach, and so forth, and I thought of the army as people who were running around with guns and dropping in foxholes. You know the story in the Pacific was terrible at this time, we were doing better in Europe. I didn't think of foxholes in Europe. I thought of the foxholes in the Pacific, don't ask me why, but this is just my concept at that time. I think I was still thinking of landing in Anzio and I was thinking of this Maginot Line that didn't hold. I just had these little tunnel visions of episodes that were happening, but the Navy just appealed to me as a nice clean way to fight a war and the Army was like a dirty way to fight a war. I don't mean it that way, but ...

SH: The *Targum*, was it still being published while you were on campus that first time?

CB: I think the *Targum* may have published but if it did, it was not a regular. I think if they probably came out, it probably came out the beginning of each semester and then even when I went back, it wasn't a daily. Is it a daily now? It wasn't a daily. It was a, I think it was a weekly when I went back. If you ask me to state what I think, I don't think it ever was a daily while I was there. I think it was a weekly.

SH: Because you worked in the newspaper in school, in high school, I wondered if you thought of working in the *Targum*?

CB: I did. Well, but not until I came back from the war. There were no activities in campus when we went up that, in July. You just went to school and you got involved with getting into the fraternity if that's what you were going to do and I don't remember any activities, I really don't. I don't remember any dances. There were just guys coming and going and that was it. But after the war, yes.

SH: And you've mentioned the newsreel and the war movie that you'd seen and how that influenced you to change your draft status. What do you remember of the newsreel and how they reported what was going and were there further discussions on campus?

CB: I don't remember discussing the war. I don't remember discussing the war with my folks. I don't remember discussing the war with the kids at school in that period or even the ones in high school. We knew it was going on and we knew, we had the rationing and we were helping everybody and but the war itself ... I was kind of a loner, too, so I didn't get into discussions with, you know, people would say, "Oh, I really don't want to go, and I'll probably be drafted

and I probably be killed.” This to me was just depressing thought, I turned it off. It didn’t mean a thing to me. The newsreels, I was very distressed that we were losing and I hated these three men who were up on the billboards. Somehow Stalin got in there somewhere and I don’t know how he got in there. He may have been later, but he’s mixed up in my mind with these three and Tojo and Mussolini and Hitler, but I did not discuss the war. It was just something that, it was there in the background and we were all living by it and you know, that was it, and we were conserving.

SH: Go ahead and explain about how you changed your draft status and the process that it took you to get to the military.

CB: Well, I went in for my physical and I passed the physical.

SH: Did you go to Camden?

CB: I went to Camden. I lived in Collingswood, went home, they told me what day I had to report and I went in and reported and then I went home again and then somehow I got some orders, or something, and believe it or not, I got on the train in Camden and I had no idea. I should have been put on the Philadelphia and gone right down to Bainbridge but I got on in Camden and that train went all over everywhere, we had to get off, take the ferry boat to over from New Castle and get on the train again down in Wilmington and then go on down to Bainbridge, and down I went. Is that where you want me to go next? You want to know all that happened down there? Well, I got down there and they marched us in and they cut our hair and sheared it all off and then they put us in this big old long barracks and they put some guy in charge of us. I think his name was Patera and he was very Italian and very big and very gruff and they gave us this rolled up sack and then we got clothes and other, but the worst looking thing is the underwear. The jeans were too big. They weren’t like jeans today. They didn’t have the thing, they were just blue jeans and with blue chambray shirt and this hat, which they pulled down over your head because you were shaved up there, and you didn’t want your head to show and I got in there. Well, then, he got us all out and ran us around something called the grinder and I thought, “This is terrible,” and we’d ran and we did this and we did exercises and oh, on and on, then we started to march. Well, I was up at the head of the line and I didn’t know. I didn’t know my left foot from my right but I had one hell of my time, pardon the expression. Well, this annoyed me because I always wanted to be good and I decided I have got to get this, so whenever I had any time off, I did this, I’m talking to myself, did my own marching. Well, pretty soon ... I had led this squad. I think every line was a squad and then this was the platoon when the squads got together and you had two platoons. Anyway, but pretty soon, I was up in the corner here and I really got kind of good at this, because I practiced a lot, and so pretty soon I got to be platoon leader and then I got to be, I guess, captain, which was in charge of both platoons but under whoever this leader was we had. Anyhow, I had a wonderful time, because at Rutgers, I did have to take gym at Rutgers and we had, you know, stockade, you had to climb up the ropes and over this thing and fall down the far side and then wander through these ugly looking mazes and what have you and I had done that fairly well at Rutgers and I was pretty good at it there and I got better and better and finally it was all over and I don’t know whether we were there eight weeks or nine weeks and oh, I had grown my hair back. I was a 140 pounds skinny stick when I went in and when I came out I weighed 153 pounds and I had some muscle

and I really felt, for my first time in my life I felt attractive. I used to think I was ugly as a kid. My father used Vaseline Hair Tonic on my hair, it wasn't tonic, it was grease. It was like Vaseline and I was always plastered down like this. It was terrible and I wore glasses because of my eye and I always thought I was just an ugly little kid. I thought I was like, there was a guy in the "Our Gang" camp comedies, Alfalfa. Do you know Alfalfa? I felt I looked like Alfalfa, but a little worse and I never did feel attractive until I got out of the navy and when I got out of the navy, I thought I was gorgeous and that's the truth. Oh, it was wonderful and then I forgot about having to look attractive and thought about other things in life. You go home and you got, I don't know whether we got thirty days leave or fifteen days and then you came back to Bainbridge and you went in the front gate and they said, "Go to OGU," which meant Outgoing Unit. So you went in there and they assign you to a barracks and gave you some bedding again and so forth and then they interviewed you. Well, at this particular time, everybody was going in, they were shifting everybody to what they called the CBs and landing crafts for the Pacific. I mean, they were shifting everybody to San Diego, that was the disembarkation point. I guess we had landed at Normandy and the European war looked good and the navy was thinking about shifting people to the Pacific and this did not appeal to me. I always wanted a nice clean ship and I was not gonna be on one of these little landing crafts and I didn't want CBs. I think ... I was still kind of innocent, but it sort of, I had in my mind that they went on shore and they built little huts and you sat there and the Japs shot down at you and this was not what I was going to do, and you just stayed on the shore and then the army came along and you kept ferrying the army people in there and meanwhile you stayed on shore and built these little huts. Anyway, it was not appealing so, while they were interviewing me, I told them all about my teaching experience in solid geometry and trigonometry. I couldn't get over that, so the next thing I know, they came down and got me out of my bunk and said you had to go up and see this chief somebody or other, and I thought Chief, it was Chief Petty Officer. Well, I went up and I saw this man. Well this was a salt from way back, I mean, this was the epitome of the Navy. He was all dressed in khakis, not whites, and a hat with something on it and it was just like an admiral to me. Anyway, he says, "I understand you taught." I said, "Oh, yes, solid geometry and trigonometry." He said, "Well," he said, "I'm giving a course down here in navigation for quartermasters, plus we have all these people in OGU and we have to teach them something because they are here for three days or so. We have to interview them and then after we interview them, we have to make up rosters and tell them where they go and everything," and he said, "We've got these people hanging around here for three days, so were gonna give them indoctrination classes." I said, "Oh," and he said, "I would like you to teach survival at sea." Now that's what he said to me. So he said, "Do you think you can teach that?" I said, "Well, I don't know. I did, I didn't know solid geometry or trigonometry." He said, "Oh, we have a book here." He said, "You take this home, back to the barracks, and I'll enroll you in this class with the quartermasters and you can teach these people survival at sea." So I read the book and the next day I had sixty people in front of me and I had four of them, I had four classes. I taught the same thing each class but I told them just what I had read. I sounded like an old salt. I told them exactly what to do and it was fascinating. Anyway, I stayed there and I learned how to navigate and then finally, I got bored with that. I went home every weekend. I had every weekend off, I went home and had a marvelous time, up to Philadelphia, Camden it was close. Then a friend of mine in OGU, he was doing something there. He said, "Listen, they've got at lot of neat little billets coming down at wherever the offices that you go from," and he said, "Come on down with me, I want to pick someplace to go, because this is gonna be the end of my

deal here and you're close." I said, "I'm close?" He said, "They're gonna ship you out pretty soon." So I went down and all these little billets were up on the bulletin board and I looked up and down the bulletin board and there was one with YMS 400 out of New York and I said, "What is a YMS?" Well, I found out it was a minesweeper and then I drew back and then I thought, "Well, out of New York, this couldn't be too bad because I'm sure that harbor is protected and we probably just ran up and down the harbor of New York sweeping for mines and this would be delightful." So I signed up for it, and they shipped me out. The thing I didn't know was "out of New York" didn't mean right in New York, it meant "way out of New York." I told you I was innocent. So they shipped me out to New York and I went to Pier 92. Do you want to hear all of this junk? I went to Pier 92. Do you know of it? Anyway this is a pier at the end of 42nd Street out into the Hudson. Cruise ships used to leave from it, but now it was a navy bunkhouse, and I went in there and they assigned me a bunk and this is the first time ... not a bunk, it was not exactly a hammock, it had springs but you rolled your thing out on it, but there were five or six on top of each other. I mean that place was loaded. That was another place they didn't know what to do with you. You got there and you had these orders to go to YMS 400 and other people were going other places so they put me in there and then they said, "Well, you have to do something," so they put me ... when I got out of Bainbridge I got this little wheel to put on my jumper, which was a quartermaster striker thing out of seaman second class, so there's a little quarter inch striker thing here so they looked at that and I guess they figured I was important and if they didn't I must have told them, but anyway, they put me in charge of a scullery crew. I had no idea what this was. Down I went and it's really nice. I had to wear my whites and then I had five or six other people underneath of me and they ran this machine, this dishwashing machine, and it came up and this one would scrape the stuff off and he'd put the dishes here and the tray over here and then this guy would stack the dishes and ran it through this little machine and all these came down and then the guy over here would pick them up, put them back in the racks again, like milk bottle racks and this was delightful. So I ran this, and you only had to run for one meal, so I ran it and that was sort of like for lunch and then when you're finished you went back and then you went down to the liberty quarters and you asked for a chit and out you went, and then you always had a twenty-four hour chit so the next day you did not have to be back until after lunch. So that night you would look up on the board and you would maybe have the dinner scullery duty. Well, anyway, I did that and I kept waiting for my orders. Now this is in early November. So I took the train down to New Brunswick and I also got forty-eight hour passes. I took the train down to New Brunswick, went over, had a date with Vinny. If I didn't have to be back at night I would stay over at the fraternity house and then I go back to New York and then if I didn't really want to go to New Brunswick, I did all the shows in New York. I had a wonderful time and in those days, if you're in the navy uniform, you got into places free. Not just USO, I never had to go to the USO because the shows you could get in if you went there late and there were seats, which there always were, because people were coming and going, and you got into the shows free. I went to the movies at the Roxie, Radio City Music Hall, I just had a wonderful time and time went on. When I got the weekend pass, I went down to Collingswood, which was my home, and visited with my folks and my father would take me to the Engineer's Club and Walt Whitman Hotel in Camden and we just had a marvelous time and he kept telling everybody in the office I was going off on this minesweeper. Well, two weeks later, I'd appear again and I could see my father was a little annoyed. My mother was happy and I wasn't sure he really wanted me to go, but he also had told everybody I was going. Well, Christmas came and I went home again for Christmas and New Year's came and I went home for New Year's and then

one day I got back and I went down to sign up for scullery duty and they said, "No, no, no, there will be a taxicab here for you." So I thought, "Finally I'll get in," and I still in my mind, I was gonna sweep New York Harbor. So I got in this taxicab with two other people, I didn't know who they were, two other sailors and off we went. We went over the [George Washington] bridge and got into Jersey City and then we went to Bayonne and I was thinking, "Where are we going?" So, finally they pulled up, and we had what we called Liberty ships in those days. The merchant marines built them and they did. They were wonderful. They were the backbone. But here were these Liberty ships, and they did all kinds of cargo, and so forth, plus I learned, they also ferried people to where they were supposed to go. So I got on this Liberty ship, oh, it was cold and rainy in Bayonne. New York was terrible and I got on this ship and they gave me my own cabin. I ate with the officers and the two other people who were with me and finally we set sail and I'm wondering, "What am I doing on this big tub?" Well, a couple of days later, they wouldn't tell you. Nobody would tell you anything. Everything was secret then, and it got warmer and warmer and warmer and the next thing I know, we pulled into this harbor and I'm in Trinidad. That started my ... and then, well, they got me off the ship and I saw all of these people in these Caribbean kind of homes, which were open with just wooden doors that you could close and they're painted gorgeous colors. Oh, this was fascinating and they dragged me onto the base and they put me in this big barracks and I was the only one there. I don't know what happened to the other two people but I was the only one there and they ... So I unpacked my things and rolled out the mattress that they gave me and I thought, "Well, I'm here for a while, when am I gonna get on the ship?" Well, all of a sudden, somebody came up, called my name, and here's this guy with a little braid on, and was the captain, "Bishop," he yells. So I said, "Yes," and he says, "I'm Captain McLaren, you're my quartermaster," and I said, "Oh." So he dragged me off there onto this little ship and checked me all in and then he said, "Now I want you to go up and meet Basset, he's been waiting for you for two months, his eighteen months" ... you had eighteen months duty and then you could get a thirty day leave if you were out of the states and Basset had been waiting two months for me to come as his replacement. So I went up and he showed me the chartroom and so forth then he started talking about the flag bin, and I said, "What is this?" Well, they have all these little flags there with squares and stripes, and what have you, and you're supposed to run these up when you're doing something special in formation and you don't want to break radio silence and you don't want your light flashing where somebody else could read it. Well, I had never been really a quartermate striker. All I had learned to do was navigate. So I said, "Oh, I can't do that." So Basset said, "Well, how fast are you on the light?" and I said, "On what light?" This is the truth. It was terrible. So then Basset disappeared and pretty soon comes back with the captain and the captain says, "You can't signal?" I said, "No," he said "Can you do semaphore?" and I said, "No, I can't do semaphore. Is that this thing?" he said, "Yes." I said, "No." He said "Well, what can you do? Why are you a quartermaster?" I said, "Because I can navigate." He says, "Nobody can navigate. A quartermaster doesn't learn to navigate." I said, "That's what I learned to do," so he started asking me questions about navigation and I could answer them all and dead reckoning, and so forth, so he liked this [guy] Basset and he really wanted Basset to get his time off and you never get reassigned to your same ship again, you went somewhere else and he knew he wasn't gonna get him back and he certainly didn't want him to leave with me there but there was nothing else he could do. So Basset left and I was the quartermaster striker and he insisted that I learned, first of all, how to do the light, the Morse Code. So he took the signal man, he said, "You teach him this." The signalman was due to get off, too. He told the signalman he could not leave until I

could read Morse Code on the light and so the signal man taught me. This was a crash course and it's one of those things like typing or something. It goes so slow and so slow and you think, "I am never gonna do this," and then all of sudden it comes and the biggest problem is because you don't think ... I was a great reader but you think and seeing the whole word and with the signal you're saying to yourself, "RAS ," and then you mix the next letter and then T and you think, "What does that spell?" and it's terrible and then all of a sudden, one day it comes to you and you put them together, so I learned how to signal. I never did learn how to run those flags but I did learn how to look at the book and put them all, line them all up in the flag bin and so that they'd be ready and I never learned semaphore, but I used my navigation and the captain was very pleased with that because he didn't have anybody else on board. We had three more officers and none of them could navigate, but I could. So we had a great time. Anyway, that's how I got on board the ship.

SH: Did you ever consider OCS?

CB: No. I was really, well, I considered this when I went to school, in fact when I went to Rutgers I thought, "You know, I'm seventeen and I'll get this college under my belt, I have at least a year up there," in fact I was counting on two years. I thought I would get a deferment. I would start my second year and get a deferment and finish my second year and then the navy would be clamoring for me. Well, it didn't quite work out that way and I never considered it again. After my little episode by Kirkpatrick Chapel, I just got in the navy, and then I got through boot camp and thought I was so gorgeous and why bother with anything else? Enjoy the world, and I really liked traveling. It was wonderful. I was not seasick and I loved the duty I had and if you're quartermaster, you're up on the bridge and the captain really depends on you. I always felt I sort of owned that ship, you know, the rest of the people were just there to work for me. None of them were in my crew except who was up on the deck, I mean up on the bridge but they were sort of down below and out of the way and they were the things that made it possible for me and the captain to run the ship.

SH: How many were on board?

CB: Thirty-five, forty, it was a small. It was only a 138 feet long, wooden bottom and people down below and they were seamen, gunnery men, and so forth, and I was up on the bridge and my crew is the yeoman, the radio man, the sound man, the sonar man and myself.

SH: Were they all from the Northeast like yourself?

CB: The soundman was from Boston, that was that Harry Marshall Nolan. We had had one before and he was replaced. The signalman was from Pennsylvania. The yeoman was from Wilmington, Delaware. I can't remember where the radioman was from and, of course, I was from New Jersey. That was about it. But the people down below, the motormacs and the people that were in that crew, they were Pennsylvanians, so forth, but the seamen were mostly Virginia and Georgia and that area.

SH: Where was the captain from?

CB: He was from Connecticut.

SH: Was he a career man or Coast Guard ...

CB: I don't think he was a career man, but he was very good. He's a wonderful captain really. A lot of people didn't like him, I liked him, but, of course, we associated a lot up above. He appreciated me and you know when you're appreciated you like anybody.

SH: When you went down to Trinidad, not knowing where you were going at that point, was there any concern on the Liberty ship, did you travel in convoy, or were you alone? What about submarines?

CB: I think we traveled on that Liberty ship all by ourselves. I do not remember being in any kind of a convoy. I don't know whether it was because of the period, you see, this is January 1944 and for some reason I do not remember that and yet I knew when we got to Trinidad why I was down there and that was particularly for convoys and that sort of thing. But I don't remember myself being convoyed.

SH: Can you talk a little bit then of what your duties were and where you sailed ...

CB: Oh, yes, we'll never finish. Trinidad is a peculiar ... Venezuela is down here and Trinidad is shaped like that, right off the coast of Venezuela, and then there are three big rock formations here and that, the United States mined it themselves. They mined this end with moored mines so that it was completely closed. Up at this end they mined between all of these rocks and Venezuela, except for one entrance, and that was a deep channel and the gulf in there is called the Gulf of Paria and the concept was, and this happened although I got down there late, the concept was in the previous eighteen months before I got there, that cruisers and battleships and aircraft ...

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

CB: The concept was that battleships and cruisers, and so forth, could be convoyed down there. They would find little snags in engines, or what have you, on the way down. They could go into this harbor which was now completely protected by mines except for sonar and radar and I don't know what kind of electronic surveillance between this one entrance to the harbor and the Gulf of Paria was the biggest secure harbor in the world and a battleship could go in there and another battleship and three cruisers and they could do maneuvers in the harbor. They couldn't do everything they could do at sea but at least they could turn around and not bump into each other and they could get their new crews used to running the ship and turning it, and what have you, and that's what they used it for, for eighteen months. By the time I got down there, as I said, the war in Europe was closing down. We had landed at Normandy, see, I'm '45 now, I mean this is the year 1945, we've landed there, we're winning. So our problem, and our duty was, our duty as a minesweeper was to go out from section base daily or every other day and sweep around the harbor in areas where mines might have drifted a little bit. See, these were moored mines and they're on rocks and so forth and then they have a cable and the mine is on the end of the cable and if you cut the cable, by Geneva Convention the mine is no longer supposed to be active. I

don't know how it works, but all those little points that stick out on them, they're no longer active so there was no fear of the mines that might have come loose. There was a fear that some of these could drift when the rocks down at the bottom drifted and so we had to sweep around the entrance there and outside the entrance and then around the harbor in the more shallow areas to see if there were any mines, and we never found one then. So that was our duty, plus, we also, whenever there was a mine report down in Curacao and Aruba, they were big refinery centers, the oil came up from Venezuela, in Maracaibo and that area. They had little lake tankers which had a very shallow draft like four or five feet and these lake tankers would carry the oil out of Lake Maracaibo or Gulf of Maracaibo, or whatever it was called, Gulf of Venezuela, right over to Curacao and Aruba and they would refine it there before it was shipped to wherever we needed oil and gas, and every once in a while, there would be a report that maybe there was a German submarine in the area and then, or that the submarine was still there, then we had to pretend we were a sub chaser. We also had to sweep mines and we would go to Aruba and sweep in the harbor of Aruba and we'd sweep in the harbor of Curacao and we never found anything there either. We chased subs, we never found a sub, but we did a lot of chasing and it was great fun.... and that was one of the, the big problem with our ship was, we had this gigantic gun on the front of the ship, a three inch gun, and you should never have a three inch gun on a 138 foot ship. So we were top heavy and we had a wooden bottom and we were shallow draft, again, so that we wouldn't encounter mines and when we went out to sea, it was terrible. I mean, we would turn actually sidewise, you'd look out here and the water is practically halfway up the deck at you, I mean, all the water, not just splashing up, and we had a lot of seasick sailors at the time but it was really fun and exciting. I enjoyed it. I went into the inside bridge instead of the outside bridge and that was mainly our duty. Then all of a sudden, two months after I got on the ship or three months, VE Day and all of that was done. We didn't have to worry about that, but then we got orders to sweep our own mines up, the ones that we had laid, and I don't know, I think there were supposed to be 490 mines down at the one end and I can't remember how many at the other end and we had maps. They sent us all these maps from Washington, showed us where each of these mines was so we went down to the low end, down by Port of Spain in the San Bernardino, or whatever it was called, and we swept and we swept and we swept. We never did find a mine. Never. So then we came up to the other entrance and we started sweeping there and the concept of a minesweeper, you have this gear that runs out the back, it's just on a big, long cable and there are knives or teeth in them and the concept is that you cut the mine, that means that it's no longer can be activated and then you sink it with gunfire. Well, first of all you always wonder if when it cut loose, whether it did, and then you travel. The first ship went in close to shore where nobody could lay a mine, this is on a moored mine, then his tail came out here into the area outside of that and the next ship followed at a distance behind that so that if you cut a mine, he was far enough behind to veer in and then shoot this mine and detonate it. Well, we finally cut four mines and I'll never forget when we shot the first one. Everybody is sitting there wondering, "Is this thing gonna blow?" It just sank and that would happen to all four of them, that was the end, and we found out later, well, they told us later, they already knew that many of these mines had drifted loose. They had found them over in Spain, in North Africa, and apparently they never did blow up, they're not like land mines. Whatever the Geneva Convention said they should do, that was the way they were made, and then for magnetic mines, which is what submarines lay in the harbors if they get in, you had this big long tail that went out, oh it went out for miles and it pulsed and it was supposed to ... you didn't follow each other then. You went by yourself and the other ship stayed far enough away and this was supposed to,

you were supposed to be able to travel over it because, again, by Geneva Convention, these were supposed to be weighted somehow so that they were at a certain depth, because they really wanted to blow up a big battleship or something and this had to be down far enough where it was gonna do damage, so that with our shallow draft, we were supposed to be able to pass over the top of it. And then this tail that pulses increased as it went and it was supposed to blow it up far behind it. We never did find one of those. We went down to Maracaibo and swept through there for a while and never did find a magnetic mine, which is a good thing because later on when we got to Hawaii, they told us that the thing was all set wrong and we'd probably blow ourselves up.

SH: Tell us about that beach, we have pictures that you shared with us about VE Day, when you were in Trinidad. Now can you then tell us how this progresses for you?

CB: Well, that was just a big celebration and we sort of knew it was coming and you know it was a big party and we partied and the next day we went about our duty. You got over things in the navy fast. You did what you were supposed to do and this was, and they were all responsible for it. They fed you, they clothed you, they cut your hair, they pulled your teeth and you had no worries except drinking beer or writing a letter home or drinking coffee or what have you. It was a very quiet life and VE Day was over and that was over and of course, Roosevelt died right after that, I think, I think, yes, because I think, was he alive on VE Day? I think so, no, about a month before. Well, we had been through that, that was traumatic for us. I do remember everybody was very upset at that. You know, what are we going to do now? This man is, well, part of us were, he had been carrying us through the war, winning in Europe and then all of a sudden we're left and this little man from Kansas is gonna be in there and he was not impressive as a vice president, just not impressive. That was a worry. I think we were more concerned about that than we were jubilant over VE Day, and then of course, as I said, we went in and swept then. Do you want funny stories? Well, after VE Day when they decided they're gonna send us to sweep two more little bays, or whatever you call them, in Venezuela where some oil was exported. They told us we had to get out there. Well, my captain was the prime captain for about five minesweepers, so we got underway and we were what you called SOPAs, Senior Officer Present. So off we went and we're cruising off Venezuela when all of a sudden we got a radio message that we could not go in there until we got rid of our, all of our, whatever explosives we had on board. So the captain had to stop the whole convoy, we had to point in different directions and move apart from each other and then we had to shoot all the shells for the three inch gun which was up in front of the bridge and doing the three inch gun, we had never done this before and these shells are long like this and this big a round, well they're three inches in diameter, but they're big looking and you have a man who's called "hot shell man" and he gets dressed up like a baseball umpire. He's got big gloves up here and big gloves up here and mask and everything. We had a seaman who was the hot shell man. He was not too bright. I used to have to write his letters home because he couldn't write but he was a nice guy. Well, anyway, we get up there and they get these things and the gunnery officer is up there and the captain is up there and every time we were in, this is called "general quarters," everybody had to put on their life jackets and my job then was to be on the wheel, because I knew more about running the wheel than anybody else, and I got on the wheel and the glass is in front and so then I heard the gunner go, "Fire." Well, they had put the shell in then closed the thing and I heard him yell "Fire." Well, they did something rather here and all of a sudden this huge explosion goes on. The shell goes out the front of the gun, the back opens up, and the hot casing comes out and the hot shell man steps

aside, it rolls over the deck, hits the captain on the leg, burns it. Oh, it was terrible, not only that, it broke the glass in the chart house. I was standing there wondering why I'm still alive. It was awful, you could feel the whole ship shudder. You were sure that we were breaking apart, into pieces. Because we were wooden bottomed, they called YMS's "the splinter fleet" and we really felt we were going into splinters. Well, we got over that. I don't remember what we did with the rest of the hot shells, I mean with the rest of the shells but we were supposed to get rid of them. Then we had to get rid of the depth charges we had for chasing submarines. We had K guns and Y guns and the gunnery guy had gotten hurt and he was back in the base in the hospital. So we had a gunner's mate striker and we also had a gunnery officer who didn't know very much anyway and he decided ... I don't know what we were supposed to do with these things but there are two settings on them and one of them is how far out you throw it from the ship and the second one is the depth that which it is supposed to go off. Well, you would think these would have been set to throw them way far and way deep. But they weren't set that way. They were set however they came on board and they had never been off their little racks, so they put these on these guns and I heard the, the captain was down there nursing his leg, I heard somebody yell, "Fire one," and this thing went off, blew up over there and then next one went off. Well, it didn't go very far. It fell on the deck. It fell on the deck and it rolled off the back of the ship. Well, on a minesweeper you don't have gunnels on the back because this is where your gear goes out streaming so it just rolled off and then it exploded, and the whole back of the ship shattered. The captain came running out on his sore leg and we were in terrible straits by this time. They called down, from down below and said some water was coming in. What we did was we blew one of the ... we had twin screws, this was for maneuverability, and a ship that small didn't usually have twin screws, but we did. Well, we wrecked one completely and bent the other one so we had to signal back to base on the radio, back to base, that we were disabled and we were turning SOPAs over to the 312 and we had to limp back to the harbor on this bent screw. Well, that ended up our sweeping duty and everything else and we had to go and dry dock, and we went in dry dock for repairs. We were in dry dock for a long time and we just spent time in the barracks, in the section base, while the ship was, plus we had to go down everyday ... One of those pictures is people chipping. You get barnacles on a wooden ship just like you do on a metal ship and I remember one day I had to chip and I sat there with this ugly looking little tool chipping away at this thing and I got myself out of that in a hurry. I knew we were going someplace so I told them the charts were in a terrible mess and I had to go down and redo all the charts. I worked like a dog. I did charts for places I never dreamed of going, but it got me out of chipping, and then we took off. We had no idea where we were going but we knew we would go through the Panama Canal and up to California and then someplace in the Pacific, and that's what we did. That was a delightful trip through the Panama Canal and up. We were a small enough ship, we should have been a coastal minesweeper, we should not have been called a YMS, we should have been called an AMc, and we were always kept in sight of shore even though we were sailing in the Pacific ocean. We went into Nicaragua and we went into Manzanillo, Mexico, Corinto, Nicaragua and we finally ended up in Newport Beach, California, Balboa and we went into a private shipyard because we had a wooden bottom and the navy didn't really know how to take care of wooden bottomed ships and we went in there to a private shipyard. Everybody who had a year's duty but had not been transferred, they all got thirty days off. I had not had quite a year on the ship and so this sonar man and I just enjoyed, we stayed on the ship, we didn't have to do anything. The people took care of the private shipyard. A navy ship has to have some navy personnel on it, just has to be, you can never leave it alone, so, we

split duties and took liberties and had a wonderful time. I described some of that in there so I won't go through it all again. But we went to a dude ranch. We went to San Juan, Capistrano and down to Laguna Beach, which is where they were shooting lots of movies at that time. It was one of the locales they used and I just had a marvelous time in California and then we took off and this time we went on a convoy, because we were going to Hawaii.

SH: What year, do you remember ...

CB: Now I'm, November 1945 ... the first of December of 1945. We spent almost two months in California. We left Trinidad probably in August and it took us till late September to get up to Newport and then October and November we spent in Newport, California and then we took off for Hawaii, and that was exciting. Being a small ship, you know, we can't carry much fuel, so we had to be in a convoy with the tanker and we had to have a ship that had medical officers on. We had just a corpsman on ours and there were several little ships going, but we had to have this supporting group going along ... and you know the Pacific was supposed to be so tranquil, well, we happened to hit when it wasn't tranquil and I spent just hours on the wheel. This big tanker had to come up alongside to put fuel on you and you had these lines going across, plus the sea was stormy and as I said we were a top heavy ship. We still had our three inch gun, no shells, and we were back and forth and you were always afraid of breaking the line, and you know, I would spend five or six hours on the wheel, keeping us so that we would not run into the ship next-door, or break the line and the wheel had an electric thing so that you could run the rudders by just pushing the wheel like that, like power steering, but it also ran by ropes and I could feel it better by rope, especially when we're tossing out of the water, you no longer have a feel and if you're on electric, you know the wheel, it either gonna spin like crazy or you're gonna hold on to it, but you had no idea for a couple of minutes, but if you had it on cables, you can feel everything that it does, so I would put it off electricity and put it on cables, and then I could tell I was holding it where it was supposed to be in position and it was deadly, and you were tired. We stood two eight hour watches each and then we had eight hours off and you never saw the same people. They slept at different times and they did, you had to wear your life jacket the whole time. We landed in Hawaii, I was really glad that trip was over and I was glad to be in Hawaii. I'd heard about it all my life, and we went into the navy yard there, again for practically thirty days, and that was to fix secret equipment that they couldn't do at the private shipyard back in Balboa, because it was secret navy equipment. That's where they told us that all of these electronic things that we had to run that magnetic tail were all set wrong. So then they set them right, but we were not so sure that they were any better than the other people.

SH: What about Hawaii, because that's where Pearl Harbor, now you're in there, what three years later? What was still there or not there or what do you remember seeing ?

CB: The navy base was just a navy base. I didn't have any desire to go see ... I guess I was a terrible serviceman, I was a terrible navy man, I guess, I had no, I did not want to go see the wreckage, and so forth. It had all been rebuilt. We were doing everything out of Hawaii for the Pacific, or at least it had been done. We were out in the Philippines then, pretty well secured because remember VE Day had happened. I mean, VJ Day, yes, that war was over. It was just another navy base and we had no duty then except that some sailors had to be on at all times because it was our ship. It was a commissioned ship. I just thoroughly enjoyed myself. We

went everywhere. I ate at ... I spent all my pay there I had saved up, eating at classy restaurants. There were only two hotels downtown, the Royal Hawaiian, this is on Oahu, and the Moana and they were both ritzy hotels and they had this beach in front and there were all sorts of people on this beach, nice looking people, and you walked out in the water and then you walked further and you walked further and you walked further. You could walk a mile out into the water and you're still, weren't up to your waist. I had never seen water like this before and I just had a marvelous time. We went out to Diamond Head, which was the ritzy living area at that time, and the University of Hawaii was there and I decided then and there and this Harry that was with me, we decided we were gonna go back and I wasn't gonna go back to Rutgers, I was gonna go to the University of Hawaii and the people were so pretty. Everybody was pretty out there. It's just amazing. I just had a marvelous time. In fact, Mac, who started me on this, Harry Nolan thing again, when he sent me his message, he said, "Do you still collect menus?" That is from the Royal Hawaiian and I'm thinking, "Who is this, what is he talking about?" Well, it seems one time, I guess, when Harry couldn't go or something, I took Mac to the Royal Hawaiian. I mean to go eat with me for dinner and he was nervous through the whole thing because it was mostly commissioned officers in there. I think I was probably second class quartermaster by this time, but I never felt inferior and you know, it was my money and I was in the Royal Hawaiian and I was pretty well up in the ranks, I was still just a lowly petty officer, but I was proud of myself and the rest. Upper class just didn't exist and I just had a wonderful time and I must have, at the end of it, asked for the menu. I remember now, because I had a menu from Liao Chai's and several others. I must have asked for the menu and this guy never ate his meal. He was nervous through the whole thing, but that's what he remembers for fifty-five years, and I had to have him explain it the second message I left that there. Anyway, we left Hawaii, we better leave Hawaii or I'll never get done. Then we sailed. The Pacific was pretty. We went to a little island called Eniwetok, it was an atoll and that was fascinating. But the 312 had gotten there ahead of us and they had broken out a picnic. We hadn't had a picnic the whole time I was on the ship and they had taken their supplies that they got in Hawaii and they had broken out a picnic on the beach. It's just delightful. I can remember this and that was bluest water I ever saw and the whitest sand and at that point we finally learned where we were going. The 312 went up to Saipan and Tinian and we went to Guam and then off into the Philippines, and we got to the Philippines, we were down at Samar Island or Leyte, or right in between, Tacloban was the name of the area down there, and we went into a small bay in there and stayed, stayed and stayed. There was nothing to do. There was no city. We had movies come to the ship, we had books come to the ship and we just went to the movies, on the base sometimes, sometimes on the ship and drank beer and I went to Easter service, I remember, and fainted. I only fainted twice in my life and that was one time I fainted and they had drag me back to the ship and I don't know to this day why I fainted. We finally go orders to do some sweeping and went up to Luzon and we swept in the place called Ragay Gulf, where they had reported possible laying of mines, and it was nice, and we didn't do anything but swim off the ship and sweep around the whole thing. Then we went back and about a month later we got orders to sweep in Mindanao and they put a Japanese man on our ship and he had seen them lay mines somewhere and he was gonna lead us to it. Well, I think he lied. I think he just decided that he was going to, he's gonna get a ride of his life out of this, so we went over in Mindanao and I remember we had a big thing with the natives there. We landed and I wrote it all out in that thing when I was writing to these people. It was just delightful. They gave us a picnic and then they took us inland and the thing I remember the most about it was they lived in little grass huts but beyond this, in the jungle, was this gorgeous Catholic church

and you'd wonder how did this get out there? There's not another wooden structure or anything there and here is this stone church with the windows and, I'm not Catholic so I didn't, but you go in and they got all the idols in those little niches and this just blew my mind. It was fun. Then I got my orders and I came back on a big, old, troop ship. I wrote several hundred letters trying to get off the ship, because my eighteen months was up and I wanted to go home, and I finally got off the ship and came back.

SH: What did you come back on? Do you remember the name of it?

CB: I don't. I didn't want to remember. I never saw so many people in one place. It was worst than Pier 92. At least in Pier 92, you can walk out the front door and here you were just on the ship. I remember they took pictures and I bought a picture and here are 8000 people on the gunnel of the ship and I thought, "How could I possibly find myself if I wanted to?" and I didn't have another friend on the ship, just a casual acquaintance I had been talking with and then I came back on a troop train. We landed in San Francisco and they put me on this train and the train, it had wooden seats, it did have bunks, but it had wooden seats and we traveled on this train. We get into bunks at night then we get back on the wooden seats and we went down through Santa Fe and Texas. I could remember traveling across Texas and the one thing that impressed me was we passed this, you know Texas is flat or where we were is flat. I was gonna say hillside, but it's not, it was just acreage and there must have been 10,000 P38s there, just all parked and I guess they eventually rusted. I don't know what they were ever gonna do with all those P38s, but there they were, field and field and field. I mean, you just travel past these and you thought, "God, did they ever use all of these?" and I remember that. Then I got to Lido Beach, Long Island and they discharged me and I got on the train, came home, and started my new life.

SH: Now when did you get back to New Jersey?

CB: I went in on June 24, 1944 and I got back to New Jersey on June 26, 1946. So I was in two years and two days.

SH: What did you do when you first got back and then, what happened to the University of Hawaii is the next question?

CB: I never got there. That's what happened to it. Well, no, what happened was, I had started a correspondence relationship with a girl and so I hadn't really told "Vinny" off. I didn't want to tell her off. I had just stopped writing to her. This is dreadful. So I got home and my father met me in Camden, or wherever, or maybe Philadelphia, at home and I asked where my mother and brother were. He said, "They're down at the shore, the beach." So I said, "Oh, what are they doing down there?" He said, "Well, we're spending the next two weeks there." So, I said "Fine." So he picked up some things at the house and we went down to Beach Haven and I got down there and there's my mother and brother and we had all these greetings, and so forth and then they said, "We have to go down to the train." So I was thinking, "Who else is coming? It must be my aunt. It must be somebody." It was "Vinny." They had invited "Vinny" down. Well, I didn't know what to do then, so I had to entertain her for ... I guess she was working that summer. I had to entertain her for the weekend, or what have you, and I did, but this was very

testy. Anyway, we put her back on the train and I spent the rest of the time on the beach and then I went and played golf with my mother a lot and I played on the weekends with my father. They were both good golfers and I just had a nice little summer and I could hardly wait to get back to Rutgers. Hawaii disappeared into the netherland and I went back to Rutgers.

SH: Now this correspondence, was the young woman from Rutgers or NJC? Was she someone that you had met prior to leaving?

CB: Oh, you mean the second girl? No, this girl went to the University of Pennsylvania and I don't know ... When I was in boot camp, I had this friend who had gone to the University of Pennsylvania and this girl was a neighbor of his, or something, and her father was president of Inland Steel, or something like that. Her name was Marjorie "Something." Well, when you're in boot camp you had plenty of time to write, and I had finished writing to "Vinny" and so he says, "Write to Marjorie," so I wrote to Marjorie. Well, this is one of those ... you did this during the war, and you got very friendly with these people and the next time you were with somebody, in the Navy and you ... so, oh, yeah, "I got a girlfriend that goes to Penn State, her name is Marjorie." I have never seen what she looks like except for a little snapshot he had in his wallet. This is the way it worked. Well, we wrote off and on and when I got to Trinidad, all our mail was censored by the captain of the ship. He was only supposed to look for you revealing where we were and I know he read more than that because he said something to me. He said, "You are giving up this Vinny for this Margie?" And he did, that's absolutely true. Well, I didn't even know her, but I was trying to tell her I was in Trinidad and there was a song "Rum and Coca-Cola" and there's a line in that, "go down Trinidad," something manana, [spanish for tomorrow] or what have you. Anyway, so, I wrote this big long letter to her one day and I said, "I remember the time we had gotten so drunk at this party, and so forth," which was all a lie and this was a real blatant lie, and I said, "I just never could drink rum and Coca-Cola," and I said this about seven times in the letter and I thought this girl ought to get this, because the song was very popular then. She didn't get it and she knew I had never been out with her, what did she think all these malarkey was? In fact, I think she wrote back to me and said, "What is this?" We didn't correspond much after that. Then one day, I got a letter from her and she said, "Viola, I know you're in Trinidad." She said, "You mentioned in one of your letters of going to Scotland Bay." Scotland Bay was a little swimming area that the navy went to down in Trinidad. Why it was called Scotland Bay, I don't know. But she had gone to a party that her father had given at their home, or what have you, and somebody, there were Navy and Army personnel there, and somebody mentioned Scotland Bay and she went over and said, "Scotland Bay, I have a friend who swims in Scotland Bay," and he said "Oh, that's in Trinidad." So then she wrote to me and said she knew I was in Trinidad and what all that other BS was that I had done before. But I never did meet her. She remains, I can't remember her last name, and then I got back at Rutgers and by the time I got back there, I think "Vinny" had gotten the idea that this is not to be and I dated somebody else, Jane Smith or somebody. I think her name was Jane Smith, she was down from near New Castle.

SH: Tell us about the comparison, now you're coming back to Rutgers as a seasoned veteran. Are you on the GI Bill?

CB: Yes.

SH: Did you go back to the fraternity? Just reintroduce Rutgers to us from an old man's eyes of twenty-two ...

CB: It was terrible, just terrible. I mean before, you know, I thought I was something important on campus when I got back there. You would not believe the mess that we had. All the freshmen were living out in Raritan Arsenal. The fraternity, I had gone up once ... I'd gone up to visit "Vinny" in Jersey City, trying to cool things down and I had stopped and there were people at the fraternity, the fraternity house was new. We were now on Bartlett Street, from Union Street, and this house of Kleinschmidt's, there were some fraternity brothers in there, half of whom I did not know and they were trying to get upperclassmen to stay in dorms or get dorm rooms so that they could pledge. Going back to the pledging business, they could pledge people and one of the things was, they could get the kids, the freshmen who were out at Raritan Arsenal, and they could come and live in town this way and this is the first time I got to thinking about how commercial this dumb fraternity was, but I signed up for a dorm room and I was put in Pell Hall in the quadrangle, which I liked because you just walked past Bishop House and right across the street was Bartlett Street and the fraternity was three houses down Bartlett Street. It was a delightful experience and I got in with the fraternity brother, mine, the one that I had enjoyed, Charles Heilman back in my freshman year. We were together, we had a third roommate, we were in one room now, not a suite, but it was a good sized room. There were three desks and three beds. The other guy was Ray Kingsley and he was a nice guy and we just roomed together and it was great and I didn't care that much for the fraternity. You know, there were all these strange people and they were upperclassmen and then I sort of had in my mind, how did they get to be upperclassman? How did they get back any quicker than I did? And you know, they started before, they may have been a year or two older but how did all these happen? But they were already entrenched and back. Then there were all these other people who had only had one year or a half-year, or something, and they were all kinds of people, I mean, tall and short, skinny and fat. I didn't know them. The group that I knew and I don't know ... The cafeteria, we didn't start the dining room until we got the freshmen to move from the Raritan Arsenal over to the fraternity house and the cafeteria then was a, it was right there alongside of Pell Hall across from the gym and it was a huge Quonset hut, huge, and the front of it, they had bricked up the front. It was like Disney. It was just like Disney. You had this front wall, of these bricks and old whatever they were, colonial style, whatever that Rutgers style is and here these colonial bricks and you walked around the side there was this black Quonset hut that stretched for miles. Oh, it was terrible. Well, we ate there until we opened the dining room and then I ate over in the fraternity, and there was a guy in the fraternity ... you got so that, now you had to make friends with all these fraternity brothers who were supposed to be really close to you and I had discovered by then, "this is all a ruse." It really is a ruse, and they have all this stuff they preached to you, but now you got all these people here and you got friendly with some and not so friendly with others and classes were hard to get into, you were busy all the time, and I remember this guy, Walt Yonkers, and he was a senior that year and he was on the yearbook and he said ... I don't know, one evening we were there and he got up and he said he had to go down to do something with the seniors. I think he was in charge of the seniors and so he said, "Come along." So I went along and I helped him out, doing whatever it was that night and there were still a lot more work to do, so I went down ... and the Scarlet Letter. So I went down again to help him and toward the end of the year, he said, "How would you like to be senior editor?" I

said, "I don't have enough experience," and he says, "Well, I'm leaving and they don't have a senior editor and it would be good for you." So I became senior editor of the yearbook and meanwhile ... I was a joiner ... meanwhile I had gotten onto Scarlet Key and I liked that, and I enjoyed the people I was with and I enjoyed the staff of the yearbook and I got less interested in my fraternity because we were having a big battle then about color, and about expansion, and I was very liberal minded but I didn't like them expanding because we had this clause in our fraternity that it was only for Caucasians, period, and back in freshman year when I first visited Rutgers in '43 there was a Japanese boy or Chinese boy on campus whose name was Tee Hashizume, I love the name, and he ate in our fraternity and as a pledge class we asked why ... we called everybody else brother but this was not brother Tee Hashizume and we asked, "Why?" and they said, "Because we had just Caucasians." That kind of annoyed some of us, I don't know if it annoyed all of us but it annoyed some of us, and then when we got back, I had gotten, the fraternity had decided to expand, but this wasn't my concept of a fraternity. I thought the fraternity was exclusive and they were going to place us in like "Lower Podunk Teachers' College" and they had a colony started there and they had one started at East Texas Agricultural Seminary and these little colleges, I figured, "Why are we expanding there?" We had one at Cornell, we had one at Yale, wherever we had one, we had one, and I thought, "Why aren't they picking other ivy-league schools or state universities, why are we doing all these?" Well, one reason, they wanted these colonies but two they had, there was some agitation to get rid of this clause and when you have a colony, they have to buy the old, whatever you had that existed in the past, and they thought they had now put on a string of people ... Theta Chi's headquarters was in Trenton. They had put on a string of people who were traveling men. These were guys who couldn't get a job and you went to work for your fraternity after you graduate and they put them on and they carried them. They made them go out to these little places and start these things, and the big thing they did was to talk up about our exclusiveness in "all Caucasians," and this got to annoy me. Why these little podunks were running around doing this and I didn't like this idea and I was vice president of the fraternity and I got into a violent argument. I alienated a lot of my fraternity brothers and I just decided, you know, I had this friend on the yearbook from Chi Psi and I would love to be a Chi Psi and I had this other friend, George Persley and he is in a Jewish Fraternity. He was football manager and I liked him a lot. I met him through Scarlet Key and I thought, "I would just as soon be in that fraternity, whatever it was and or a Chi Phi or an Alpha Chi Rho and here I am a Theta Chi and I don't like half the people at Theta Chi and I really don't like what they're doing and I'm not really prejudiced, that I know of," so this just annoyed me and I just decided to heck with it. I got other things to do and that's when I really got to spinning and you know, I was on the dance committee for the junior prom and I went to Inter-Fraternity Council. I got in everything I could get in and I remember my roommate wrote a song, a poem, it went something like, "spin a while" ... they called me Spinner ... "spin a while, you go to see the Dean, Fletcher. You're the biggest wheel I've ever seen. Scarlet Letter, Scarlet Key, you have no time for me. Once was when we spent together many hours," or something like that, "now the only time I see you is when we're in the showers." This went on and on and I just had this reputation for spinning and even when I wasn't spinning, I had to pretend I was. So I would disappear and spin and by that time, somebody on the yearbook staff was put in Crown and Scroll Junior Honorary Society and I did not know why this guy was put in there and I did not know why I wasn't. So I just bided my time and there was a senior society called Cap and Skull and two of the guys on the yearbook, the next year when I became business manager of the yearbook ...

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

CB: I mentioned something about how did Doug Campbell get on the Crown and Scroll and they said, "We don't know." They said, "But he's not gonna get on to Cap and Skull, we know who is." So, you know, this is a big hint. Well, I kept my fingers crossed and I caught on to them, and I know it was because both of them were on Cap and Skull and Cap and Skull votes for it's own members the next year, but you had to have a certain number of activities and I activitied all over the place to make sure. It was like the National Honor Society, it was the same thing. Really hardly worthwhile and that was the end of my ...

SH: Now Scarlet Key, can you describe for the tape what their activities are?

CB: Scarlet Key met any of the sports teams that came to town. You went down to the train station, there was a lot of train travel then, there was still not a lot of car travel and you met them and you had gotten the word on where they were gonna be housed, Sometimes it was in Ford Hall, sometimes it was someplace else, then if it was just a small crew, you walked them up there. If not, you got a taxi. If it was a bigger crew you had a bus that you took down and met them at the station. You got them and you settled them and you settled them in their dorm and told them where they could go to eat and then you took them out. If this was a football team, you took them out to the stadium area and if it was a basketball team, you took them up to the gym, showed them around the gym and the locker rooms. You were a hospitality thing, that's mainly what it was.

SH: And the Cap and Skull was, did that lead to Phi Beta Kappa or ...

CB: No. Cap and Skull, you don't have Cap and Skull up there anymore? Cap and Skull was just, this was supposed to be the highest honor in Rutgers and it had nothing to do with academic work. This had to do with having done the most for Rutgers and been an outstanding person at Rutgers. Normally, Frank Long, I think he edited the *Targum* then, he was there. Ed Lonsky was in Scarlet Barbs. Scarlet Barbs was an association of people who did not want to be in fraternities. They were adamant against being in fraternities and he was the president of that, or something, plus he did a lot of other things and he was elected same time. John Yewell was in NSA. NSA was running strong then. I always shied away from that because it sort of had connotations of communism and this McCarthy was coming in, and I don't think NSA was, but they were little groups and you sort of shied away from it. But John was active in a lot of other things and he got in. Nobody else on the Scarlet Letter got in that year. I did and I guess because Conway liked me, but you were chosen because you were liked and also because you had an activity record.

SH: What did you become on the Scarlet Letter then?

CB: I don't know what I was sophomore year, when I went down with Yonkers. Yonkers graduated. Junior year I was senior editor, that meant editor of the senior section. I had to set up the section in the book, what it was gonna look like, and then I had to schedule all of the pictures for all of the students who were graduating in '48 and then in '49, which is my senior year, I was

business manager. The three of us, we had a managing editor, editor-in-chief and a business manager. We were just a team of three who supervised all of these other people and their sections of the yearbook. Somebody did fraternities. I remember the guy that ... it doesn't matter. I remember who I turned the senior area over to, and I went down to see ... I worked with a man named Brill with a red face and you know, we saw that the money was coming in and I paid the bills, and they would come to Brill, and then I would go check and see that this had been accomplished and we had finished this and then we could pay the bills. That's what I did.

SH: What were you studying then? Did you change your major from when you went in as a freshman?

CB: No. I didn't really have a major. I had started out in the Ag school and then I liked biology better, so most of the courses I took were biology oriented and then I decided I wanted to be an agricultural chemist so I took chemistry courses until they did me in, like calculus. I did well in organic chemistry and well in qualitative and quantitative analysis, but then the next chemistry was physical chemistry and that blew my mind, so I decided I was no longer going to be a chemist. I took all the biology courses I could. Out in the Ag school, I could take plant pathology and plant physiology, these were all technical courses and then I finally gathered up 165 credits and they told me it was time to graduate. So I graduated and by then I was totally disenchanted with the fraternity. Have you ever heard of a man called Howard Crosby? Well, Howard Crosby befriended me somehow and I used to invite him to dinner in the fraternity house and this is a terrible thing to tell, but he always had indigestion and he was nervous and high strung. Toward the end of my senior year, he called me in and asked me if I wanted to become an assistant to the Dean, and I think he was gonna be moved up into a dean position then and then he was gonna have instead of just ... he was a single person working under the Dean. He was gonna have five or six people working underneath him and there's gonna be little assistant Deans. Well, I got in my mind then that I did not want to stay ... That was a closed environment, school, and I saw what he was like and he was just like a big over grown old college boy and there's nothing worse than an over grown old college boy trying to pretend that he's still a young college boy. I really observed this, and I was not a great observer of humanity, but I was an observer of him and I just thought, "I do not want to do this," plus I don't like this fraternity and I have nothing against them, but I just, I want to do something new. So I graduated and I left and I've only been back twice. When I moved back to New Jersey, I went to Florida from college and got a good job down there and then another good job and I stayed down and then I went to Europe and then I came back and then I went to the University of Washington and I started teaching school and then I ended up in North Jersey again, in the Watchung Mountains. In fact in Watchung Regional High School and I had turned to teaching, and one day, I was close to New Brunswick so I drove down to New Brunswick and they had rebuilt the gym or they had expanded, or something and I drove down Bartlett Street and I saw this fraternity house and so I got out and I walked up the front steps and then to the front door, and it looked like the same old fraternity house, but here were all these young little babies running around and I was now, probably about thirty-two, maybe thirty-one I don't know, but there were all these little kids running around. The campus didn't look like I remembered it and so I went and had lunch somewhere and went back again and then I got a message about Cap and Skull was gonna have its fiftieth reunion, I think it was. Well, I had worked so long to go to Cap and Skull and I was living in the area ... One of the reasons I hadn't gone back before was I was

lived in Florida, it's a long trip from Florida, so I want back to the Cap and Skull reunion and I met Ed Lonsky again, and Frank Long, and people I knew and I had been teaching at Watchung Regional High School and that's another story. That was the weirdest school I've ever been in. The guy had a marvelous idea but he couldn't put it all together and the staff was too bright for him and I decided I wanted to leave. I had five preparations plus the yearbook to do there. I taught five different subjects and I was complaining to Ed Lonsky and I said, "I've already turned in my resignation." He said, "Well, I'm chairman of the science department in Plainfield High School, that's the best high school in the state, would you like to come down and teach honors biology?" So I went down there and taught honors biology, but I never went back to Rutgers after that. The next thing that happened during all that uproar of Vietnam, Rutgers turned, blew apart somehow, and they banished all these societies. There was a movement then. Everybody was banishing everything and they just banished it and I thought, "Golly, you can't just banish societies," but they did and I got very angry at them. I got as angry at them as I did at Rutgers, well, the people as I did with, I think Mason Gross was president. He had a terrible time trying to handle all of these people. The drugs were in, I don't know what was going on in campus but I didn't want to get anywhere near it because they had all these weird people there and I really didn't get in tune with the Vietnam War either. I think that's the most interesting thing that I haven't even talked about. If you went through World War II and I had a good time. I not only don't regret it, I really enjoyed World War II as far as my own life was concerned, and then I was teaching in Plainfield High School during most of this Vietnam War. We had mother teachers there whose children were now going out to the Vietnam War. Woodstock was going on. Everybody was on drugs. The high school was full of drugs and this was just out of my realm and this was a war. I never did consider that we were fighting somebody else's war. We declared war and therefore we were fighting the war and I figured everybody in Vietnam just sort of sat around and smoked and we dropped all that stuff and defoliated the thing and it was again not something I identified with and I feel very badly about that. Later on, I got terribly involved in my mind, particularly after all the revelations that came out after it, but I was thinking how I went through my whole life and I didn't focus on the war as a war. I didn't focus on what was going on in Rutgers after it. I didn't focus on the black problem because of my own interest in it. These were things that happened to me and I lived them and I threw my interest in it as far as it interested me and then I went on to other things. I can remember after I got out and when I got to Florida, I graduated in '49, and we got into the McCarthy thing. Now, I should have listened to all of that, and I did. I listened but when I listened to it on the radio, we had radio, television wasn't in Florida then, and I listened to the radio and I was much more interested in Cohn, Roy Cohn, and he had a friend who was in army and he called David Shine and Roy Cohn kept protecting this David Shine and I got more involved in thinking about that than I was thinking about McCarthy beating apart these people from Hollywood and they were having to testify. I was more interested in the logistics of what was going on than I was in the text of what was going on, and I think that's why I never liked history as a student of it, because I focused then on trying to recall the logistics of it rather than the things that were behind it all. Now when I look at history, when I get into genealogy and I go back, and I have this relative in Alsace-Lorraine and has escaped from Wurttemberg during the Forty Years War, I'm much more interested now in why they went here, and why they went there than I am in the person, it's a complete shift. Enough of that. What else do you want me to say? You have another appointment at one.

SH: Shaun, do you have any follow up questions?

SI: No.

SH: You talked in such brief terms about after the war ... could you maybe flesh that out a little?

CB: Okay, I left Rutgers, my mother and my father were having difficulties. My brother was also a difficulty, the second one. He was bright, extremely bright, and he would not finish his papers in chemistry and he had to go back to summer school strictly for writing his chemistry reports and he wouldn't write them. He said, "I know the chemistry, why do I have to write this stupid report," So he never graduated from high school, and he was a problem at home. My mother and father they had a strange relationship all their life and they stayed together sixty some years, so I guess it survived, but they had a strange relationship and my mother had just graduated from college. She had her degree, Bachelor's degree now in Special Education and she had decided that she got colds up there and had severe sinus and she got her brother-in-law to say she had to go to Florida. So she got a job down in Florida. I had been working for the Turnpike Authority, they were just doing surveys of where they were going to put overpasses, underpasses or combine roads and I had a crew that went out and counted cars going up and down these little country roads. So I told her I would drive her down to Florida, I'd give up that job and drive her to Florida. I wanted to go to the Caribbean. I wanted to go to Nicaragua and work for United Fruit, don't ask me why, and raise bananas, and I thought Florida was closer. I am an innocent. You know I figured if you got down closer it would be easier. Actually if you wanted to get hired for Nicaragua, it's in New York that you get hired, but this didn't cross my mind, so I came to Florida. I got her enrolled in school and Minute Maid was just starting up and I answered an ad in the paper and I went over and got the job at Minute Maid, executive training job. But I had also applied for another job over in a little place called Howey-in-the-Hills as assistant to the vice president and I had gone over there and been interviewed by a treasurer. The vice president was in the Mayo Clinic having fluids taken off his heart. He was only thirty-eight or thirty-nine years old. So, this guy told me he'd call me, but he never called me and I went to work for Minute Maid and on Saturday ... We were living in a little cottage then with no mail delivery. On Saturday I went down to General Delivery to get our mail and there was a letter that said, "Report on Tuesday at three o'clock, Mr. Taylor would like to interview you." It's already Saturday, so I called up and he said, "Oh, we filled that job, but I really wanted Mr. Taylor to meet you." He said, "I checked all your references and they were glorious references, so you come over." Well, I went over and I met Mr. Taylor and Mr. Taylor said, "Fire the other man," and hire me. Mr. Taylor, he was a marvelous man. He was bright, he was a Dartmouth graduate and he thought everybody south of the Mason Dixon line was an imbecile, an absolute imbecile, and I came from Rutgers and this was ideal. Plus I am present, so he hired me on the spot and I went to work for him and to make a long story short, I went to work for him the first of November and on May 1st he had a heart attack and died and I had learned his job, which was a public relations job, and fruit sales, and so forth, for a company that managed groves for northern grove owners. I knew all the grove owners because we had a hotel there and I had had to go up to the hotel and meet these people because he was sick and carry them out and show them their grove and if they wanted to pick some fruit and ship it north, help them do that and see that the hotel shipped it and it was a delightful job. He had two young daughters who I liked very much and he was high society in town and I just drifted in. It was a marvelous job, and I

stayed there for seven years, and then I was thirty and Orlando only had 50,000 people at that time. To go to the movies I had to go to Orlando and there were only two movies in Orlando and I was bored. Both of his daughters had gotten married and gone. The Korean War was over. My brother had come home. My mother had gone back to New Jersey after one year down here and so I left and went to Europe and I traveled in Europe for a year. Then I came back and I was gonna go to work for J. Walter Thompson who I knew from my work down here. I'd worked with them through the Florida Citrus Commission and I decided I really don't want to get in that rat race, so I went to the University of Washington. I had a friend out there and I just went out and I had to do something, so I went to the University. I started, I really want to be a teacher, so I took education courses and did practice teaching and this was all graduate work, but it was not graduate work on a graduate level. It was just extra work, and my practice teaching was superb. I had had all this experience, so it wasn't like a kid, why this was thirty-one years old, and so they wanted to hire me in Seattle. Well, I had the wanderlust or something. Why do I want to be out here for? I really don't know a lot of people. My family is back in New Jersey. Everybody I really know is back in Florida, so I didn't. I took a job in Atlantic City, Atlantic City High School, and I was a floater. I didn't have my own room ... had to have this little cart that I carried all my books around and my biology experiments and it was terrible ... I had been making when I left Florida ... I was making a good salary ... I was making about \$15000 a year, which was high then, and I took a job in Atlantic City for \$4000 a year, and I didn't mind. It was enough to get along and then I lived down there during the winter, which meant that I had a motel room, sort of a glorified motel room with a bedroom and a front room, which was a summer rental and I could have it from Labor Day to Memorial Day at a reasonable rate and I liked it and I invited my folks down and I liked Atlantic City because it was temperate. The reason I went there was in Seattle I was growing roses in the yard and I knew that the Japanese current warmed it there and I figured Atlantic City, with the Atlantic ocean it never gets to freezing so it's got to be more temperate than New Brunswick. So I taught, and I would have stayed there another year because they had a good staff. There were some nice people on the staff. This was the old school of teachers. Long story, I'm almost over. I picked up the paper one day and it said ... you know, I was rehired for the next year and here were all the salaries of all of the teachers, and it told that I was making \$4000 and one of the kids in my class, her father was a doctor and she came in to class the next day, she said, "Mr. Bishop, you're my favorite teacher. I read in the paper where you make \$4000, is that true?" Well, I turned red and said, "Yes." She says, "We pay our maid more than that." She absolutely did. I left school that afternoon, went down to the main office and said, "I'm not coming back next year." I quit and that's when I went to Watchung Regional. Enough. You got to have lunch and meet other people.

SH: Well, we thank you very much.

CB: You're quite welcome.

SH: Tell me about your family now, how you came back to Florida very quickly and I know you have been involved in the politics of Howey-in-the-Hills ...

CB: Oh, yes. Oh, I have a lot of stories I haven't told you. Well, I was living in New Jersey. I was teaching at Plainfield High School. I went through the big riot in Plainfield where they

stomped a police's head into smithereens and the school was closed down and we had police for the rest of the term. That was in the old high school. We built a new high school and they trashed that in a year and a half, and I was teaching honors classes and it was just unbelievable. You would be teaching, I have twenty-four students in there, and the door would open and somebody would scream all kinds of epithets at you and ran up and down the hall. The administration couldn't do anything. You couldn't send anybody out of your class for discipline. You sent them to the library and the librarian just said, "Cope, cope." This is it and it was so discouraging and I'd had some wonderful teaching experiences and I just decided I'm don't want to teach anymore, and one of my best friends in Howey-in-the-Hills, when I had lived there before, my folks had gone down to visit her on a trip and she was selling her house. She was eighty and I loved her house and it was cold up there and I was trying to get my parents out of the snow all at the same time. So I talked to my brother, who was living with me then, my adopted brother, and he had moved up in several jobs and he was getting kind of discouraged at his job, and I said, "Why don't we just buy this house down in Florida?" I had a little antique shop I was running then in addition to teaching, "We'll move the antique shop down there," and that's how I got back to Florida.

SH: And then you ran for office in Howey-in-the-Hills?

CB: Yeah, well, I was a joiner. That is the best story of all. But you don't have time for that.

SH: We do.

CB: All right, very quickly. I went to Howey-in-the-Hills. I opened my little antique shop down there. My brother went to work up at the Mission Inn and I went down to the town office after we had been there about a year. We had a woman mayor then, Flonnie Cope and I went to the office and I sent her a letter, I said, "Dear Mrs. Cope, I had done things all my life and here I am in a community and I think you should help the community out, so if you have any committees, or anything of that sort you think I could serve on, I'd be delighted to do it." She never answered the letter. Never. So I really got angry at this. So the next town council election came up, which was in '74, I got a petition, I ran around town and got twenty-five signatures on it, and I ran for council. Several people told me, "You can't make it," but I still had Dodge Taylor's widow who he had told I was the brightest person he ever met in his entire life. Well, she told everybody in town this was true and so there were three people running and I ran. Flonnie Cope was one of them, the old mayor, and she was bound to get some votes. Carrol Chalk who was a lover boy in town, he's about eighty-five years old, but he fixed everybody's plumbing and did all sorts of things. No matter what was wrong, you called Carrol Chalk and it was taken care of. You knew he was gonna win hands down and then there was this Chester Burdick so and then two other people ran. Well, we all ran and I came in third. So I was one of the three out of five or six who ran. Well, C.V. Griffin, who was my president of the company before, Dodge Taylor was Vice president, he was president, he called me and he said, "Now, the council elects the mayor, and we can't have Chalk for a mayor." Chalk came out with the highest number of votes. He's hard of hearing, plus Chalk and C.V. had an argument and C.V. ran the town, so he said, "I want you to vote for Flonnie Cope. Flonnie Cope we know what she's like and we know how good she is and what she's doing and so I would like you to vote for me." He said, "Now, I have to tell you, I didn't vote for you." He said, "I wanted Chester

Burdick in there because he was in before and I know what he's like. But I do want your vote for Flonnie Cope" Well, I got upset at this. First of all, I had now experienced Flonnie Cope and she was a nice enough person, but she could not speak the King's English and the minutes was "thems wases" and "this done happened," and I thought, for a town this is terrible. So I could not vote for her. So I didn't know what to do. So we had two women, the two women were gonna nominate Flonnie Cope and vote for her. We had two men, a carry-over and Carrol Chalk and Carrol Chalk wanted to be mayor and he had the other man who was on the council was gonna vote for him and I was the oddball and I was supposed to make the choice, because we're just five votes. So I didn't know what to do. I went over to see my lawyer. I said, "What do I do in this case?" he says, "Don't you read Robert's Rules [of Order]?" I said, "I've been through it." He says, "A nomination," he says, "I don't know why they second nominations, but a nomination does not take a second." So he says, "Why don't you nominate yourself?" This is my old friend lawyer. So we go to the first meeting. This was funny. We go to the meeting and they swear in the new members and Flonnie Cope is the old retiring mayor, and of course, she's gonna run, so she said, "Now we have to elect the mayor, we'll have the vote." So she said, "Are there any nominations?" Well, Helen Hisey nominated Flonnie. "Are there anymore nominations?" Well, Bob Edwards nominated Carrol Chalk. So then she said, "Are there nominations going to close," and I said, "No, I nominate myself." She says, "You can't do that." I had my Robert's Rules with me. So this fractured the audience. Well, she didn't know what to do, so she said, "I guess we'll have a vote." The vote came out exactly as the nominations and my own came out, so nobody was elected. Well Flonnie went on with the meeting. She says, "We'll vote again at the end of the meeting." So we went up to all the nominations again and there were a lot of people who did not like C.V. Griffin and thought Flonnie was his flunky on there, so by this time, people had called other people and they came down to the meeting. So the end of the meeting, we came and we came into the nominations and I nominated myself. Well, ... they all wanted me to vote for Carrol Chalk ... the dissidents. The others wanted me to vote for Flonnie and I wasn't gonna do that. I got up and I said, "You know, I'm brand new. I don't even know how the council runs, I haven't been to a full meeting ever," and I said, "but you're making me, the new person, make the choice of whose gonna be mayor and I shouldn't be doing that. If you four people, you can elect the mayor, three of you anytime and if you can't decide on who you want, you are not gonna make me decide," so I went that way again. Well, Flonnie said, "Well, we'll meet again a week." So a week came on a Monday, we had another meeting. This was not the regular monthly meeting, this was another one. We went the same way again and this man in the back, I'll never forget as long as I live, he all of a sudden, it's quiet as a mouse and I nominated myself and we voted and it came out, two-two and me and this man yells, "Get her out of here! Get her out of here!" and the whole audience broke up. Then there was chants, "Get her out of there." I don't know where her supporters were. Well, this was most embarrassing. We had to adjourn the meeting and we met the following, two weeks later we met at the regular meeting. But meanwhile, I was running my antique shop and lampshade shop down there and I was getting the cold shoulder from a lot of people and they want to get her out of there. I was getting, particularly, the people who want to get her out of there and the only way they saw was to get Chalk in. They gave me, they came into my store and it was terrible. But I held out and finally, the day before the meeting Carrol Chalk came in and he said, "All my friends have been in to see you," and he said, "It sounds like you're not going to give in." I said, "No, I'm not going to give in." I said, "If either one of the ladies want to vote for you, you should be mayor." And he said, "Well they're not going to, I know that." So he said, "I told Bob

Edwards to nominate you.” So I made mayor the next meeting and I didn’t know my ass from a hole in the wall. It was terrible, and Flonnie Cope took off on a vacation to the Caribbean that next day. She didn’t even come down to give me the keys. She gave the keys to the town clerk and I had to collect it from her and that was my first experience as mayor.

SH: Well, we thank you, Mr. Charles Fletcher, Jr. This concludes the interview.

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

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