RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH PETER DALY CAMPBELL

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

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

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with the Honorable Peter Campbell in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Shaun Illingworth and …

Tracy Pall: Tracy Pall …

SI: On Oct. 11, 2002. Judge Campbell, thank you very much for being with us this morning.

Peter Campbell: You're welcome, sure, glad to be here.

SI: To begin, could you tell us a little bit about your father who was a native of Boston?

PC: Yes. My father was from Boston. He met my mother when he was stationed down here at the Raritan arsenal. She was driving an ambulance for the Red Cross and they met and fell in love and were married during World War I.

SI: Was your father's family always from Boston?

PC: Yes, they were. They came from Prince Edward Island and they settled around Boston and then he settled down here [New Jersey].

SI: Was it during World War I that your father settled in New Jersey?

PC: Yes.

SI: Do you know anything about your father's career in the army during the war?

PC: Not too much. He was a sergeant in World War I. I said he was stationed at the Raritan Arsenal in, basically, supplies, so, that's about all I know of that.

SI: He never went overseas?

PC: No.

SI: How old was he?

PC: Well, he died in 1935, and, I believe, he was thirty-nine at the time. He left my mother and four children and many, many, happy memories.

SI: What about your mother and her family? Were they native to New Brunswick?

PC: My mother? Yes, she was a native of New Brunswick, and her father was a Supreme Court Justice of New Jersey, Judge Peter F. Daly, whom I'm named after. She's always been extraordinarily active in every kind of endeavor, every charity you could name, and she also led some. She was president of four PTAs at the same time, which I think is some kind of record. She was a women's libber and extraordinarily active.

SI: Did she ever talk about her work with the Red Cross?

PC: No, not really. She had so many interests. Plus the four children kept her very busy, and she always encouraged us to be involved with local organizations, to help the city, state, *et cetera*.

SI: You mentioned that your mother was a women's libber, did she ever talk about the struggle for suffrage, or do you know if she was involved with that?

PC: No, she was always very active in Democratic politics. She was a State committee person and that gave [me] my interest [in] politics. I was a local committeeman. I eventually served on the Democratic National Committee, which I found very, very interesting.

SI: What can you tell us about growing up in Highland Park?

PC: Well, Highland Park is a strictly residential town. All the Rutgers people lived there and we were very happy … [It was a] happy childhood. I went to St. Paul's Grammar School and then Highland Park High School. … I was out of high school seven days and [then] I joined the United States Navy and I went on from there.

SI: You grew up during the Depression. How did the Depression affect your family?

PC: Well, we didn't have any money, but it didn't really affect us. My mother was a very great provider, and a good shopper, and we always ate well. We always said, "We had the smallest garbage pails in town because of four children." We all ate very, very well. … There was no waste in that house, and we got that from Mother. As I said, my father died when I was ten, but we had really a happy childhood in Highland Park. [We were] very close to Rutgers at the time. I have great memories of going to football games at the Nelson Field, seeing the great Jack Grossman and many other Rutgers' greats. … [It was] very comforting to be so close to Rutgers. It seemed quite natural, when I got out of the Navy, that I decided then that I wanted to go to college and that I gravitated to Rutgers quite naturally.

SI: Had you always planned on studying at Rutgers?

PC: No, I didn't even want to go to college when I was in high school. I didn't think I would last long. … I deferred going to college, it was abhorring to me, really. … I was in the Navy for three years and served on the destroyer most of that time in the North Atlantic, in the Mediterranean. … I had all the time to myself to think as to what I wanted to do in the future, because, you're on gun watch four hours on, eight hours off, so, you have plenty of time to think. … So, towards the end of my time in the Navy, I said, … "Maybe we'll give college a try," and "It can't be all bad." So, when I got out of the Navy, in March of 1946, I applied to Rutgers and I started in, I believe, June of 1946.

SI: I understand that some of the senior officers aboard the ship were college men. Was that an influence on any of the men?

PC: Not really. … The officers' education didn't bother us. We all could spot the guys who went to Annapolis because they were "spit and polish" more so than the others, but college wasn't mentioned. We had too many other things to think about. We were chasing submarines around. But I enjoyed the Navy. The Navy was the best thing that ever happened to me, because it gave me that time to think about my future, and it gave me the GI Bill, which paid for my college and law school. … Without that GI Bill I would not have been able to go to college or law school.

SI: Just to step back, what were your interests in high school?

PC: I was quite active in just about every organization there was, and Highland Park was a good school. We had, I believe, about six hundred and some odd students, about one hundred twenty-five in our graduating class. … That was, of course, 1943 and, believe it or not, they still have reunions and a small group gets together every month for lunch. [It's] a very close knit group. That gave me my fondness of the town.

SI: Highland Park today has many people who are associated with the University living in it. Was it much the same back then?

PC: I think it's about the same. I live in East Brunswick now and I think it's about the same.

SI: Were you here when the football stadium was built at Rutgers?

PC: I attended the first game, played in 1938, when we beat Princeton at Rutgers Stadium. It was a very thrilling experience, oh, yes. I've been to many [games]. I have reservations about big time football. I have had those reservations for quite a while. I think maybe I got spoiled about thinking [that on] a Saturday afternoon in the fall [there] was nothing nicer than watching Rutgers play Lafayette, Lehigh, Princeton, Columbia, Colgate. I used to love that and I felt very much at home and Rutgers always acquitted itself well. … I miss that part of it. As a result, I don't go to any football games now. I head to Florida. … I'll be going down there on the 20th of October. I listen to the games but I just have no desire to go in and see them, frankly, lose all the time. [laughter]

SI: Your family was always involved in politics. Do you have any memories of discussions of the local politics?

PC: Yes, as a matter-of-fact, I have a very vivid memory of when Al Smith was running for president. My family … worked on the press, and I remember one Sunday there was … a picture of Herbert Hoover in the newspaper and I made some fuss about it, either towards the picture or something like that. … My father stopped me and he admonished me for doing that. He said, "These people are running to improve your government and … you don't have the right to disparage them." I was a young kid at the time and I never forgot that. … As a result, I know the sacrifice that every person puts in whether to serve on the school board, or local councils, or state legislature, *et cetera*. … It's a sacrifice for everybody, and if we keep disparaging those people it's going to affect our government. … It's not fair to them or to what we can expect from them.

SI: What was your mother's opinion of Roosevelt, particularly before the war?

PC: Oh, it was very, very much on the plus side. I mean, I think even today the most conservative Republican would have some good things to say about Roosevelt and, as I recall, President Truman. I was a great admirer of his and I was in college when he was serving as president. … People were really knocking the heck out of him and I said, "He's going down as one of your great, great presidents." … It wasn't sage-like of me, but it happened, and, now, Harry Truman is going down as one of our great, great presidents.

SI: Before you entered the war, did you ever contemplate going into the Navy?

PC: No, I didn't, but at that time, towards the end of my high school period, the service was an accepted thing. … Everybody was going off, and we were always going down, I remember … I played trombone in a little band called, "The Hungry Seven," and we would go down and play when the guys were going off to war. They would leave from the New Brunswick Station … joining the Army, Navy, and what have you. … We would go down there and play for them and see them off. … Unfortunately, by the time I was going in the Navy, "The Hungry Seven" was all in the service, so, I missed their send-off.

SI: Where were you when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

PC: It was a Sunday afternoon; I was home in Highland Park, December 7, 1941. I remember very vividly. I remember I was in my room, I had the radio on, and I was [in] rapt attention to the events in Pearl Harbor. … I saw the movement for the young people to go into the service that followed that [Pearl Harbor] immediately. I had no desire to go in right then, I was too young anyway, so, a couple of years later, in June of 1943, is when I went in the Navy.

SI: How soon after Pearl Harbor did you notice changes in Highland Park and New Brunswick? Were there blackouts?

PC: Well, we had air raid drills and things like that, and local block captains, but we had an enormous number of soldiers present at the Camp Kilmer. … They would seem to float in New Brunswick and there was a sea of khaki all over. … You'd see these fellows come and there were just tens of thousands of them, and that's why the war was a very constant reminder to us … This [New Brunswick] was their last stop before going over to Europe. This was prior to D-Day and there was a militaristic attitude around.

SI: Were there any problems with so many service men in town?

PC: No. I can't recall any incidents between the service men and the local people, *et cetera*. No, I can't recall any problems that way. We were all on the same side. That's one thing about World War II, we had the benefit over the guys that served in Korea or Vietnam in that we were the popular war. World War II, … everybody was happy about it and everybody wanted to do something. … Going in the service was going to be an honor, it wasn't … a problem. It wasn't a sacrifice. Everybody assumed that they would be going into the service.

SI: You have two older sisters.

PC: Yes.

SI: One of your sisters went to Douglass. Was she at Douglass during the war?

PC: Yes, I believe she was. It was NJC [New Jersey College for Women] at the time and she studied library science. As a matter-of-fact, … I believe she has a doctorate in library science. … She helped me get a part-time job when I was in school. I put books away in the stacks of the old library. As a matter-of-fact, I have a fondness for libraries and hardware stores. … I belong to about four or five libraries. … I thoroughly enjoy a good library and a good hardware store.

SI: What kind of job did you do?

PC: It was just a part-time job somebody got paid by the hour, and it was just putting books away. That was my library experience, indoctrination.

SI: Did you visit your sister at NJC at all?

PC: No. As a matter-of-fact, she would walk to school and, I'm guessing, she must have walked two or three miles one way. That was not uncommon. I walked over to Rutgers. Everybody walked. … We didn't have cars, so, you just automatically walked.

SI: Was rationing ever a problem?

PC: No, rationing wasn't a problem. We didn't have any money to spend anyway, so, I can't recall being [affected by it]. You had a sticker on your car, like an "A" and I'm sure there's a lot of conniving going on about people having gotten goods improperly and people would hoard, but it didn't bother us.

SI: Why did you choose the Navy?

PC: Well, I chose the Navy because I was going to be drafted. I didn't want to go in the army. I always liked boats, so, I signed up for the Navy prior to my … graduation in June of 1943. So, a week after graduation, or two weeks, I was in the Navy. I went up to Newport, Rhode Island for boot camp. … I went to gunnery school up there, also, and, from there, I was transferred to Louisiana. … I served on an antiaircraft range down there as an instructor on the .20-mm and .40-mm and we had a lot of members of the Armed Guard and we also had some Russian sailors come in for training on the guns. After that, I went to advanced gunnery school and got some hydraulics. … Then, I was assigned to a ship called USS *Moffet* (DD-362) in New York and I was got there late on a March evening, and I went aboard. I didn't realize you were supposed to salute the quarterdeck; so, I was admonished by the officer of the deck for that. … I never forgot that. So, I always saluted the quarterdeck if I [went] on a Navy ship … in the future. … So, we left in a couple of days and we went to England. It took us twenty-seven days to get to England.

Because, we were on a very slow convoy of sea-going tugs. They were towing barges for the invasion of Normandy. …

SI: Had D-Day happened already?

PC: No, no. … So, these tugs were towing these gigantically huge barges and it was our purpose … to protect them. We had, I guess, about three destroyer escorts along with us and we had some exciting times. … We had a couple of submarine attacks. … One time a barge broke loose and it rammed into a tug, which was to its stern, and the tug sank in about one minute. … We were right on the spot and we were able to rescue the entire crew of, at least say, thirty-five, plus their dog. So that was sort of exciting. … Then we went to England and Wales. … Then, we returned to the States for another convoy. … So, that was most of my naval career, … going back and forth, to either North Africa, or England, … or the Caribbean, and it was a great experience. I could never do it now, because, I think, you have to be quite young to put up with that rigorous life. It was very, very tough, especially, when there were … icy seas and things like that. I took an oath: I would never complain about the cold; and I've kept that. Because the sea was so cold, you were hugging the smokestack just to stay warm, but you had to stay outside because you're on gun watch, so, being young, I was able to persevere. But the Navy was good.

SI: How much of a shock was it to go from civilian life to being in boot camp?

PC: It wasn't terribly shocking. … I knew most of the fellows in the company. They were from this Middlesex County area, so, we had a lot of friends. … We were so young and naïve that it wasn't harsh. … We all were eager to learn how to march, and do what they tell you to do and, so, it was not a bad experience.

SI: Was the training tough?

PC: No, I don't think it was. Then, in gunnery school, that was an entirely different type of thing. It was mostly classes and things of that nature. … There were certain Marines, US Marines, [who] were also going to school up there, and we were assigned KP duty, kitchen police. … My job was to see that the serving tables were filled with the food and stuff like that. … I made a terrible error in that I put salt in the sugar container. … If you want to see about a hundred unhappy Marines, [they were] when they started taking their cereal covered with salt. … I made a very quick retreat. [laughter] I'm surprised I ever stopped running.

SI: How long was boot camp?

PC: Six weeks.

SI: Did you have Marines as instructors?

PC: No. … On the field … the first class was on tools, and the instructor … picked up a screwdriver, and he said, "Fellows, this is a screwdriver. It is not a chisel. It is not this, it is not that, it is a screwdriver." … I always thought of that, and he was right. We might ruin a good

screwdriver by chipping paint or something like that. So, we learned how to take guns apart and things like that. It was fun.

SI: Did you ever get out, or off the base?

PC: Oh, sure. … Now, boot camp you didn't get out, but in gunnery school, I think, you got out after a couple of weeks. … We went into the town of Newport. I had one nice experience there. In the town of Newport, it's a very social town, extremely wealthy people lived there. … They had this one house that on Sundays they had open house for all the sailors. … These socialite ladies were there. … They would give us cake and all that kind of stuff. So, I was with a friend of mine, I said, "Today is your birthday." It wasn't, of course, and so … I mentioned to these ladies, "It's his birthday." So, we had a birthday party for my friend and we got the first pieces of cake, *et cetera*. I didn't feel too guilty about that. They were nice ladies, good cake.

SI: When you were in boot camp and gunnery school, did you have a choice as to the kind of classes you took?

PC: Oh, yes, oh, yes. … I had put gunnery down as my first … (want?) and it was good. I'm glad I made that decision. … It was good. I like guns, and we used to have a .22 in the house, so, we would go target shooting, *et cetera*. … I taught on the .20 and .40-mm and the 1.1. … Then when I was on the destroyer I had a pair of .20-mm, which was my responsibility to care for, and I worked on the five-inch .38. You got to know [the guns]. … It was pretty clean living and I enjoyed gunnery. … When I was on the ship, I was also in charge of the line-throwing gun. When we wanted to pass mail to another ship, we come up alongside. It was my function to be way up on the bow and shoot the line-throwing gun. … They would tie the lines on there and then, whether it be refueling, or what[ever] we're doing, it was going up there. So, that was nice, because I had to stay with the line-throwing gun in case they needed another shot and that relieved me of doing the bunny lugging down on the deck, the sort of loading whatever we were taking from the other ships. I'd only regret, sometimes, the captain wouldn't get close enough and I would have a shot that I know would be short. … It took me forty-minutes to rewind the spool, so, I, naturally, would want the ship to be closer. So, after a while, the captain, he said, "Maybe that gunner's mate knows what he's doing." So, he would get it a little closer before I had to shoot and get the line over. Officers don't usually take suggestions from third class gunner's mates or other enlisted people.

SI: What was the emphasis with most of the men on the ship? Was it antiaircraft?

PC: Well, in the North Atlantic, it was submarines. So, we'd go after submarines and when we were in the Mediterranean, just inside the Rock of Gibraltar, every night, [from] the first night through the Rock of Gibraltar, there would be air attacks. So, that was shifted to JU-88, or what have you. We'd come in. … So, we'd be zigging and zagging, so, it was a simple thing. We zigged when we were supposed to zig and we zagged when we were supposed to zag. … That's the only reason why you don't get hit, just luck. … So, the submarines were the toughest, because, we had the ash cans we put over the side set to different depths. … So, we would know how deep he [a submarine] was.

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PC: So, we'd be going over and dropping these ash cans. … Then when he starts to come up, you don't know whether he's coming up to fight it out, or coming up because he's wounded and he can't go any farther, or what have you. So, that was very exciting to know the submarine [was] down there and he's coming up. … Is it going to be a surface battle or what? … Because sometimes they would throw garbage out to let you think that you had … destroyed them, or something. … They were very smart people as (young skippers?)

SI: At the time, was the U-boat still a threat at all?

PC: We thought so. I had no way to compare it to anything else, but we thought so. I served on a cruiser, the USS *Denver*, for just about two or three months at the tail-end. … The cruiser was nice, but it was huge by comparison to a destroyer. … You get lost on them.

SI: When you joined the *Moffet*, were you a replacement, or was it whole new crew coming on?

PC: No, in the Navy they just replace. … I don't know, I was probably one of, maybe, four or five new crewmembers and it was extremely crowded conditions. You sleep on bunks three and four high. … That was okay, but in the rough weather you could be thrown out of your sack. I've seen guys break arms during that. Again, when you're young, you could take those things in stride.

SI: How soon after you joined the crew of the *Moffet* did you have your first encounter with the Germans?

PC: It was in that twenty-seven days traveling to England, so, I would guess, maybe, about three weeks after boarding ship that we had the first sub contact.

SI: Did you have alerts or false alarms before that?

PC: No, but you had plenty of drills. … There'd be plenty of drills. … So, you just hope the drills wouldn't be on your sleep time. But you have to respond; because it became very well automatic once the bell went off. You grabbed your life jacket and you went up to your gun station. … I had more to do, because they were my guns, so, I had to make sure that they all ran properly, all that kind of stuff.

SI: How long did it take you to integrate with the crew?

PC: I'd say a matter of days, because we had some very talented [people]. We had a great chief gunner's mate who would keep an eye on the new guys coming aboard. … You'd be assigned to work with a more experienced person. … You already know how the guns work and [how to] take them apart, *et cetera*, but you didn't know the maintenance of it, which was required being out at sea. So, it became very routine, worked very quickly and [it was] routine.

SI: You worked more closely with the gunnery crews.

PC: Yes.

SI: Were they mostly enlistees, or was there anyone who was regular Navy?

PC: There were very few regular Navy, very few. I never thought much about it, but there was no discrimination between the two groups. They all ate the same food, and they had the same quarters. Everything was equal. That's one thing about the Navy. It was an equalizing experience.

SI: Can you describe what an average day was like?

PC: Well, if you served … the midnight to four o'clock watch, … if you have that watch, you don't go to sleep and then … at seven, or so, you'd have breakfast and then it was too late to try to get any sleep. Then you went to your assignment, which was like the guns, and you gave your attention to them, see what they needed to do, make sure that they were all working properly. Depending on the gunnery officer in charge, we had one, who was an Annapolis man, we called him Paint Brush Dewitt, because he liked to have things painted nicely. He would come around to inspect our gun sections and he never inquired about the gun itself. … He said, "I want this painted," this gun shield, or something like that. Because the captain's looking down from the bridge and he's seeing this nicely painted gun shield and he supposes that officer must be doing a good job, *et cetera*, *et cetera*. We had a joke about him running out of paint. … I'll never forget the pleasure [I had one time when] I was all set to go with a friend of mine up to his [Dewitt's] stateroom and say "We're out of paint." So we went up there, we knocked on the door, and said, "Ensign Dewitt, we're out of paint." He said, "Oh, no, you aren't." He had two cans of paint in his stateroom for this emergency. [laughter] So he won that one.

SI: Some other people we talked to said the whole experience was just endless chipping of paint and repainting things.

PC: Well, that's true of the guys who were in the deck division. That's their job. They continually … chip the paint, but we didn't. There was always something to do on a gun to make sure that it wouldn't jam, or no saltwater got in it, or things of that nature. So, there was always some little tension. It was like having a child, you know, you have to care for it all the time. If you didn't, the gun didn't work, your ship is in jeopardy.

SI: What was your relationship like with all the other men on the ship?

PC: I had some great friends. … For many years after I got out, I corresponded with them and I've seen a … few. … We had a great bond. I was a best man in a wedding up in Massachusetts [for] a guy I went to the Navy with. Some real good friendships evolved from the Navy. … It was usually from your immediate contacts. … If all the … gunner's mates were sleeping in a certain area, those are the people you are with all the time. So, you go on liberty with them. … Those were the ones you would BS with and exchange lies with; brag about your prowess with the women with them and drink coffee [with them]. I mean, you have fifteen, twenty cups of coffee a day just to exist. I mean … that was normal.

SI: Were there any hostilities between any of the men?

PC: I'm sure there were. You can't live that closely without bumping into somebody, but I think most of the guys were mutually respectful of the others. … One of my most vivid memories was a friend of mine who was killed. … He was over the side, doing something, I forget what it was, and we were very close to another ship. … The ships had contact and he was crushed to death. Now that necessitated a burial at sea. … This was a vivid, vivid memory of mine. They hooked a chain on him, and then wrapped him and then the canvas, and then they, the captain, as I recall, came by and said some prayers. … They slid the body off into the ocean, into the dark ocean, and this was the North Atlantic. … Several of us went back on the stern, and stayed there a long time, just looking back and imagining that body going down and [knowing] we were never going to see him again. I'll jump forward to tie this in with Rutgers. One of my first courses was a basic English course. … The professor had us write about something, anything, and I wrote "Burial at Sea," which was still a moving, moving thing. … I got a four on it, I think, A, B, C, D. … I got a D on it and I was horrified. … What he did, quite properly, … you lose a mark for every punctuation error. So, here I wrote this moving experience, "Burial at Sea," which was ingrained in my mind, and this guy gave me a D on it. [laughter] … But I've been careful ever since about commas, *et cetera*, but, again, this [is] where you learn. He did me a favor, but I didn't think so at the time. I was still grieving. This was years later, but [I was still grieving]. I hadn't thought of that thing in, I just want you to know, a long time.

SI: Were there any other casualties on your ship?

PC: No, not really. There was nothing by gunfire, or torpedoes, or anything like that. Like this accidental death that I mentioned, maybe, there was one more like that. … I think there were more accidents when guys were on liberty, being hit by a car or something, than there were in action, so to speak.

SI: How often would you get liberty? Where would you go?

PC: Well, it depends where you were. If you were in England, we were in Plymouth, England, which is the home of the British Navy. … So, it was port and starboard, half the crew was off at a time, … depending where you were. If you were in port for a two day liberty, you got one day off. … Then we went up to Ireland, in Belfast, and my most vivid memory of that was on the docks were thousands and thousands of soldiers and they were just waiting to be transferred to wherever they were going to go just prior to the invasion. Here I am, I'm looking at those guys, and I'm feeling guilty, because I'm going home. Depending where you were, if you were in North Africa, in Bizerte, or Oran, in Tunis, you would get a chance to see the area. I was always very inquisitive about other parts of the world. One of my favorite memories of the Navy is seeing these foreign countries. That was fun.

SI: I assume that before the war you had not traveled very much

PC: Just down to the Shore, yes, I … must have traveled alone, or with [my parents] but no, absolutely not.

SI: So, this must have been a whole new experience for you.

PC: Oh, yes, and … all of a sudden, you're eighteen years old, and you're all alone, and you're the boss … of your decorum, of your responsibilities, *et cetera*. … If you messed up, you had to pay for it, but the Navy was really good. … I'm always glad I made that choice.

SI: Was there any gambling on board the ship?

PC: Oh, sure. Oh, sure. … There was a poker game that would go on for days. I really didn't know how to gamble, … so, I didn't participate, but, I don't know, there was always [some kind of gambling]. You could make a bet on anything, the weather, if you wanted. … I can see the poker, or the crap games now, way on the deck, in the rear compartment. … They'd go on round-the-clock. Guys would go off watch and go in there. … They'd play until other duties came up, but there were always people to participate.

SI: When you went on liberty was there a lot of drinking?

PC: The only drinking on shipboard was once a month. We'd have to clean the, I forget what they call … the … front of the mechanism of, say, a five-inch gun for one, or the other thing. So, it was a ritual to say, "We're going to clean the breach of the gun this time." … Different guys [had] different responsibilities, and one was to get the one hundred and eighty proof alcohol they used to [drink]. So, one guy would put the coffee on, one guy would get the alcohol, one guy would notify the bridge to put a gun out of commission, because we were taking a part down. … Then they'd bring the part down to the gunnery shack, like we called it. … The breach would be over in the corner, while everyone was sitting around having coffee, with one hundred and eighty proof alcohol, that wasn't very warm. [laughter] But, at any event, sure, on liberty, depending on where you were, there was [drinking].

SI: Did you ever go out to any English pubs?

PC: Oh, sure. Oh, sure. … At times we might be carrying … beer, say, a case of it. If we were in Sicily, and we were going up to the beach, … we would take the beer out there. … We could never … drink it on the ship, but you take the beer out to … the beach. … I saw … Palermo, and it's beautiful, with all the yellow trees and stuff like that, yellow beach. … There'd be beer there; it was nice. [It was a] nice sojourn.

SI: Did you ever interact with any of the locals, or other military personnel?

PC: Not very much. We stayed pretty close to ourselves. We really didn't have any reason to have any camaraderie with anyone else. … We stayed by ourselves.

SI: Were there any Marines serving on your ship?

PC: No. On the cruiser there was either four, or five Marines, but not on the destroyer. … They had a function to do. They're policemen. They were the policemen on the cruiser or the battleships, and what have you, … so, therefore, they would be … building an animosity, so, you didn't have that on the destroyer, which was [good]. I think they'd be given real trouble if there were any Marines on board.

SI: How were the conditions on the ship, were they tough?

PC: Yes. … The racks that we slept on were either three or four high and the distance between all the aisles, or the racks was, I'd say, … maybe, less than three feet, so, therefore, you got six or eight guys, … who all have to dress and climb aboard their racks right in the same square footage. … It could be a problem, but, I guess, we were pretty respectful … of each other. … You worry more about falling out than anything else.

SI: What about other creature comforts like food and shelter? Were they adequate?

PC: Well, they were adequate for that time and place. You wouldn't want to go to take a shower today in what we did in 1943 or '44. … You just wouldn't. … It was adequate for our situation. You didn't know any better.

SI: What else can you tell us about the men that you served with? Did you notice differences based on where you were from?

PC: Oh, sure. … We left from New England and New York, see, basically Brooklyn, and then there was a lot of Southerners … in the Navy. … There were no … problems as far as … animosity … between the people. The only blacks, as I recall, [would] do … mess duty. … They were very much to themselves and there was no problem between the blacks and whites, because they stayed by themselves. At that time, the only sea duties that the blacks would get would be on black ships. They would be totally … black, … which was wrong. It should've been integrated, but who knew it then? No one really cared to explore the need for that.

SI: How often were you able to get mail?

PC: It varied. We got a sort of routine of every two months we were back in Boston, so the mail knew where to find us, so, when we pulled in after … two months, we usually had mail there. … If we [went] back to Africa, or someplace, they'd get mail to us later. … That wasn't a major problem.

SI: Did you always cross the Atlantic with a convoy?

PC: No. … We had a commodore on our … ship, … and he was boss of the whole convoy. So, we usually traveled with, say, half a dozen destroyer escorts, and there might be a hundred freighters involved. … As I remember now, we'd go over with a crowd, and go back with just the DEs [destroyer escorts]. That's so long ago.

SI: Were you aware of the D-Day invasion?

PC: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. I'd say, especially, when we [were in Belfast], it hit me in Belfast. I was on one of those long, dark piers, and I saw these thousands and thousands of soldiers and everybody knew what it was all about. … I read a lot of things on D-Day since and I'm very happy that I wasn't part of it, because those guys … really got it tough, really had it tough.

SI: Can you tell us anything about your specific duties?

PC: Well, … I had a pair of .20-mm on either side of the ship, just below the bridge. … When the general quarters sounded, I'd race up there, and we'd take the covers … off the guns, and you'd strap in the guy who was going to … actually [be] firing. … [We would] make sure the ammunition is available and then we'd just wait. … Usually, we had nothing to do on a sub attack. The torpedo men, they were the ones who had to man the stern racks. … They had to set the timers on the ash cans, and roll them out on order, or shoot them off the sides. They … had most of the work during the sub attack. So, on air attack, they wouldn't do anything and we did whatever we had to do.

SI: Did you ever shoot down a plane?

PC: I don't think so. It happened so fast. … The Germans, as I recall it, they'd come in … two planes at a time. … They usually, you know, [would be] zagging. One goes to get your attention this way, and the other comes in and drops the torpedo, which, fortunately, would just keep on going. Because, again, if we're zigging, and properly so, that thing is passed us by, I'd say, a hundred yards. … So, there was nothing you could have done about it. I'd pray, which there was a lot of, I think.

SI: Did you ever see ships get hit?

PC: No. … No. …

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

SI: This continues an interview with the Honorable Peter Campbell on October 11th, the year 2002. Please continue

PC: No. … Again, we were all fortunate. I didn't see any ships get hit, or go down. I think, … again, you practice something. I think, the big emphasis on submarine attacks had lessened by the time we were there, so, I'm sure the ships [that] were ahead of us by a matter of a few months did sustain a lot of casualties, so, we were lucky.

SI: Did you talk with any of the people who been on your ship before you?

PC: Oh, sure. The ship had been in Recife in South America for a couple of years, so, they had some submarine encounters … coming up in the Caribbean. So, we got to know a lot about life down there, you know, talking to them.

SI: How often did you go to the Caribbean?

PC: We went down there a couple times. … One time was when we were escorting a shake-down cruise of, I think, it was an aircraft carrier. … I think on that trip we went to Trinidad. I don't recall a great deal about [it]. I've been to the Caribbean many, many times since, but it was on pleasure. … Most of our … runs were over, from Boston to North Africa, and Sicily, and that area. …

SI: Did you ever escort hospital ships back?

PC: No. They were much faster than we were. … I think, they went by themselves, because, these destroyers couldn't make any time. In fact, now they can, they can really move, but, no, I think most of those ships worked by themselves.

SI: In another interview we were told weather was often a big factor. Was that true on your ship?

PC: Oh, yes. … Weather was always a factor. … Even the factor of whether you had a Saturday morning inspection, or not. If the decks were awash, they wouldn't have the inspection. So, we had a very fortunate [situation]. We had an Indian [helmsman], and American Indians were very good at being helmsmen. They would move us along. … We used to bribe this one helmsman, who would be serving on a Saturday morning, to steer the ship so we'd get extra water on the decks, so they would call off the inspection. [laughter]. … Well, I remember one time, and this may be hard to imagine, that we did a fifty-eight degree roll. Now, that's not a record, but imagine what forty-five is. … We were fifty-eight degrees. … This … was the ship that happened to be involved with the waves and part of that [was], nobody wore their lifejacket. Immediately, after, everybody had a lifejacket on. [laughter] But the weather that was the worst was the cold and the ice. … We went down … from Norfolk to New York, or vice versa, and we had a very, very bad ice storm. It was horrific, really. … We pulled in, I guess it was Norfolk, and we were a sheet of ice. The whole ship was just ice. We must have looked like something very weird. … The ice had accumulated. Now, the worst part, guys had to be out all night long, [because] you're on watch. So, you get in that weather whether you like or not. … But, again, we were so young it didn't bother us.

SI: Did you ever have anybody get washed overboard?

PC: … When the weather got rough, we put up catwalks … for about six feet above the deck and that's what you walk on. No, I don't recall anybody getting washed over, but nobody went on the decks … when they were really awash. It was too dangerous. But the catwalks … served a good purpose.

SI: What did you think of the Germans?

PC: I don't recall, … I never thought of them as anything but the … enemy. … When you see a submarine coming up to the surface, you're not talking to him, "Hey, Charlie, what are you doing, what's wrong?" He's coming up, you think does [he] have a scheduled fight with you or

not. Now, you're getting ready to do that, so both sides are doing their job and getting ready to defend themselves and hurt the other guy. … So, I don't think you had much time to … form any real opinions about whether they were nice guys or not.

SI: How much discipline was there on the ship?

PC: Well…

SI: Was it clean?

PC: No. No, because, first of all, it was an older ship. It was built in, I think, 1937, and you'll never get an old ship as clean as you'd like, because there's always oil. … Everybody was clean. There was a laundromat on the ship. … We all, of course, wore dungarees. … You stayed as clean as you could, but it wasn't as if you were on a battleship. You knew you'd be a lot cleaner and neater and stuff like that, that way [on a battleship], but it wasn't bad, just crowded.

SI: Did you have officers who were strict about doing things by the book?

PC: Only the Annapolis graduates, otherwise, no. No, the officers, they were … very fair and there was not much interplay really. They'd come around and we [could] always tell, like a new gunnery officer. The first day he would come around and watch you. The second day he would ask you questions. The third day he would tell you how to do your job. This was the routine. [laughter] … We used to kid about, but it was true. I mean, he didn't know what the hell we were doing, anyway, and we had to know what we were doing. It's too important otherwise. So the officers, … they didn't bother you.

SI: Most of them were ninety-day wonders.

PC: I think so, yes, yes. … There were some who were like a Mr. Roberts [Judge Campbell is referring to a 1955 comedy film about an American naval vessel in World War II] type of thing. Obviously, he'd have a personality that would be a lot more favorable than another one would. … The Mr. Roberts-type was the type that you could go and complain to or something if it was necessary.

SI: When did you leave the *Moffet* and switch over to the cruiser?

PC: … We decommissioned the *Moffet* in Charleston, South Carolina and during that period we stayed at the Citadel Military College, which was kind of nice. So, I'm going to say that was in, say, December 1945. … Then, I think, I'm not sure, I went to the cruiser after that. … Then I was discharged March 6, 1946.

SI: Do you remember V-E Day?

PC: Yes. I was in Norfolk, Virginia on V-E Day and that was really exciting. I couldn't do anything about it, but it was exciting, just the news of it.

SI: How did the end of the war affect your duty?

PC: Well, … there was a point system to get out. … Everybody was counting their points all the time, and trying to make sure that they had enough points … to get discharged. So, that, again, was a preoccupation. While I was on the cruiser, I asked for advanced hydraulic training *et cetera*, but they were going to be so hard up for experienced people that they were offering [quick advancement]. I was a … gunner's mate, third class. They were offering you chief within a year, if you stay[ed] in, and we all said, "Thank you, no, but I got to go home." But you could have done [that] in any rank right after the [war], when things were really winding down, so, now, just being a chief petty officer didn't mean that much to me either.

SI: What was the decommissioning process like?

PC: You had to take all the good things off the … ship. … I hate to say this, but it was a lot easier to toss it over the side in the dark, in Charleston, then to carry it to a truck, or wherever they were going. I knew one guy who set up a machine shop in the South somewhere by appropriating various machines and tools and stuff like that from the ship. … They were just throwing … things away. So, there wasn't much formality to it. … I saw the USS *Missouri* being commissioned [June 11, 1944] in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. That was interesting, because, that became a very famous [ship]. That's where MacArthur and his generals and all of them were [when the Japanese signed the surrender]. … So, … I saw that in Brooklyn Navy Yard and that was a huge, huge ship. So, that was the commissioning of that. But, no, I don't recall any really sad incidents of the decommissioning of the ship.

SI: Your duties on the cruiser were the same?

PC: No, it wasn't. I was assigned to a six-inch turret. There were two or three guns on there, but I was assigned to that. … There wasn't much to do, … just keep them clean. … I … had that job because of the hydraulics involved and I had gone to this school in Washington, DC for most of that.

SI: Do you remember hearing about Franklin Roosevelt's death?

PC: I'm sure I did. I … can't recall it right now, no. …

SI: How soon after leaving the Navy did you go to Rutgers?

PC: It was three months. … I started here, in New Brunswick, and I took two courses. I just didn't want to … wait until the fall and just be blind-sided, I felt, with a whole bunch of [classes], a full schedule, so, I took two courses, an English, and then a math course, I'm quite sure, in the summer time. … That was it. … Then comes the fall, [and] I took the regular [course load]. I was a political science major, [and a] history minor. I was just at Rutgers for three years. They had a system that your first year in law school would count as your last year in college. So, I spent a little over three years here, then I went to law school, Rutgers in Newark, and then that was it.

SI: Did you find that a lot of your classmates were World War II veterans and on the GI Bill as well?

PC: Yes. We were all like in a mold. … We all wore Army and Navy jackets, and we were all about the same age. It was the non-veterans who were the exception. I belonged to the Delta Upsilon fraternity, which was a great experience. … The young guys were the guys that weren't the veterans. … We all got along fine. There were no problems, but the majority seemed to be all veterans.

SI: Could you see, mentally, the difference between the veterans and non-veterans?

PC: I just think that the veterans lied more and cried more, maybe, and told more war stories than were necessary. In all, there was not that much of a difference.

SI: Did you have the idea of going to law school when you first came to Rutgers?

PC: Well, … my grandfather was a Supreme Court Justice, and I was named after him, so, in growing up, everybody inevitably said, "You're going to be a lawyer," so, I decided, I'd do anything in the world except be a lawyer, because, I'd been hearing this, all this time, so, the Navy cured me of that. So, I said, "I'm not going to make any decision now, but maybe I'll go to law school and maybe I won't." Then, as college went on, I decided to try law school. … It was … a maturing process. … My family never bothered me. My family never bugged me at all about it. It was always the relatives, and the name, and all that kind of stuff. But it worked out well, having the time by myself in the Navy to decide I wanted to go to college, and it was good for me to have time in college to decide I wanted to go to law school, so, one sort of followed the other.

SI: Could you go over what Rutgers was like before the war? Did you see how things changed?

PC: Just in numbers, I mean, like walking up College Avenue, to go up to the gym. I mean, the sidewalks were crowded. It's probably the same way today, I don't know … but the sheer numbers were what [was different]. … The class sizes, I'm sure, were larger than they are today. … You were reminded of the service [all the time]. See, we all kept our jackets with our service emblem [on them], so, that was a reminder. … Then, if we went down to the Corner Tavern, there'd be lies over who was the bravest of all, you know that type of thing. … I'm sure there was an awful lot of exaggeration done by all of us, as far as our heroics and winning the war, *et cetera*.

SI: Were there a lot of veterans in the fraternity?

PC: Yes. … It worked out well. I've maintained a lot of friendships from the DU house, a lot of friendships.

SI: What made you decide to join that fraternity?

PC: A friend of my sister's, my sister being a librarian, he was a DU. … I had known him and, so, he suggested that I come around and see the house, *et cetera*. … I did and I liked the people who were there and that was it. It was a very simple, simple choice.

SI: Did you have to go through the regular pledging traditions?

PC: Oh, sure. Yes, but it wasn't rigorous at all, because we were all bigger than the upperclassmen. [laughter]. So, I don't recall any bad experiences that way. No, it was good. I ended end up being president of the DU house, and I enjoyed that. I was on the Inter-Fraternity Council. [I] played freshman lacrosse, very poorly, but I did that. … I was in Crown and Scroll and I enjoyed my time here, very much.

SI: What was your favorite subject?

PC: My favorites were American history, [with] Professor Richard McCormick, I took his course in American history and also New Jersey history which was fascinating. We had our fiftieth and I told him then, I said, "You were voted the most popular professor when I [was there]" and he said, "Tell me more" [laughter] He was a great one, and I enjoyed political science courses. Everybody knew Professor John George. I knew him very well because he [had] lived up the street from me since I was born. He was going to teach, I'm digressing a little bit, but he was going to teach in a West Virginian, northern, town one summer, so, he … walked down the street and he said, "Petey, I'm setting out to go to West Virginia." He had a heart condition, so, he said, "Would you drive with me?" So, I said "Sure." He was a bit eccentric, anyway, so, we took off, and we were in the middle of the Pennsylvania Turnpike, and he said "Pull over here." So, we pulled over, and he goes in the trunk and he gets this silver horseshoe set. So, we played horseshoes on the Pennsylvania Turnpike before we went on to (Morgantown?). Two years later, a friend a mine says, this is the darndest thing, "I was driving down the Pennsylvania Turnpike, and I saw two jerks playing horseshoes, and one of them looked just like you." [laughter] That was my Professor George story.

TP: What was the social atmosphere like at Rutgers?

PC: Well, socially, they … still had the soff hop, that was a big thing, and the junior prom they were big deals and the [Military] Ball. … But mostly social stuff was done in the fraternities, … so, it was … nice. I don't think you wanted for any more than was present.

SI: Do you remember Dean Metzger? Wasn't he a Delta Upsilon?

PC: Yes. Yes. I knew him. … He was a trustee, I think, of the fraternity. He would come to the meetings a couple times a year. I knew him … later. He was a Freeholder before I was. As a matter-of-fact, I was asked to speak at a dinner they had for him when he was leaving the board. He was a fine guy. He was very friendly with Dr. Mason Gross. I don't remember any run-ins with them. I think … most of them were quite deferential to the veterans. Although, I remember we had one assistant dean, Dean (Curtin?). We had convocation up at the gym and he made our blood boil, because, he used all these Navy expressions like, "Knock it off." You know, stuff like that. … That was the last thing we wanted to hear from him, having a dean get

up, and [talk like that]. I guess, he'd been in the Navy, I don't know, but he thought he was being one of the boys by talking this way. That was not well received, but he was … not a bad person. Now I was friendly with Howard Crosby, the dean of, I can't think of [it]. That's not important. [Howard Crosby was the Dean of Men].

SI: Where you a member of the New Brunswick City Council?

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

PC: Quickly, at that time, a lot of stores were closed. … It wasn't ... good. … I think it was during that period. … This was before what I call, "The Rebirth of New Brunswick." The "New Brunswick Tomorrow" organization came in much later and turned the whole thing around. … New Brunswick was just like Perth Amboy, or … Newark, or any other older city. They had all the … [same] problems, so, it wasn't a happy place. But we didn't get much further, really, then the Corner Tavern, then this whole area around the college.

SI: In 1950 you moved on to law school?

PC: Yes.

SI: You were there for two years?

PC: Three, yes, and I commuted to law school by train. I was living at home in Highland Park, [and] commuted by train. … It was uneventful.

SI: What did you think of the program there?

PC: I have no way to compare it to anything.

SI: Was it a good education?

PC: Yes, I think so. I mean, not the best, but it was good. Yes, but my allegiance to Rutgers is to New Brunswick, not to the law school in Newark. That's my feeling about it. … The attendance, … like in a football game, everyone went to a football game. It wasn't like [today]. I see now, that a lot of students don't go. … Maybe we were the grizzled veterans, so to speak, but we just assumed you'd go there; to the football games and basketball.

SI: Did you feel, being in the service for so long, that you had missed out on what was going on at home?

PC: I'm sorry, I didn't understand.

SI: Most veterans feel like they might have missed out on parts of life during the war.

PC: Yes.

SI: Did it seem like that to you?

PC: No, it didn't. I was probably too ignorant to think I had missed something. It was a very … full life thing, in the service, in college, a very full life, … so … you didn't worry about missing anything.

SI: Were a lot of your friends getting married after the war?

PC: Not many were married, although, we had a lot of married students. They lived in trailers over there in Piscataway. No, most of my friends were either going to medical school, or law school, or what have you. We all … dated, but you couldn't think about getting married. I mean, it was absolutely unheard of to [get married], so, most of us, I think, got married at age, let's see, twenty-eight, thirty, I don't know, something like that. I'm sure a lot of … romances didn't survive because the girls wanted to get married and the guys, they had to get their education and get their thing going, yes, I'm sure that was a problem.

SI: At the time, it seems like the fraternities were a large part of campus life.

PC: Yes.

SI: Were a lot of people from your fraternity in sports?

PC: There were a lot of sports, mostly crew, as I recall, … they were all DUs. … My dear friend, Frankie Burns, one of the greatest coaches of all time, he roomed next door to me. … I still see Frank. We had some … great guys in there [Delta Upsilon]. My roommate was a Navy pilot and … one weekend a month, he'd have to go to Willow Grove, Pennsylvania for some kind of reserve duty. So, he would fly up here and fly up to Hadley airport. [Do] you know where that is, over in Piscataway? [laughter] The flight would get in, and we'd go flying around in a Navy plane. … I used to just wear khakis; people thought I was an officer. … We'd fly down to Willow Grove and we'd stay in the officers' club. These guys are saluting me, and I'm going like this, I didn't know how to salute. [laughter] … I mean, we used to do things that were unheard of. … He even let me fly the damn thing. [laughter]. … That was fun. But no, we had some great, great times, because, anytime anyone did get married, the whole slew of DUs [were] there, and they ended up singing the Sweetheart's Song to the bride, that type of thing. That part was very nice. No, I enjoyed the DU, it was not a secret fraternity, it was an open [fraternity]. … I'm not criticizing the secret fraternities, I just liked this one, the way this was. … We had good times with all the other houses; we got pretty friendly with them. … I was there for the DU house reunion, … until they packed it in a couple years ago, for a long time. … So, college was nice, and fun, and I was at the reunions for a long time. I think, I've been to most of them in the fifty-some years. … A lot of fellows I got to know much better twenty years out, than I did then, … because, you couldn't know many people with … the class sizes at that time, but after you start seeing them every May or June and you're on College Avenue you get to be friendly with them. So, … that's been rewarding.

SI: Did you always plan to settle in this area?

PC: That's a good question. I think so. … I started clerking when I was in law school, and I clerked for a judge here in New Brunswick. … Then I just stayed here, and then you get active [in the community], whether it be the Red Cross or the United Way or a whole myriad of things. … New Brunswick was the center. … I thoroughly enjoyed being a lawyer. I can say, in fifty years, I never had two days alike, … and I'm still practicing. I'm going to talk myself into retiring this coming year. … Practicing law has been very satisfying, very satisfying to me. … This is the county seat, and I got to be president of the County Bar Association, the New Brunswick Bar Association at the time. So, you get to know lawyers all over the county, which is very, very important, because you're dealing with other lawyers all the time. … If you can't trust them, or they can't trust you, your client is going to suffer. So, it's extremely rare that you couldn't trust a lawyer from this county. As a matter-of-fact, there was one I'd like to recall, someone we all knew. So, we wouldn't talk to him, because he would record telephone conversations, [of] someone, you know, talking into a telephone. But any lawyer in Middlesex County that says, "We'll close this title. You owe me an affidavit, but I'll give you a place to get it," and he says, "okay," that's his word; that's his bond. … We wouldn't treat Newark lawyers that way, because, we didn't know Newark lawyers, but we knew that anybody from this county, you could trust. … That was good for the clients, too, very good for the clients, because you could deliver something based strictly on your word.

SI: What kind of practice were you involved in?

PC: General practice, and I was in the Attorney General's office for years. I was a prosecutor up in Passaic County, and Brendan Byrne [Governor of New Jersey] was [there]. There were six of us up there. We were crime fighters. [laughter] … Really, a great, great bunch of guys, and Brendan went further than anyone else in our group. Well, one guy became appallit division judge, and two others were trial judges, and a couple of us were general practitioners. … Those were friendships I maintained over the years, also. So, the laws were a very satisfying choice of careers. The practice has just changed over the last few years, just changed. I think, the younger lawyers today are smarter than we were, they're better prepared. There's a lot to be said [for it] being a better system, but, you don't have the camaraderie that you had thirty, forty years ago. You don't have that. When I see lawyers advertising, … it's repugnant to me. It's legal, but, you see, you watch the television or [listen to] the radio, and some lawyer is advertising, I just don't like it. I just don't like it. But … I'm wrong because it is legal to do it. So, I get mad anyway.

SI: Were there any interesting cases?

PC: Oh, boy, Well, I was magistrate for eleven years, too. In Milltown , and most of the cases came from the Turnpike, so, we had a myriad of situations, even diplomatic immunity. I resented those people speeding up and down the Turnpike, and they were diplomats. … I can't touch them. But [if] you speed up [the Turnpike], well, I've got to take your license, and, maybe, I'm taking your job, and everything else. So, I created a couple of international incidents by fining some diplomats. [laughter] I think I got a letter from the Secretary of State, or something like that, admonishing me. [laughter] So, I enjoyed that. I was a defense lawyer, and I had various [cases]; property work, zoning work, things like that, some interesting things. … I don't know, … I just generally enjoyed the practice a lot.

SI: What did you enjoy more, practicing or being a judge?

PC: [I enjoyed] practicing more. Because, … for eleven years I was [a] judge. … I got to worry about myself. I said, "Am I taking this for granted? Am I dispensing justice correctly, or am I doing the same routine I've been doing for eleven years?" I said, "That's not right," so that's what caused me to terminate that. … Then I went into politics. I ran for County Freeholder and I served two terms there. I was director of the Board. … I really enjoyed county government because it's … a middle government. You don't get the abuse that you get with the mayor of a small town hall, or the governor, or the legislature. You are in-between. You are in a level that not too many people know about. … It's an important level, because, you've got your vocational schools and parks and roads, and all that kind of stuff, to be responsible for, but you could … do things. One of my best [responsibilities] was vocation education. … We have one of the best vocational school systems in the country, right here. … [It's] not just because of me, but we were taught by some of the best administrators. We were taught, and we responded. … The group was a very satisfying local government. … You don't have to raise the taxes, or take the abuse that the poor mayor does, because no one knows what you do, other than the fact that you have an office in the county building, or something.

SI: What years were you on the Board of County Freeholders?

PC: [In the] … the seventies, or possibly the early eighties, I'm not sure. I really have to concentrate on putting dates for perspective. … Then I got out of county government. … Then … I served [for a] couple [of] years [on the] Democratic National Committee, which I really, really enjoyed. That was different … [having the chance] to meet people, like Bill Bradley, for example. He came to my office, you know, to seek his endorsement when he started to run. … … I got a kick out of that. You know, he's "Dollar Bill." I've read his book. [laughter] … Today, [if] I see him, we always have a nice greeting for each other. … When you go to Washington, … the capital, if you want to talk to your senator, you give your card to the guy in charge. He goes in, [and] all of a sudden the senator comes out to see you. Now, that's an ego trip. [laughter] That's a trip. … Government has always been a vocation that I've enjoyed.

SI: Were you on the Board of Freeholders during Brendan Byrne's term?

PC: Yes. Yes. Yes. …

SI: Were you able to use your prior relationship to bring anything about?

PC: Well, … in a way. Like, your bridge out here. [Lynch Bridge?] That was a very controversial thing. … I remember Brendan came to town to look at it, or something like that, and … I was asked to sit in the car with Brendan, just to talk about the thing, because I was the only one that really knew him. … So, that was one of the ten thousand reasons why the bridge is there. … I found that, in government, … learn[ing] … who you can trust to talk to and who you can't trust, is very, very important, because you can't know it all. … You have to take advice. … You have to listen to other people, but the question is, "Who are you listening to?" … I think, you kind of get [a sense of it]. Like, Brendan, he was going to listen to me before he was a stranger, you know. I just had one little thing to talk to him about. … He was a very, good

governor, he was a good friend, [and] a good Democrat. He took a lot of abuse for a while with his tax situation, but he's going down with Tom Kean … as one of the better governors we've had. I'm sure of that.

SI: He was working during a difficult economic period.

PC: Yes. He did. … He made some very tough decisions. … Brendan was an extremely intelligent guy. His only drawback, he went to Princeton. … He and I had a standing bet of a dime on every contest between Rutgers and Princeton. [laughter] … I forget how we [did it], but [if] we went down to [see] baseball, lacrosse, or anything else, it was a dime bet, standard, on every contest. So, yes, he's a good man.

SI: How often did Rutgers come up as an issue in your political career?

PC: That's hard to say. … The university was smart. They had a good friend of ours, John (McDonnell?) or (O'Donnell?), I'm not sure. … He was, sort of, the liaison between Rutgers and the politicians. … We knew John very well, and John knew us very well. We trusted him. … That was greater for Rutgers than you can imagine, because, we trusted each other. … He was very active in [the group] called "The New Five," … the five commissioners that turned the other rascals out for a number of years. … John was very close to them, so, they trusted him. Yes, it was great. He was one guy. So, … if we had a problem with Rutgers, I'd call John, or he'd call me. … That was just … one small thing, but we didn't have … many problems. New Brunswick had problems [with Rutgers], in that, the [university] was eating up all its housing and stuff like that. They were putting new buildings up, and so that created a strain. … So, a few years ago, Rutgers made a pledge that they wouldn't put up anymore buildings, because they were taking tax ratables away from the city, and all that kind of stuff. … That was something that had to be negotiated. I was not involved with that. It was important for Rutgers to have people that could be trusted and talked to.

SI: Could you tell us a little bit about your family?

PC: Okay, I have … two children. … One is in Texas and one is in New Jersey; she's a teacher. I was married to a local gal. We were married for twenty-three years and are divorced. I have remarried. I've been, I think, almost twenty-three years with my present wife. [laughter] She has two children. They're thirty-three and thirty-six. We live in East Brunswick. We have a house in the Florida Keys, which we are going to on the twentieth of this month. [I] can't wait to get down there, because I got a little boat waiting for me, too. … We like to travel. … Right now, she's actually my secretary, not that I have much secretarial work. … We get along very well together. We had a house up in New York State, on the Delaware, for a number of years, which we liked very much. Now … [the] Florida Keys are our favorite vacation spot … . We have three beagles, which are great dogs. … We have friends all over. I don't know what else to mention, or what I'm remiss in not mentioning.

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

Reviewed by Sarah Rice 02/07/06

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 2/10/06
Reviewed by Peter Daly Campbell 3/17/06