

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH MELBOURNE ROMAINÉ CARRIKER

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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Wendy Castillo: This begins an interview with Dr. Melbourne Carriker on October 29, 2004, in Lewes, Delaware, with Wendy Castillo and ...

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: Dr. Carriker, thank you so much for taking time today to talk with us. To begin the interview, would you tell us where and when you were born?

Melbourne Carriker: Yes, indeed. I was born in the city of Santa Marta, Colombia, South America and my father was Melbourne Carriker, and my mother was Carmela Fly Carriker. Going back earlier, my grandfather, who was an electrical engineer, was hired by the city of Barranquilla, and later by the city of Santa Marta to put in the telephone system, eventually telegraph and eventually electricity. So, [my] grandparents were very popular among the natives because they brought so many wonderful assets to the community. Well, after time, my grandmother, who was just an amazing person, was a nurse by training and supported my grandfather in just every way she could imagine. Now, just think of people living in Columbia: Grandfather was from Maine, Grandmother was from Ohio and then, my grandfather goes to my grandmother and says "Eva, we have an invitation to go to Colombia, South America," to another language, another culture, a very distant place. So to the credit of my grandmother she went along.

SH: What year would this have been?

MC: Have to refer to my notes. [Editor's note: Dr. Carriker is referring to his book, *Vista Nieve: The Remarkable True Adventures of an Early Twentieth Century Naturalist and His Family in Colombia, South America.*] Grandfather went first in 1892. Grandmother followed later. After Grandfather did the electrical and the telephone system (coming from a farm originally) he became interested in agriculture and kept thinking about coffee. Cultivation of coffee was just beginning about then, and [the] first thing you know, he decided to go into the coffee business. As I explain in some detail in my book, he failed three times and eventually hit one spot high up in the Sierra Nevada in Santa Marta, which was ideal for coffee growing. There he developed a plantation, with eventually his eight children. If my father was an ornithologist. He went through two years of college, at the University of Nebraska, and at the end of that time he felt that he knew all that was necessary for him to know, so, he left and went into collecting birds professionally for museums mostly in the United States. First, he went to Costa Rica, then Venezuela and, eventually ended up collecting in Colombia. An interesting episode occurred when he landed in Colombia. His practice was to go to the consulate to get information about where he might set up his collecting base. Who should be in the consul's office, but my grandparents. So, Daddy explained what his mission was and then my grandparents said, "Well, do come and use our plantation as your base of operations." So, that's how that begun.

SH: Now, where had he come from?

MC: Dad came from Nebraska. He was collaborating with a Dr. W.E.C. Todd at a museum in Pittsburg collecting birds, (and also later collaborated with the Smithsonian, with Dr. Alexander Wetmore collecting birds for the Smithsonian Institution). So, he had a lot of contacts in the States. This set the stage, you see, for a marriage between my mother (the Flye's oldest daughter) and my father. Then came the question, what are we going to do? Are we, Carmelita

and Melbourne, going to stay in Colombia or are we going to go back to the States? That was a very difficult question for them to answer; they finally decided that they would stay. After all, all of my mother's family was there and Dad was having a wonderful time collecting birds; so, with Grandfather's help they decided to build their own plantation. And this is what they did. On the plantation, which they named Vista Nieve, they raised five of us kids, I was the oldest one.

SH: Can you tell us then about your earliest memories of being in Colombia and on the coffee plantation?

MC: It was an interesting life because, picture our plantation, it was about five miles from my grandparent's plantation. The only associations we had were with the children of the *peons*, that is what we called them, (this was not meant in a derogatory sense, but that's what they were called, the workmen and the children of the workmen). In those days the landowner's children were not supposed to play with the workmen's children so we kind of snuck around and played with them anyway. So, this was our life. At first my mother taught us the alphabet and simple reading and arithmetic, and then my parents decided, the way that my grandparents had done, to hire a tutor to come to Columbia. They hired one of my cousins, who became our teacher. I spent quite a bit of time in the book [Editor's note: *Vista Nieve*] talking about her introduction to Colombia. We had our classes on a little table out on the porch. Jasmine vines grew around the porch and when the jasmine was in bloom, the perfume was just intoxicating. This was a one-room classroom where she taught all five of us. I spent a lot of time, as I was very interested in nature, the plants, and the animals, wandering around the surroundings. It was perfectly safe,. There were no terrorists then, no wild animals to worry about, and I learned a great deal about the native vegetation and the plants and the animals.

SH: Did your father continue with the bird collecting while he was also running the plantation? Was he able to do both?

MC: He did both, which is quite amazing. That is, right after the plantation was developed. Mother was a tremendous help to him because she was a practical nurse and was able to help the men, also the women, give birth to children. Some of the men would cut each other up with machetes on weekend parties, and their mother would sew them up. It was that kind of a life, you see.

SH: I wondered if your father was able to continue collecting the birds as well.

MC: Yes, indeed he did, and, again, in my book I describe in great detail the four or five of the major expeditions that he took with my mother. I was taken on the first one as a little baby: can you imagine my mother and my father on mule back, a nurse on mule back, and our luggage behind us on pack mules wandering over the mountains of Colombia? [laughter] It was really bizarre, but, anyway, Dad was very successful in collecting. In between times, while he was running the plantation, he would go on weekends and shoot birds in the local area. He would take me with him occasionally and we did a lot of shooting that way.

SH: Was your mother's training as a nurse given to her by her mother or had she gone away to school?

MC: By her mother. My grandparents sent their children to the States at least through high school, and so my mother went, too. She came back so she never had anymore than a high school education. She was what you might call a person interested in her hands, in manual things, and working with people and doing things, like sewing. She made all the clothes for the people on the plantation and for us. Can you imagine? Of course, she had a cook, also a lady who helped with the children, and a lady who helped with the washing, and so on, in this way they managed well. It was a very nice partnership for a long time. Eventually, there were problems and I go into that in the book.

WC: Did you like growing up in Colombia?

MC: Yes, I was twelve years old when we came to the States.

SH: How was that decision made, why did you come to the States?

MC: That's a good question. Probably two major reasons, one was that Dad was still interested in ornithology as a profession. He really wanted to get back to a museum to do his research, and by that time, 1927, the price of coffee was going down and things were not as good as they had been. The second reason was that there were now five children growing up. They thought: "What are we going to do with five kids? We can't possibly train them with tutors beyond the eight grade." I think they both concluded that they wanted to bring us back to the States to raise us as US citizens.

SH: I wondered, perhaps, in your mother's experience of having left her family to come to the States to go to school, perhaps she chose not to have that for her children? Do you think that had any impact on that decision?

MC: Very well may have.

SH: So, how was the decision made about where you would come back to the States to start your new life?

MC: Yes, Dad had always wanted to work in the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. Two years before we came, he corresponded with them and was told they had an opening, but they said, (this was in the Depression) "Yes, we want you very much to come, but we won't be able to hire you for a year." So, Dad was a very good carpenter and mason and had built *peons'* homes and our home in the plantation, with the help of natives. He had a sawmill where he cut the timber out of the jungle trees, all of this, it is just amazing what he did. So he and Mother decided they would come to the U.S. anyway and he would find a temporary job. We landed in Beachwood, New Jersey about a mile from Toms River where there were a very good grade school and high school. Dad took the train from Beachwood to Camden, and then to Philadelphia, on weekends after he started working at the museum. This is after we had been in

New Jersey. The first year he was head of a ditch digging gang. Later he did work with builders building houses. He also worked for the Borough of Beachwood in politics. [laughter]

SH: When you were living in Colombia, how did you receive supplies? Did they all come by boat, and then how did you get them to the plantation? Did you go to pick them up or did they deliver them?

MC: The major supplies from the United States and Europe came by ship to the Port of Santa Marta. The United Fruit Company was functioning well and it took a lot of supplies there in not available Colombia. The plantation had its own garden, fruit trees, a vegetable garden, cattle, and mules. So we had milk for cheese and butter. It was essentially a self-sufficient plantation. Other things, say salt, flour, needles and thread, the essentials, came from Santa Marta. By then Santa Marta and Barranquilla were pretty well developed. There was a lot of manufacturing going on. So, Dad would come down to Dad and Mother's little halfway place called, Las Flores, just outside of Santa Marta. This was a kind of stopping place. He had a man, and his family living there. Eventually Granddad put in a telephone system, a one line between us and the city, so Mother or Dad could telephone to the man in Las Flores, "We need such and such ..." The man would go into town, buy supplies and put them on mule back to Vista Nieve the next week.

SH: So, all your books and things like that for school and everything would come from the United States to Las Flores or Santa Marta.

MC: Newspapers, magazines, all came from the States.

SH: Did you have a correspondence or knowledge of your families that were here in the States?

MC: Yes, especially my grandmother was very good at corresponding. She typed, hunt and peck, but she loved to correspond, so, she wrote long letters to all her family in the States, and, in fact, after we moved, she kept corresponding, keeping us up-to-date.

SH: Now, they stayed there, your grandparents?

MC: They stayed. After Grandfather retired from the plantation, one of my uncles took over, they remained in Bolivar, the load on-station. They had the plantation up in the mountains about 4,000 feet and then in addition outside of Santa Marta was Bolivar, a really beautiful, lovely place where they lived there.

SH: What was social life like for your parents? Who did they socialize with? If you were not to play with the native children, who did they socialize with?

MC: Exactly. When we were living on the plantation there was a lot of traffic back and forth between us, our grandparents, and our aunts and uncles in Santa Marta. They had children and would often visit our grandparents, and occasionally us, so we got to know our cousins quite well. So, they would visit us on the plantation from time to time, and then we would go down to Santa Marta and spend time down there in Las Flores and go into town and meet people that

way. Our whole life on the plantation was pretty much a family affair. Mother and Dad often had guests that came up and visited us, spent weekends, or a week, or more. From time to time Dad would have professional people, collectors, come and visit and take them collecting. One time, for example, a Doctor Ruthven from the Michigan Museum, came. He was collecting reptiles, so Dad took him out on a collecting expedition. This sort of thing would happen from time to time. We were not entirely isolated, but it was different, you know, you just couldn't walk up next door and see the neighbors.

SH: How did you celebrate what would be traditionally American holidays in Colombia? Did you celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas?

MC: Always. Oh, we had Christmas and Thanksgiving, big events always at my grandparents plantation. Everybody would get together, most often down in Bolivar, outside of Santa Marta. Our three aunts, their husbands and their children were all be a part of the celebrations. There were as many as twelve altogether at these gatherings.

SH: Now, all of these siblings that were of the eight children, did all of them remain in Colombia?

MC: Let's see. No, the Hatches, the Ryans, and the Hills all came to the States eventually. What happened was that the United Fruit Company transferred their workers back to the States, and the wives and their children went with them.

SH: But then, let's go back and talk about what you remember, the adjustment (of moving into) Toms River, and having been educated, basically, through tutors, and your adjustment to school and to the United States.

MC: Yes. I will never forget entering the sixth grade in Tom River Grade School. Miss Hurley was our teacher. She was a very large, bosomy person, she commanded, wonderful person. [laughter] She had twenty-four students, and here I was a skinny, little, uninitiated person from the Tropics. I didn't know my way around at all. I was very timid, of course, very much intimidated by all of the activities. I was a good student so that was no problem. My major problem was associating with the other kids, especially, the bullies, and in sixth grade there were one or two bullies. One of them, especially, for quite a while, took the greatest delight in picking on me from behind me. Finally, eventually out on the playground, I decided this was enough, and so, even though I was small, I confronted him, he turned around and left. From then on things were okay. No, I loved school, I would get involved in the activities, especially from eighth grade on to high school. My mother hired a teacher to teach us how to dance, so we became very popular at parties. [laughter]

SH: Now, in the family, you are the oldest, and then, brothers and sisters?

MC: I'm the oldest. I have two brothers and two sisters. Only two are living now, my younger brother and my youngest sister.

SH: Did your brothers and sisters have any difficulty making the adjustment?

MC: No, because they were much younger, you see. I was twelve and the next one down was ten and that would have been in a much lower grade. It's very simple to integrate into the lower grades.

SH: What about the cousin who was your tutor? Did she come back to the States with you?

MC: Thelma Perry came back with us. She became a part of the family. She was a wonderful teacher. She lived with us in Beachwood for a while, and when she married. She and her husband continued to live in Beachwood.

WC: Going back to when you lived in Colombia, did you speak English or Spanish at home?

MC: Both.

WC: And coming to the United States, did you have a hard time adjusting to the language? Was it different than what you knew?

MC: Not so, because there was enough of a cosmopolitan mixing between guests who came and went and our association with the grandparents so that the English we spoke in Colombia was pretty much the same English that was spoken in the United States.

WC: Did you have a hard time adjusting to the lifestyle from living in the plantation, and then, coming to Toms River?

MC: Very much so. You know there were people next door, people all around us. The fact that we could get on the bus and go to school, was very different than getting on a mule and going somewhere. [laughter] It took a lot, but, you know, young people are very adjustable. They acclimate quite quickly.

SH: Did you notice a change in the food or anything like that?

MC: Oh, yes, and I miss it. I love fried platanos, yuca, malanga, mangos and all those good things. In fact, today one of our pleasures here in Lewes is that Super Fresh is carrying a lot of these tropical items: platanos, mangos, and avocados.

SH: Your father was an ornithologist and also studied their lice. What was his study there? Did that continue in the U.S. or was that something that he started in Colombia?

MC: No, this is something he started in college actually. He had a professor who was very interested in bird lice and then started working with him, and became very fond of the little critters. So from that time on, he continued. On all of his expeditions he would collect specimens of the bird lice, put them into little vials of alcohol and take them back; and then worked out the systematics, their relationships and names.

SH: Did he have a lab setup where he did this or an office or study? How did he preserve this material?

MC: Yes, when he was collecting he simply put them in vials and sealed them very tightly so the alcohol wouldn't evaporate. On the plantation, in the big house that he built for us, a big square building with two floors and behind a wing that went out with the kitchen, the pantry, two bedrooms, one for us, all the children, and one for the maids; and then a store, then a little office for him and Mother off to one side. So, Mother, mostly, Mother kept the store and they kept all the little things that the workers might need, cloth, safety pins and threads, safety pins, all of those things. She had a dispensing window on the side of the building and at a set time she would be there, and people would come and buy whatever they needed. To the side of that, was where Dad kept his financial accounts for the plantation and so on. He had a desk, a microscope and the little tools that he needed for processing the bird lice. He would take the lice out of the alcohol and put them through a clearing solution, I think it was xylol, that totally dehydrated them. Then he mounted them on slides, in a resin type medium, under a cover glass and spread it out, and this way the specimens are very clearly visible under the microscope. He kept up a continuing communication with colleagues all over the world who were also studying bird lice. They were, I have forgotten, four or five.

SH: Really? Now, were the birds that he collected preserved in some fashion?

MC: Yes. What we did, and I say "we" because in 1934 and 1935 I spent nine months with him collecting in Bolivia on his first expedition there. First we shot the birds. I should say by explanation that in those days the only way to study birds was to kill them, unfortunately. Of course, today you are not allowed to kill birds. You take pictures of them. You net them with nets and then release them and it is very different, but in those days shooting was the only way we had of collecting specimens. So then we skinned the birds with a scalpel, slit down the belly, open up the bird, peeled the skin back and remove all the flesh from the bones and the skull, leaving nothing but the skeleton and the skin. Then, we powdered the skin on the inside with alum, which is a stringent, and causes the skin to shrink and dry. Then we stuffed the interior with cotton, very carefully, so the bird retained its shape with eyes and brain space filled. Then, we sewed the belly, put the bird in a little cone and dried it either in the sun or in a little drying oven. Thereafter in museums they have to very carefully maintain the birds in closed cabinets to be sure that the insects are kept out.

SH: When he would get such a collection, he would ship that to the States?

MC: Then he shipped to the museums: the Smithsonian, to the Academy of Natural and Sciences, the Pittsburg Museum, and museums in California. He was very well known. In fact, he was considered one of the outstanding bird collectors of his time.

WC: When you moved to the United States, did your grandparents stay in Colombia?

MC: Yes. That was the most difficult parting we ever had. It was really a very sad time as they stayed.

WC: What happened to your plantation, did you sell it?

MC: We sold it to our grandparents who made it one big plantation.

SH: We talked about the Depression and how that affected your father's ability to find a job. Were there other evidences that you noticed of the Depression in Beachwood and in the area where you lived?

MC: Oh, my, yes, everywhere. Products that we couldn't get as easily, and people out of employment, In a cultural sense, everybody was worried about finances and jobs. Oh, it was very obvious.

SH: Was Beachwood in a more agricultural area of New Jersey would you say?

MC: It was really a little suburb of Toms River. It was only a mile away and it was just a series of little streets and houses, one small area at the crossroads on the road between Toms River and Atlantic City. At the crossroads, there was a store, a laundry, a doctor's office and a post office.

SH: You talked about being a good student, were there any other activities that you became involved in that you perhaps had not participated in, in Colombia? Any sports or ...

MC: Oh, yes, I got very active. I was always very social, and ended up being class president in the junior and senior year and enjoyed it. I was never particularly athletic so the best I could do in high school was to be the manager of the baseball team. I decided I really should do something. I was also active in music, in the glee club. Singing.

SH: What instruments did you play?

MC: None, only vocal.

SH: Were you involved in church at all?

MC: Yes, (and before we leave the school) I was especially interested in English and writing and biology, so, it was a perfect background for subjects that I've taken up since.

SH: Were you at that point, in junior high and high school determined to go to college?

MC: Oh, yes.

SH: Was that something you were expected to do?

MC: That's right, because Dad went. Mother was not too much of a scholar, Dad definitely was. I would go with him to the museum in Philadelphia and see what they were doing so that, I think, it was just sort of understood that I would go to college.

SH: You said it took a year before there was an opening at the museum for your father, what then was his title? I mean, I understand he's still collecting, but what was his occupation?

MC: Then he became assistant curator in the department of ornithology.

SH: How often did he go on field trips then, collecting, after that?

MC: He continued. He had two major sets of expeditions, the first set was a four to Peru. The Academy raised funds for him to go down, and he hired an assistant and took off into the interior. He was beautifully organized for camping, taking the necessary equipment with him. After that, there were three to Bolivia. The one that I went on with him was the first one to Bolivia and it was a wonderful experience.

SH: How does one go about setting this up? Is everything taken care of by your father as far as the transportation and so forth?

MC: Oh, yes. He planned all of that, the ship passage, obtaining the necessary paper work at the consulates, the entrance papers, and visiting all the necessary legal offices to obtain permission to collect in the country and to take the collections out of the country. Yes, he was very detailed. It was very demanding.

SH: Were you able, or was he able, to go and visit the grandparents at all on your trip?

MC: As time went on the plantations, Dad and Granddad did not seem to get along very well. We never could quite figure out what the difference was, they're very different, one was an engineer, one was a scientist. They were on friendly terms, but on stand-off terms. When we came to the States the grandparents visited us. We had some lovely visits with them. Mother was very devoted to her parents so she kept in close touch with them.

SH: When you went to Bolivia, did you get an opportunity to go on down to Colombia then?

MC: No. That was '34 or '35 and I didn't get back to Colombia until the '80s. This was after I was along in my career.

WC: How did you decide you wanted to come to Rutgers?

MC: Good question. During the expedition in Bolivia collecting birds I was persuaded, not persuaded really, convinced because my experiences with Dad were so positive and so pleasant, that I guessed ornithology was the thing that I should pursue. I had learned that Rutgers had a Doctor and Mrs. Leon Hausman, an ornithologists, and so it was very logical to go there. It's a State University and we didn't have much money. I did get the munificent sum of \$300.00 scholarship from Toms River High School. I wrote from Bolivia to Dr. Clothier, the president of the university, and explained that I wanted go to Rutgers. He very kindly responded, I still have the letter. But when I got to Rutgers I learned, to my dismay, that Drs. Hausman weren't taking students anymore. But in the meantime, I felt so stimulated by my botany professor, who taught the general course the first year, and my zoology professor, who taught the general course the

second year, and became so enamored of what they were doing, that I said, “Well, it seems to me invertebrates are just as interesting as birds, if not more so.” So, I gradually shifted into the study of mollusks, which was the major subject of my major, Professor Thurlow C. Nelson.

WC: Dr. Carriker, what did you do during the summers in between grades? Did you have a job, did you have any hobbies? Was there anybody in high school who mentored you?

MC: This is while I was going to college?

WC: High school.

MC: While I was going to high school. I was very active in Scouting all my early years. I worked my way up from Tenderfoot to Assistant Scoutmaster and Eagle, and I became involved in Camp Burton-at-Allaire, which was a wonderful Boy Scout camp in New Jersey. I started out as a counselor for a tent group, and then went on to become a nature counselor, and from that I went into life saving and swimming instruction. By that time, it was time to make a decision, whether I was going off to graduate school or not. As much as I loved working with the Scouts I really had to make a decision. So I decided to go to graduate school, and then once I got into graduate school, I started working for Thurlow Nelson down on the New Jersey bays, on the houseboat. The first summer I researched the oyster drill, and later summers worked on the distribution of hard clam larvae.

SH: Now, Nelson was at Rutgers?

MC: He was the chairman of zoology at Rutgers, and his father before him, famous oyster biologist was also Julius Nelson. Julius started the oyster program. He would take oyster trips from New Brunswick cross to Camden. Then take the train to Camden and then to South Jersey. There he would borrow a little boat and go out and pail up water from the surface water of little creeks, and pass the water through filter paper to collect the oyster larvae. This is how he discovered something about their distribution and seasonal distribution of the larvae.

SH: Was there a research vessel?

MC: Nothing. This is why he would go to Tuckerton and walk across the marsh, borrow a little boat from one of the oystermen, row around, take his water samples, and go back to Rutgers and study them.

SH: Now, did you help him on any of these trips?

MC: This, of course, was way before my time, this was Julius a pioneer. When I came along, Thurlow Nelson had already been very active. He followed in his father’s footsteps doing research on oyster culture in New Jersey estuaries, and he had had a houseboat, *Cynthia*, constructed. He had me live on the houseboat and do the sampling and the study. I had a little laboratory at the back of the houseboat, the front part was a little kitchen, dinette, two bunk beds, and so forth. After I was married, my wife Meriel (McAllister) went with me. She lived in the houseboat with me for two summers or so there and our children started coming, we now have

four children. With the first child Eric it was not too bad on the houseboat because they could be controlled, but then the second child Bruce came along. He just paid no attention to water. He was not afraid, he just walked right off into the creek, so, my wife decided, "Enough of that." So, she stayed in New Brunswick where we were living and I would drive back and forth weekends during the summertime. The details of this are all in *Vista Nieve*, where the story is complete.

SH: That is wonderful. When you finished at Rutgers it was in 1939 and you were very involved with your sciences. Were you aware of what was going on in Europe as far as the clouds of World War II?

MC: Very, very much so. I was very concerned about it. My folks, by this time my mother had divorced my father, and she and her second husband, who was just fine by the way, the second marriage, my father married a second time as well, which was beautiful for both of them. They made out okay. Anyway, they were very concerned. So when I went to graduate school Madison, Wisconsin in biology, things were rumbling. Just as I was graduating, I had just gotten my PhD degree, I had a little missive from the Army, in those days, you know, it was mandatory enlistment. Well, I didn't want to go in the Army so I quickly turned around and enlisted in the Navy. I was able to make the Navy before the Army got me because I thought that was much more reasonable, in terms of my background in marine biology. So, I joined the Navy, went to training schools at Harvard, Fort Skyler, and Miami, where my wife was with me. We had married by that time. Then I was shipped to Adak on a little patrol ship. There were five officers and about sixty men, just a little putter, and our duty, up in the Aleutian Chain around Adak, and Hitu was to look for submarines. By that time the Japanese had been driven away from the Aleutian chain and there were no submarines. The only thing we ever got to ping on was a whale. So, that was an interesting experience. I roomed with the skipper in his stateroom. I had the upper bunk and he had the lower one, and I had one little desk and he had another one, and before I went up, being very science conscious, I had asked one of my professors at Rutgers what I could do to help science. He was studying the systematic relationship of invertebrates by blood sera, using blood samples. So, he said, "You can collect some blood for me." So, he dutifully sent me the supplies to collect blood samples.

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SH: Please continue.

MC: With the help of one of my radar men, a seaman who also liked the rambling on the seashore, we went along the shore and we collected chitons. There was a big chiton there, mussels and other mollusks, and brought them back to the cabin. I preceded to bleed them at the my desk. I had put filter paper in a glass funnel in a little vial to collect the serum. I cut the sea squirt, or whatever I was getting blood from, and, boy, the skipper would look at me, "Oh, you character, you," but he tolerated it.

SH: Was it a number or did you have a name for your ship?

MC: It was the PC 780. After I finished my training in Miami, I was flown out to Seattle and up to the islands. I'll never forget as the plane approached Adak, it was late spring and the snows were melting, and I looked down, and here, across the naval establishment, it had made a mess of things, roads and structures, it was just so messy. I looked down and as I was new in the Navy, all I had was naval training so I really didn't know how to behave. I came up the gangplank and I saluted appropriately, I had been taught to do that. The sailor at the gangplank took me and introduced me to the captain and he got me started. It was a very strange experience because I've never been militarily interested, and then to find myself suddenly in an environment of strict routines. It was difficult, but you soon adjust.

SH: Did this captain maintain very strict protocol?

MC: Yes, even on a small ship. Nothing like on a carrier or a destroyer, of course, but even so, it was informal, particularly come time for leave. We would be at Adak outside of the officers' club. Most of us would go in just to get drunk, drunker than you could imagine, on beer. I'll never forget coming back one night, the tidal amplitude over there is very steep, some fifteen feet or so, and we came back from the officers' club, and the PC 780 was way down here. One of the men just walked off the dock. [laughter] How he didn't kill himself I don't know, perhaps he was so relaxed from beer that he managed.

SH: He did manage to get into the boat.

MC: He didn't land in the water, that's right. One of my friends on the shore was a botanist. I was a frustrated zoologist and he was a frustrated botanist, so we would get together and go on field trips. In the late spring the Aleutian Chains are just gorgeous, covered with low blue and yellow flowering plants of the all vegetation out there, even the trees are just little stumpy things. So he and I would go out walking through these beautiful fields, and he would teach me the plants so that was very worthwhile. On the ship things didn't always go peacefully. At one time we had a big squabble between the skipper and the executive officer, one of those repeatable events and, of course, the crew and the officers ganged up, one side and the other, so we were about equally split. Things got so bad that the admiral had to send a vice admiral aboard to find out what was going on. Finally the skipper was transferred elsewhere and we got a new skipper. That was an interesting experience.

SH: Had you been on the side of the exec?

MC: I was on the side of the executive officer, yes, who became skipper later on. The skipper was irascible; he was unreasonable in the way he treated the men and the routines.

SH: Had he come into the Navy Reserve, or was he regular Navy?

MC: I went in as a Naval Reserve.

SH: Was the skipper regular Navy or was he part of the Reserve Officer Corps?

MC: The skipper was a Naval Reserve also, as I recall.

SH: Where were most of the men from that were on your ship?

MC: All over the United States. I don't remember specifics.

WC: So, do you keep in contact with any of them?

MC: No. Once we left, it was a strange thing. When our ship left the Aleutian Chain, it went to Hawaii, and we patrolled pineapple barges from one island to the other. Of course, the men were just outrages, "Here I am in the war and patrolling pineapple barges," oh, what a letdown. After that I was assigned to a destroyer, and I chased the destroyer from one place to the other, never catching up with it. I ended up in the Philippines in a jeep ride all the way up the Philippine Chain to Manila, where my points came due and I was able to leave the service. What I was getting to in answer is that when you're in the service you get so fed up, at least I did, not being interested in military things, that you're just so glad to get out. I had no qualms about just cutting off the service completely. I didn't want to have anything to do with it anymore, and I'm glad, because I didn't want to take time out from my profession for further training. If an emergency had come, of course, that would be something else.

SH: With the GI Bill, were you able to ever apply any of that to further your education?

MC: No, because by then I had my PhD. I had finished my formal education. From there, I went to Rutgers, where I joined the faculty at Rutgers.

SH: How did that come to be? You talked about writing from Bolivia to President Clothier to come as a student, how did you come back to Rutgers then?

MC: Let's see, well, from the Bolivian expedition, I came back and went to college at Rutgers. While there I worked summers on the houseboat, and then went to graduate school out in Madison, Wisconsin, where I received a research fellowship, full four years, which was wonderful. The Navy experience came was right after graduate school. When I came out of the Navy, my wife had been staying with Aunt Marie Carriker in Berkley, and our first son was born before I got to the beach.

SH: Really?

MC: I had checked ahead on jobs, and in those days it was pretty easy to get out. I had three possibilities, but somehow, Jon Nelson prevailed on me to come back to Rutgers. So, I came back to Rutgers, which was not a good idea, mostly because the faculty found it hard to think of me as a faculty member. I had been an undergraduate there, you see. So, that made it a little difficult. So, the Navy experience was right after I got my PhD degree.

SH: You got your PhD in Wisconsin.

MC: In Wisconsin, yes, and then went into the Navy. I spent the thirty months in the high Pacific seas, then, came back to Rutgers, yes.

SH: Had there been any talk while you were in the military about the invasion of Japan, and what your role might be in that?

MC: Very little because in those days, there was very little news, you know, we got some on the ship's radio, only of major events but it was almost like being in a blank.

SH: What were your duties on the ship?

MC: I started out as an ensign and ended up as a lieutenant, junior grade, as a deck officer in charge of supply, communications, I think that was it, and standing deck watch. I didn't stay in the Navy long enough to learn to dock a ship, although I did all the time underway because we would stand watch, but the skipper never quite trusted me. I'm just as glad. Can you imagine coming up to a dock?

SH: You talked about the tide and around Adak. Were there other experiences that you saw in the Navy that you'd like to relate for the tape? Any other stories or interesting happenings in that part of your life?

MC: I got deathly seasick on the ship. Every time I smelled the diesel fuel from the engine room, right away, I'd start getting nauseated. That was a real problem, and the only time that I could escape that was to go back and lie on my back in my bunk. Then everything was fine. So, up on deck, my radar man, first class, he was the same, it was always a race to see who would get to the side of the ship first. Then one other time, another very serious incident took place. We were in around the Hawaiian Islands and one day as I came up on deck, we were out, underway, I saw that all these men were up vomiting over the side and lying on the deck. I couldn't imagine what in the world was going on. But apparently a lot of the people had been poisoned by something in the food. That was a real emergency so we hastened back to port. Fortunately, we didn't lose anybody.

WC: Do you remember where you were or what your reaction was to Pearl Harbor when you heard about it?

MC: Let's see, the Pearl Harbor event was what year?

SH: December '41, December 7th. You would have been at Madison.

MC: I would have been, yes. I was out already and heard the news on the radio. That was something, especially, since our ship had spent about a month in Pearl Harbor. We had enjoyed Honolulu so much, that was tragedy.

SH: Were you already in the military when Pearl Harbor happened?

MC: '41, let's see what it is. Did I say anything there? [Editor's note: Dr. Carriker is referring to the pre-interview survey for the Rutgers Oral History Archives.]

SH: We've ascertained that you were at Madison when Pearl Harbor happened and your decision to go ahead and enlist in the Navy. From the Aleutians then you went down to Hawaii, to Pearl Harbor so you saw the aftermath of the attack. What do you remember seeing there and at the Philippines?

MC: Nothing more than the devastation. Being on duty on the ship we didn't do much sightseeing, whether it was off-limits, I don't remember, it could have been a possibility.

SH: When you were in Hawaii, were you still collecting specimens for the professor that you had been collecting for?

MC: No, that stopped in the Aleutian Chain. Most of our duty in Hawaii, other than the occasional pineapple barge, was cruising back and forth in front of Pearl Harbor to be sure that no submarines were trying to come in.

SH: You never went into Pearl Harbor.

MC: No.

SH: What about supplies and mail and other things? Were you well supplied? You talked about the tragedy of the poisoned food.

MC: It was amazing how well the personnel were treated that way. But there would be lapses of time in between ships, when the mail got out. I can remember using the radarman's typewriter, all capitals because in those days the code was used so frequently I would write Scottie [Dr. Carriker's wife] at home. I spent hours in there. It's a good diversion, you know.

SH: One question we do need to ask is how did you meet Mrs. Carriker?

MC: Yes, Scottie (Meriel) and I met in Madison, Wisconsin. She was there working for her master's in languages, Spanish mostly, and we were introduced by a friend, started dating, and that was the beginning.

SH: Where was she from?

MC: She's from Virginia, born and bred a Virginian.

SH: She'd been allowed to go to the wild University of Wisconsin.

MC: Yes.

SH: You married before the war, since you told me she was in Berkley.

MC: Yes, we went to Richmond, Virginia. Scottie's uncle, was a minister, a tiny little man, wonderful person, he married us.

SH: Did she finish her work at Madison?

MC: She finished her master's degree.

SH: You said that your first son was born before you got back to California.

MC: Back to Berkeley, yes.

SH: Had you been able to get any leaves at any time between Alaska and then going to Hawaii?

MC: No, because we were way out in the Pacific. In those days transportation was not what it is today.

SH: You said you were able to fly from Florida to Seattle, you were one of the lucky ones that didn't have to take the trains across the country.

MC: Yes, that's right, but then we did take the train back, Scottie and our little boy.

SH: How old was he then?

MC: Just a little tyke, I forgotten, just one or two months.

SH: Where did you stay when you first came back then to Rutgers?

MC: Rutgers had a series of prefabs near the gymnasium. The ball-field near the stadium, just south of the stadium, there were a whole set of these temporary structures. They were quite comfortable, really, and we enjoyed it because there were other couples there in the same position as ourselves, just coming in to the University. Our wives got along very nicely, visiting in and out of each other's kitchens. It was a very pleasant experience.

SH: Was Clothier still the president then?

MC: Clothier was president.

SH: How long did you stay at Rutgers as a professor?

MC: Eight years.

SH: In '46? Okay, so, you left then in 1954.

MC: Yes, that's right.

SH: What changes did you see in the University?

MC: At Rutgers? Greater size, more students, but still the same parade of students back and forth between Douglass and the campus.

SH: I wondered when you were there, Rutgers was such a small university.

MC: About five thousand students..

WC: During the Depression?

SH: Rutgers was very small during the Depression, and then, you came back after the war and now all the GI Bill students are coming back. How did you see the accommodations that were made for them? Was there any trouble between veterans and those who were coming right out of high school to college, or did they just seem to meld?

MC: I don't recall of any problems at all. I do recall, since I was teaching the veterans, the wonderful experience that we had with the veterans, because most of them were very serious, intent on getting an education. It was quite a contrast to some of the younger, less mature, students who were more intent on a good time and fraternity parties.

SH: When you were at Rutgers, did you belong to a fraternity?

MC: I never joined the fraternity. I think mostly because of my low financial status, also the idea just didn't seem to appeal to me. I was so busy so to speak and I was so involved and enjoyed the work in zoology, which was fine. Also I had made good friends in the dormitory. One of my really best friends on the faculty was Ben [Benjamin C.] Blackburn. I don't know if you ever heard of him? He was in horticulture in the Ag School and he and I got along very well, and our secretary Miss Davison, in New Jersey Hall, was a great friend of Barbara Brace over in Winants who handled the cafeterias. So, the four of us formed a group, Barbara Brace, Miss Davison, Benjamin Blackburn, and I, just friends, and we went to restaurants together, picnics, and that sort of thing. It was nice, we had a good time.

SH: When you were an undergraduate living at Rutgers, you said you were on the fourth floor of Winants? Were there any stories that we should hear about?

MC: Other than [what] I already told you?

SH: We need to put them on tape.

MC: Oh, that's right, yes. Well, I think one dramatic one. My roommate was Elmer Hill, who came from the farm country, was a farmer's son from South Jersey, and not quite attuned to, shall I say, the practices of society-at-large, so the other students kind of picked on him, I'm afraid, but he was a wonderful roommate. One time we were both away. We had gone home for a weekend. My mother was living in Belmar at the time so I went down there frequently, and Elmer had gone to Blackwood to his home. When we came back, we couldn't open our dorm room door, the door was jammed shut. The students had gotten in through the windows, they had gone around the outside, came into our room, the windows were not locked, and piled the furniture against the door so we couldn't get in. [laughter] So, we had to go out and repeat the

process in reverse. Oh, my, so that was a bit, but that was just one of the pranks, you know, we just laughed it off.

SH: Was there a form of initiation for freshmen, incoming freshmen, when you came in to Rutgers?

MC: Not in Winants. Students pretty much came and went on their own. We did have groups who would get together and have pranks, like I told you about getting a tube of toothpaste, opening the cap, putting the tube at the top of the stairs and jumping on it. Then the toothpaste would go squirting down the steps. The other one I told you about, where they collect bushels of newspapers and fragment the paper into little pieces, and then stood on the top of the 4th floor, and just sprayed these down the balustrade, all four flights down. You can imagine how popular the students were with the janitors.

WC: You mentioned on your pre-interview survey that you had two brothers in the military. Were they in the military at the same time that you were?

MC: My brother Howard was in the Army.

WC: Did you have any contact with them?

MC: We kept in touch, yes indeed, because Dick, our youngest brother was in training for medicine in the Army. They put him through a wonderful medical training. So he got a good education, specialized in ophthalmology, and then went on into the private practice.

WC: Did they use the GI Bill to further their education?

MC: I'm sorry.

WC: Did they take advantage of the GI Bill?

MC: Oh, yes. Yes, Howard went into art. He's a superb artist becoming an expert in, I'm not sure what they call it, where you take a colored photograph and touch it up, change it, put a beer can here, or another item there. In those days that was a big thing. Of course, now it's all changed, it is computerized.

SH: We talked about mandatory chapel earlier, over lunch. What do you remember about that?

MC: Yes, I never objected to that because, as I mentioned to you, I've always been interested in spiritual, religious matter, and enjoyed the sermons and the music, and the atmosphere of the Kirkpatrick Chapel on the Rutgers campus, it is a lovely place.

SH: Do you have any Demarest stories or Dean Metzger stories?

MC: The only thing I can recall of Dean Metzger, is about Barbara Brace. She and the Dean didn't always get things just quite together. She would complain about him to me. But the Dean was very nice to me.

SH: Was Dr. Demarest there as well?

MC: Let's see, he was, what was his position? He was chairman all the time that I was there.

SH: No, is this Nelson you're talking about?

MC: Nelson, yes. A very kindly, thoughtful person, who loved the students. He was very strict with his secretary, Judy Davison, so we heard a lot about Nelson from Judy in our meetings. Thurlow never typed, everything was written in long-hand. He was a prolific letter-writer so she had, of course, to type all of his material. So, that created a bit of friction. When I first went to Rutgers, Thurlow, very kindly, space was at a premium in good old New Jersey Hall let me have a corner of his laboratory at the back of his lab. I cleared the window space and cleaned up the desk. I've always, as you can see here, like the things clean and orderly. I made myself at home in my little corner, and looking around, there were tables in the middle just covered with papers, specimen, jars, pickled specimen, dry specimens, and everything you can think of. Well, that bothered me, and I thought, "I can do a good turn." So, I started cleaning things up and putting things in a little bit more order. At first he thought it was fine and complimented me, but then he couldn't find things, and so he eventually said, "Well, Mel, I think it would be better for you to have your own office." So, then, believe it or not, they gave me my old room up in the fourth floor of Winants. It became my office. I couldn't believe it. So, I set myself up there and it worked fine. I would interview students there and use the little backroom to do research. I was collecting specimens because I was teaching a course in marine ecology, which required that the students learn about the different organisms, the invertebrates and the plants that I collected, and I needed a place to store these, and, believe it or not, the only place that I could find, or they could find for me, was a little closet under the stairway, coming in the front of New Jersey Hall from the street. The steps had cracks so the dust would fall down. So, here I was, a young instructor with not much power for position or space, so I got some brown paper and tacked that up against the stairs to keep the dust from falling down, put in a table, and that became my collections storage place. For research I used the greenhouse. We had a greenhouse by then and that was very nice because I could set up aquariums, house my oyster drills, and in the aquariums and study them out there.

SH: Now, this was on the Ag campus?

MC: No, this was behind New Jersey Hall.

SH: Oh, that's where the greenhouse was?

MC: Yes, there was a botany and a zoology greenhouse, end to end, out back of New Jersey Hall. Besides teaching, I was in charge of the general zoology laboratories, and we must have had fifteen or so different laboratories. It was quite a chore, and money was so scarce. We had a little room, which was our supply room, and it had just enough glassware for the different

laboratories. Of course, the researchers and the students, didn't have enough, so they'd come in, they'd pilfer some, it was a constant fight to keep stuff in the little room. One day, aside from all of these, I went in there and everything seemed to be in order. I came back out to the lab, and then one of the students went in, she came out screaming, "snake." She had gone in and a little python must have curled up on a chair, they're harmless. She was petrified, so I went in, got the snake, and put it in a box. The local fruit store downtown, when they got big bunches of bananas they occasionally would find a snake in the banana bunch, so they'd call me up and they'd give us the snakes. I love the turtles, snakes, and lizards, in fact, I taught a course in Rutgers on herpetology. Anyway, another time, we got a much bigger python and I set it up in a big aquarium up in the window, where the students could study it. One day the snake got out. Under the first floor of New Jersey Hall, there were big spaces, very deep, mostly filled with water, and this snake was crawling around down there with the rats and cockroaches. We had the biggest cockroaches you can ever imagine. It was a wonderful place for zoology, snakes and rats. But it was difficult because in those days, we didn't have much money for equipment. Fortunately, for the faculty, the Bureau of Biological Research, Jim [James B.] Allison and Dr. [William H.] Cole, in physiology, had somehow organized this. They had gotten grants and had refinished this second storey, and we had a really, quite a passable biochemistry laboratory. This was the only place that many of our faculty had to go to do research. So, it was pretty rough. You know, I look around here [Editor's note: Dr. Carriker is referring to his office in the University of Delaware in Lewes, Delaware] and I see the wonderful facilities that we have, and I'm sure that now Rutgers has wonderful facilities that are now available. People just have no idea of what in the early days, the students and professors, had struggled for equipment, supplies, and funds.

SH: Did that have anything to do with your decision to then leave Rutgers?

MC: I suspect in part. I think mostly though, I had received an invitation from the University of North Carolina. They were looking for a person to head up their marine biology program. They had a man there by the name of Charles Jenner, who was handling both the limnology and the marine biology, which they felt should be separated. The offer was appealing. They offered a good salary. I had been at Rutgers eight years, and the fact that I was an undergraduate still worked on me a little bit. I'm glad I went because I think it was good for me, and Chapel Hill was a great experience. The department of zoology was very different from the Rutgers group. We had a wonderful group in New Jersey Hall, the botanists, the zoologists, the physiologists, and the bacteriologists in the four departments all worked very closely together. It was a very nice relationship. When I got to Chapel Hill it was very different, a lot of knifing, back-knifing, and I just never really felt at home there. So, some unpleasanties occurred. I talk about this in the book exactly [*Vista Nieve*] what happened, so I left, and, fortunately one of my dear friends, John Glude, in what became the National Marine Fisheries Service, had been after me to join the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, it was the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries then, and they were putting up a new lab at Oxford, Maryland, a beautiful new lab, and he hired me. I accepted with some trepidation because I still felt that the "ivory towers" were a little above the government positions, which of course, was all nonsense. I got there and they asked me to set up a program to study of the enemies and diseases of shellfish. John promised to get a good staff of four or five people to work on the different aspects of the shellfish problem. MSX was a big problem at that time. Well, with all of John Glude's very best efforts, he wasn't able to get the support that I

needed. At that time, I received an invitation from the Marine Biological Lab in Woods Hole to consider organizing a new program in systematics and ecology. Even though the position was soft money, and I knew by that time what it meant to keep getting soft money, the opportunity and the challenge of going to a famous laboratory persuaded me and I took it the job. We managed it for ten years. It was a rough task, but a wonderful program.

WC: Was your wife working at the time?

MC: She was. All the while she taught. She did a lot of teaching. When we went to Chapel Hill, to the University of North Carolina, she taught part-time in the public school, and then when we got to Oxford, she taught only part-time. Then as the children got older she went to teaching full-time.

SH: So, you left Woods Hole and came then to the University of Delaware?

MC: Yes, we terminated the systematics-ecology program at the end of the tenth year, and then the Marine Biological Laboratory kept me on, paying full expenses, for one year, as a visiting investigator to give me chance to look around for a new position. So, I got busy, as one does, writing to friends, and three opportunities opened up. One was at the University of California in LA, working in a laboratory out on the island off the coast. I went out, actually visited it, but I wasn't too impressed with the opportunity. Another one was with the University of South Carolina, and that was very interesting but for two things, one was that the lab was six hours drive away from the main campus, and the other was that the marine biologists and the biologist weren't getting along. I said, "Oh, oh, that's not good." You could sense this as you look at these places. Then, one of my friends, who was on the faculty here [University of Delaware in Lewes, Delaware], Frank Daiber. Frank who became a director the marine program. Eventually, and by this time Dean Gaither had become dean of the college of marine studies. So, Frank Daiber put my hat in the ring. I sent in my credentials, and I came to Lewes for an interview and they hired me on the spot. [Laughter] I was so surprised. I didn't have to give a lecture, which was very nice. But getting back into academia was hard because I had been away from teaching eleven years. The college was wonderful to me; all they asked me to do was to teach one course malacology, my favorite subject. But I hadn't taught malacology for a long, long time. So, that first semester I had to get busy, and at that time we didn't have this lovely facility here. We were all over across Canary Creek in a temporary building. The only place I could find for a laboratory was over near the beach where in an old, old building, and we had no aquaria or running seawater. I wanted to emphasize the live animals. I started to get familiar with all the area where the animals where, setup a temporary aquarium with simulated running water, that is, a big jug of water above, and water trickling down into the aquarium. I had a wonderful first class of about twenty students, which in a way was too bad. I wish I'd had a much smaller class to get started with. By the next year it tapered down to about a dozen, that was much better. The college people were very kind, very helpful, and very nice. It didn't take me long to get adjusted.

SH: That is great. Of all the research that you have done, and so varied over so many years, what are you most proud of?

MC: Most productive?

SH: Or most proud of.

MC: Most proud of. I think the oyster drills. The behavior and the ecology of the predatory aspects of the oyster drill. That led me to the one that was really my favorite, and that was to try to find out more about how it is that the oyster drill, which drills into the shell of the oyster, and what impact the drilling has on the composition of the shell. That got me into scanning electron microscopy and, with colleagues, into the chemistry of the whole process. We spent just many, many months working on that, and came up with some beautiful scanning micrographs, especially of the larval shells of the oyster. By that time, we had a facility at the college and we were able to raise oyster larvae in the laboratory. We had no electron microscope in Lewes, so I had to go to the main campus. Geology had one and a very sweet lady, Japanese, I believe, handled the microscope. She would operate it for me and help me mount the specimens, and sit there with me while we took pictures. All those file boxes you see up there on the shelf those are all scanning micrographs, negatives and prints. That, was my favorite and most productive research. I used to have two lab spaces across the hall, much bigger spaces than this office. When I retired they gave me this office, which is very nice.

SH: For the record Dr. Carriker retired in 1985.

MC: '85, yes, that's right. One of the things that intrigued me was what shell of the oyster, and what is in the shell of the oyster that allows an oyster drill penetrate it. We were able to get samples of other minerals, calcite, aragonite, and so forth and make little slivers, polish them interpose them. We'd get the drill to drill through the shell of the oyster almost to the meat on the other side, then we interposed this little piece of mineral. The snail would then put his accessory boring organ down on this, and make an imprint, or not, and then we did the scanning record after that. That was great fun.

SH: It sounds like a fantastic career and very productive and I thank you so much for taking time to do this for us. Wendy, do you have any other questions?

MC: It's been a real pleasure and you two are such good interviewers, just wonderful.

SH: Before we end the interview, over lunch, we talked about a very good friend of yours, Carl Woodward, and his family and how you had met as an undergraduate.

MC: This is as undergraduates at Rutgers. He was a year behind me.

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

WC: This continues an interview with Dr. Melbourne Carriker on October 29th in Lewes, Delaware, with Wendy Castillo and Sandra Stewart Holyoak.

SH: You were talking about Dr. Carl Woodward.

MC: About Carl Woodward, yes. For some reason, we hit it off very well, we became fast friends. Since Dr. Woodward, Carl's father, he later became secretary of the university. [Editor's Note: Dr. Carl R. Woodward, Sr., served as Secretary of Rutgers University from 1936 to 1941. He left Rutgers that year to become president of the University of Rhode Island, a position he held until 1958.] Carl would invite me over to their home for meals, after all, I the poor undergraduate. So, I spent many pleasant hours dining with him and just socializing, Carl and I would also meet on the campus and have such good times together; and we still keep in touch. We write Christmas letters to each other.

SH: Is there anyone else on campus that you met on Rutgers, either as an undergraduate or as a faculty member?

MC: That I keep up with? The Richard McCormicks, of course, we kept up with them when I was on the Rutgers faculty on the faculty and since.

SH: Would you retell the story?

MC: Yes, because the Carrikers and the McCormicks lived in Piscataway on, I've forgotten the name of the street there ...

SH: River Road?

MC: Yes, River Road, just a few houses separated from each other. Scottie, my wife, and Kathy McCormick became fast friends. Our children were growing up at about the same ages and so they had lots to share. Then, at that time, I was hired by J. Richard Nelson, who was the president of the Elsworth Oyster Company, to carry out some research on Gardiner's Island, off of the end of Long Island Sound. The island had a big old barn of a place where we stayed. Especially interesting to us was the fact that up on the second floor, at the head of steps, was a little room for the slaves (this used to be a passageway for slaves coming North) and a little place for a checker board had been cut in the floor. People passing through spent their time playing checkers. And there were cobwebs on the ceiling, and the plaster was falling. It was a wonderful place especially for our four sons: Eric, Bruce, Neal, and Rob. Just a wonderful place. There were ducks and geese and deer, on the island, and a little steer named Blackie. Blackie was very friendly. My wife Scottie came back to the house one day and there was a voice, of her older son, trying to get Blackie into the house. Well, fortunately, Blackie resisted. It was the kind of place where there were a lot of mice running around. Scottie had the kitchen at one end, and then down at the other end there was a place where, these little mice would come out and play while we were having our meals. The boys were entranced, but Scottie was not very happy. So, it was great fun, and a wonderful experience.

SH: You had said that the McCormicks came to visit.

MC: That's right. We would have guests come to visit us from time to time. One weekend, we had the McCormicks visit us, and they were such a delight. One day we took the group to a pond on the upper side of the island for a picnic. The tide was going out and the crabs were coming in the inlet. We lit a fire by the side of the creek. Young Dick was out with a net, trying to catch a

crab, and Dick Senior wanted young Dick to do something, I've forgotten what it was. But young Dick refused, so Dick Senior took a kick at him with one foot, fell over, hit a stone and hurt himself pretty badly. [laughter] Dick Senior was just furious. We next saw young Dick sneaking off into the bushes. That was a wonderful event. We never forget that one.

SH: Do you get up to campus often? Do you come up to Rutgers at all?

MC: Not recently. I used to get up occasionally to some of the alumni get-togethers. I think the last time I went to a reunion was, I don't know, five or six years ago, but so few people from my class came out by that time, it didn't seem that interesting to me.

SH: We thank you so much for recalling these stories about Rutgers and your experiences as an important scientist and all of this. It has been a delight. Thank you so much.

MC: Thank you, Sandra, I really enjoyed you and Wendy here too and thank you so much for taking the time to come here.

SH: Thank you.

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

Reviewed by Wendy Castillo 11/30/04

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 12/5/04

Reviewed by Melbourne Romaine Carriker 1/16/05