

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN F. CRANE

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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Kurt Piehler: This is an interview with Judge John F. Crane on September 22, 1994 at Rutgers University, New Brunswick with Kurt Piehler and ...

Curtis Tao: Curtis Tao

Natalie Kosonocky: and Natalie Kosonocky

KP: I would like to begin by asking a few questions about your parents. Your father came from France?

John F. Crane: That's right.

KP: Why did he come to the United States?

JC: Well, he first came to Canada, and lived in Nova Scotia with relatives and moved down to New York looking for work. He met my mother, in Nova Scotia, and they became married in New York and I was born in New York City.

KP: Did they live in the French-speaking community of Nova Scotia?

JC: No. No. There are French-speaking communities in Nova Scotia. No. ... They lived in Halifax and a small fishing village called Ketch Harbor, which was about eighteen to twenty miles away from Halifax.

KP: Do you know why he came to Nova Scotia first and not the United States?

JC: No.

KP: He was a paint chemist?

JC: Yes.

KP: Do you know where he worked?

JC: Yeah, he worked in Jersey City for a company called Gillespie Paint and Varnish, and he worked for some time at a company in Carlstadt, New Jersey called W.J. Sutcliffe. I'm not sure if it's still in existence.

KP: He was a paint chemist.

JC: Yeah, formulating paint formulas and supervising the manufacture of paints and varnishes, that kind of thing.

KP: You grew up in Wood Ridge, New Jersey.

JC: That's right.

KP: When did your parents move out of New York City? How old were you, or do you even have any memory of it?

JC: We lived for a short time in Detroit, Michigan, and I have almost no recollection of that. I think I was about four years old, but moved back to the East and eventually they bought a house in Wood Ridge, New Jersey, and I became enrolled in the local public schools and went through the Wood Ridge grammar school and then eventually to Rutherford High School.

KP: Your father did not serve in the First World War. Was he already married at the time of the war?

JC: ... I can't answer that truthfully. ... I'm not sure of the date of the marriage. ... My guess is that it was somewhere around 1918.

KP: Did your father ever talk about World War I?

JC: I have very little recollection of that.

KP: What kind of community was Wood Ridge when you were growing up?

JC: It was basically a bedroom community for people working in Jersey City and New York. People at that time commuted on the Erie Railroad into Jersey City or Hoboken, from which they got ferries to go to New York. There was a large truck farm in the town which was bought up by developers and in a very short time turned into small houses, which were sold at relatively cheap prices and that doubled or tripled the population of the town very quickly.

KP: Growing up, were most of the students in your elementary school, were they first generation Americans or were they older generations of Americans?

JC: I would say a large percent of them were first generation Americans. I remember a lot of the kids whose mothers and fathers spoke Italian at home. Some of them spoke German at home, and the adjacent town was Carlstadt, which in the preceding generation the public schools were taught in the German language. So there was a large German presence around. There was also large Italian presence. ... When the new development opened up there were a lot of Irish who moved in from Jersey City. Very few Jews, the few Jews operated mom and pop candy stores. I remember only one black family that I knew. [As] far as religions were concerned, there were a wide variety of Christian-type religions represented ... Catholics, various Protestant denominations, ... a relatively homogenous group. I don't remember any strong controversies based on ethnic, or religious, or cultural differences.

KP: Do you have any memory of the Ku Klux Klan near your community when you were growing up?

JC: I heard my parents speak about a march that they told me was held in the town, at night, and I probably was kept in the house along with the other children, but they told about it and they told me that they thought they recognized one of the participants, and that was all I knew about it, really.

KP: You went to Rutherford High School. What kind of high school was Rutherford?

JC: Rutherford was a middle-class community, economically consisting mostly of people who ... commuted to New York City for their employment. Some of them professional people, business people, and I liked Rutherford High School. I thought it was on a pretty good level, academically. I was fortunate enough to get into a college preparatory track, and I studied some languages: Latin, French, and I thought it was pretty good. ...

KP: Did you know that when you went to Rutherford High School that you would be going to college?

JC: Yeah, I had it in mind. ... From I guess the time I was in high school, I aspired to be a lawyer.

KP: Why the legal profession? I know it's hard to think back.

JC: Well, I remember there was a young man who lived a block away from me, and he was the son of German immigrants who ran a delicatessen, and he became a lawyer, and ... he became sort of a role model for me and I liked the idea. I was always involved in school politics of a sort, you know ... whatever they called the council, and I remember at one point when I was in junior high school in Wood Ridge, I was the chief of the junior police and that was kind of fun. (laughter) But I was always involved in some kind of, what nowadays would be called political activity. So ... that helped to steer me toward law.

KP: What was your parents' attitude towards education and your going to college? Did they want you to go to college?

JC: Oh yeah. They approved of it. ... They just couldn't support me economically.

KP: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

JC: I have one brother and one sister.

KP: Did they go to college?

JC: My sister did not, my brother did some college and eventually he was elected ... as a member of the governing body in Paramus, New Jersey, where he lived, and then he became a member of the state legislature in New Jersey. And ... he was interested in electronics, and he worked for IT&T, and he took a lot of technical courses through them. ... But through his political activities he eventually got connected with representing a professional group of CPA's ... in their problems

that they had with legislators around the country, so in a sense, he was a sort of a professional secretary of the organization, plus a part-time lobbyist for them when needed, [or] when called upon. But I was the only one who got a degree or any advanced degree.

KP: Initially, you went to Bergen Community College, a junior college?

JC: Yes. Bergen County Junior College.

KP: And you had applied to Rutgers, you had mentioned?

JC: I had applied for a scholarship to Rutgers about the time I graduated from high school, and I heard nothing. So, I enrolled at Bergen County Community College and took a law preparatory course.

KP: The Bergen Community College. How large was it when you went there?

JC: Small. A couple of hundred students.

KP: And how old was it? How long had it been in existence?

JC: I would say probably not more than ten years. It started out in the Y.M.C.A. in Hackensack and then as time went on it bought property that had been a private estate along the Hackensack River in Teaneck, which is now part of Fairleigh Dickinson University. It was eventually taken over by Fairleigh Dickinson University.

KP: And when you did not hear from Rutgers, was Bergen your only choice, in a sense? Did you try to go to other schools?

JC: Well, it was close by. I didn't look much further, because of economic restrictions. If I went to New York, ... I'd be faced with commutation expenses [and] so forth. So, I just took what was close and available, and it wasn't too bad a choice.

KP: How would you sort of compare the teaching you got at Bergen compared to what you would eventually get at Rutgers?

JC: Well, generally speaking, I thought the teaching was better, but I don't mean to put down the teaching at Bergen Junior College, because some of it was very good.

KP: So when you came to Rutgers, you had done a year of law school at John Marshall?

JC: That's right.

KP: You thought you were adequately prepared. ...

JC: To come to Rutgers?

KP: To come to Rutgers.

JC: Yeah, yeah. I felt that I probably should have been here to begin with. (laughter) And if I had had a totally free choice I would have, but economic circumstances just pushed me in a different direction. ... When I got the scholarship, which I think covered tuition, I was happy about that and [I] made a decision, because my choices were should I continue with John Marshall College of Law, which, ... I knew was not a first-quality law school. It was taught by practicing lawyers who were good lawyers, but they weren't legal scholars of the caliber that you might find at N.Y.U. or Columbia, although a lot of people who graduated from Bergen Junior College had very successful careers at the law in New Jersey, and when I first went there I thought that was what I was going to do.

KP: How did the Great Depression affect your family?

JC: Severely. There were times when my father did not have employment. I remember times when they couldn't pay the local real estate taxes, and fortunately our next door neighbor was the president of the bank and he was generous enough to loan my father money so he could pay the taxes and eventually they got paid off. It was tough going, and I remember that I worked part-time at various things and made a little money. [I] bought my own clothes, so I guess I've been working since I was about twelve years old, in one way or another.

KP: What kind of jobs did you have?

JC: Well, I remember delivering circulars ... for a rug cleaning business. After my father got the job in Carlstadt, I worked summers there, doing some office work and some other work, so I saved that money, used that for my expenses.

CT: You said that you worked for the N.Y.A. Were you going to school?

JC: Yes. That was National Youth Administration, and that was one of those depression programs designed to help students at college. ... I had a relatively menial job. I had to sweep out classrooms every afternoon after the classes were over and clean out the girls' restroom and the men's restroom, (laughter) that kind of thing, all for fifteen dollars a month.

CT: You began that N.Y.A. job at Bergen Community?

JC: Yeah, I think so. I think I probably did that for two years while I was there.

CT: Were a lot of your friends there in the same program?

JC: Not many of them. No.

KP: What circumstances led to your getting involved with N.Y.A.?

JC: I needed money and I asked, "How can I get some money?" Somebody pointed me to N.Y.A., so I filed an application and was accepted, and I was happy to have the fifteen dollars a month. That helped to pay for lunch money, ... and commutation expenses, and things like that. You could buy a pretty good man's suit for fifteen dollars, in those days.

NK: Do you remember what the tuition was about? Around?

JC: I don't know. A couple a hundred dollars, I guess.

CT: Tell us again the circumstances that led to you coming to Rutgers.

JC: While I was at John Marshall Law School in, let me see, 1939 or early 1940, I received a letter that I had been awarded a scholarship to Rutgers that would pay my tuition, and then I had to make a decision as to whether I would stay at John Marshall Law School, or because if I stayed there I could have graduated in another two years, and in 1942 I would have been admitted to the Bar, I would have been able to take the Bar exam. I could have been admitted the Bar and started practicing law and earning a livelihood. On the other hand, I considered coming to Rutgers and getting what I considered to be a better, more complete, education, and then, possibly, applying to a more prestigious law school, and I decided in favor of coming to Rutgers, and I'm glad I did.

KP: What was the reputation of Rutgers?

JC: Well, Rutgers had a very good reputation, academically and otherwise.

CT: When you first came here, what was your first reaction when you saw the campus?

JC: Well, I liked the campus, and I made friends rather quickly, and I scrounged around and looked for a way to make some money, so I wouldn't go hungry, so I got a job in a restaurant at the corner of Easton Avenue, and whatever the street is ...

NK: Hamilton?

JC: Hamilton, I guess. Yeah. Across from the Corner Tavern.

CT: Okay, that's Somerset Street.

JC: Somerset? Okay. ... And I think I worked about fifteen hours a week. Three hours a day, five days a week, for which I got my meals. I didn't get any cash, but I had my N.Y.A. job with which I paid my room rent in a rooming house on Easton Avenue at three dollars a week, so ... I could pick up a few other jobs around now and then. I played the saxophone in the band, and once in a while I played with dance groups and what not and made a few dollars doing that. So, things were tight economically my first year here, but I made it all right.

CT: What other types of jobs did you hold while you were at school at Rutgers?

JC: At the end of ... my first year here, that would have been around, I guess, 1941, just before the war started, there was the Lend-Lease Program going into effect, there was an armament build-up in this country, and the Mack Manufacturing Company, which was on the outskirts of New Brunswick, began to build parts for tanks and build tanks. They didn't build the tanks here, but they made parts for them, and they were hiring people ... to be machine operators, so I went out there and applied for a job and I got a job as a machine operator, and in my senior year, part of the time, I worked twelve hours a night at 75 cents an hour. ... When I first started they were on a two-shift basis, so I had to work twelve hours a night and go to school in the daytime, which was a little difficult, because there wasn't much time left to sleep. (laughter) And once in a while I would fall asleep in class, but that gave me money! (laughter)

CT: Was it common for a lot of students to work?

JC: They didn't work that much, and sometime along that year the plant was unionized, and the shifts were broken down to three eight-hour shifts, so I only had an eight-hour shift to work at night, so I worked the second shift from four to midnight, and I had time to sleep. That wasn't too bad. (laughter) But it still was kinda [bad]. We worked seven days a week, so it was kinda difficult to have any dates, so I had made friends with a young woman from New Jersey College for Women, ... and we used to meet for breakfast. (laughter) So that worked out okay, sometimes for lunch, but mostly for breakfast, so that was okay. I eventually married her.

KP: You mentioned that the Mack plant you worked at was organized. Which union unionized it?

JC: It was the United Auto Workers. I became a member and ... there was a strike for awhile, and the company tried to form a company union which I did not join. I joined the U.A.W., and the U.A.W. got wages increased and got the shifts rearranged so that you could work an eight-hour shift, instead of a twelve-hour shift.

KP: You must have been exhausted after twelve hours.

JC: Yeah. That's why I fell asleep in class. (laughter)

CT: Did you date much at Rutgers, other than your wife?

JC: Occasionally, but mostly with the lady I married, Janet Beyer, who graduated from New Jersey College for Women in 1943.

CT: How did people meet one another?

JC: I met her through a friend that I had known when I was in high school and playing with jazz bands while I was going to high school, and this woman, who's a friend of mine right now until this time, lived in Dumont and she was a singer who sang with one of the bands that I became

acquainted with and she was a friend of Janet and a student at New Jersey College for Women. That's how I met her.

CT: And so I guess a lot of the men here at Rutgers College always took the hike up the hill to New Jersey College for Women?

JC: Yeah, yeah.

CT: How were your classes?

JC: I enjoyed the classes. The most vivid recollection I have is the constitutional law course, which was, I thought, very well taught, and another course I took was ... a political science course that had to do with various devices that were used to manage programs that were established by legislatures, and that I found very interesting. That was a political science course. And when I graduated from college, I think I had an offer to come to work for the federal government in Washington at something like, I don't know, 2,200 dollars a year, something like that, which I wasn't interested in. Because, by that time, the war was on, and I had decided I wanted to go into the navy, even though I could have stayed on at the Mack truck plant, because I had status that entitled me to deferment from the draft, because of the fact that I was a machine operator in a war industry.

CT: What was the class of 1942's make-up? How big was the class?

JC: I don't know, I'll take a guess and say maybe at the most 200, 300. It was not a big class.

CT: Were there a lot of first generation students?

JC: Yeah. Quite a few.

CT: Can you recall the make-up?

JC: Well, quite similar to what I described as the people who lived in Wood Ridge, where I lived. There were a number of Italian kids, Irish kids, German [kids]. Very few blacks.

CT: Do you remember how many?

JC: Well, I remember one in particular, Harry Hazelwood, who was a friend of mine. He became a judge in New Jersey. A few others who were football players. There was a Jewish fraternity on campus. It may still be here, I don't know.

KP: What did you think of having to go to chapel, to required chapel?

JC: I thought it was fun. ... There was ... a chaplain, we used to call him "Weeping Willie" because he got so emotionally involved in his sermons. (laughter) He would burst into tears. ... I didn't object to that. No, I didn't mind it at all. [referring to required chapel] After all, in public

school you know, ... I had learned the Lord's Prayer, I had sung ... the Thanksgiving songs, and the Christmas songs, those were all part of the culture in which I grew up. And nobody objected, and nobody felt that they were being put upon to participate in what essentially was a religious activity. But things have changed nowadays. No, I didn't mind going to chapel.

KP: What did you think of Dean Metzger? Did you have any experiences with him?

JC: I don't remember him too well. I think, generally speaking, the opinion of the administration was good. The students were not bomb throwers; they were not agitators. There was only one woman that I knew of that was an agitator. She was in my constitutional law class, and she used to hold rallies. At that time the Russians weren't involved ... in the war, and she was an anti-war person, and a communist, and people used to come and listen to her, but hardly anybody paid much attention to what she had to say. There was not a radical movement on campus. Although when I lived in the rooming house on Easton Avenue, I do remember that one of the graduate students there offered to introduce me to the communists on campus, if I wished to be ... so introduced. (laughter) And I used to think it odd that he would have a meeting with a so-called girlfriend once a week, who would drive down from I don't know where. But she never came into the house and they used to sit in the car outside and talk. (laughter) Of course, now, having been exposed to the way the communists operated in those days, I suppose they were afraid of being taped. That was the only evidence that I saw that there was any radical communist activity on campus.

KP: What about the approach of World War II? Was there any interventionist sentiment on campus, or any anti-interventionist activity?

JC: The only activity against intervention that I remember is this young woman who was a communist. ... There probably was, but I don't recall it. My most vivid recollection was, of course, the news of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. I was then a resident of the Raritan Club, and we heard it on the radio. And almost to a man, everyone made some kind of arrangements to get into a military service. There was no hesitation on anyone's part, and even though I had deferment status, shortly thereafter, I went downtown and went to the navy recruiting office and signed up for the navy.

CT: What type of social environment was there while you were here at Rutgers? What did the people do here?

JC: Saturday night they went to The Corner Tavern and drank beer. (laughter)

NK: Things haven't changed much.

JC: They went to football games, they walked across to New Jersey College for Women and dated girls over there, went to movies once in a while. Eventually I was invited to become a member of the Raritan Club, which was a non-Greek fraternity, and I lived there. That was a good experience. It was good for me, because I had a good place to live, and the members were friendly and they would have parties now and then. ... That was good activity.

CT: Do you have any long-standing friends from your college days?

JC: I see Tom Conte occasionally, who was my roommate at the Raritan Club. I attended the fiftieth reunion and saw quite a few of the people there. Ronnie Jarvis was a member of the Raritan Club, and I don't see him or communicate with him often, but we had a very pleasant chat at the fiftieth reunion. I'm not an active alumnus in the sense that I go to a lot of meetings, but ... I keep on making contributions and things like that, and I've put a clause in my will making a contribution to Rutgers. I feel that's important.

CT: How was school spirit? Did a lot of students go to football games?

JC: Yeah, I played in the band. ... But, when I was working it was a little difficult to schedule, but, ... schedule permitting, I would play in the band.

NK: You played the saxophone?

JC: Well, in the band I played clarinet. Sometimes a small E-flat clarinet, which was in a high register. Are you a musician?

CT: Used to be. I played the violin.

JC: Oh. okay.

CT: Did you play the saxophone in any type of jazz group?

JC: Yeah, yeah.

CT: How was that?

JC: Oh, that was fun. I enjoyed that. I always enjoyed that.

KP: When did you take up the saxophone?

JC: When I was in high school. I played in the high school band. ... One day I remember one of my friends saying, "Hey, come on down! They're giving out instruments. Do you want to learn how to play an instrument?" So I went with him and they gave me a clarinet. (laughter)

NK: So that is when you started to play?

JC: ... That's what I started to play, whatever they gave me. Another guy got a soprano saxophone. That's what he played.

CT: Were there any other issues of concern of the day amongst the students?

JC: Well, people here were pretty serious about making a living ... I would say that ... you asked about whether there was any anti-interventionist activity. I don't recall any. I think the general attitude was that we owed something to England and to civilization, to try to contribute to stop the aggression of Germany, and I don't recall any pro-German activity on campus, although I was aware of activities of the German-American Bund in New Jersey and that ... they were a political force, which in my opinion ... was not strong. But they were a concern. There's no evidence of any activity of that kind on campus.

CT: Once the war broke out, did that become the main issue on the minds of most students?

JC: The war?

CT: Yes.

JC: Yes. ... I don't know what the percentage is, but my impression was that, I would say, a very high percentage of the student body participated in some wartime activity. ... If not membership in the armed forces, in some other way.

CT: The students. Did they get married before they went off to war?

JC: I was married in June 1943, after I had been commissioned and after I had been assigned to the Lexington, and when I was about to depart for the Pacific. I imagine a lot of others had made similar arrangements.

CT: What was the attitude towards sex around the campus?

JC: Guarded. Limited. Not at all like it is today. People were very careful. There were very few people that were openly, sexually, active. That was my impression.

CT: There were not many men who boasted about it?

JC: Well, yeah, there were some, some of which we took with a few grains of salt. (laughter)

CT: Did men and women take classes together?

JC: Yeah. There were a few women who would come over from the Jersey College for Women and attend some of the classes. There were not large numbers of them. And I don't remember any men going to New Jersey College for Women to take courses. There may have been, but I was not aware of it. Probably commonplace now. Is it?

NK: Yeah. We all travel everywhere.

KP: You didn't have R.O.T.C. at Bergen Junior College?

JC: No.

CT: When you came to Rutgers did you have to take R.O.T.C.? At Rutgers, the first two years, was mandatory.

JC: Well, I was a junior, so I guess I escaped it.

KP: Yeah. Had you thought of taking R.O.T.C.?

JC: No. Never gave it a thought.

KP: You chose the navy. Why the navy as opposed to the army or army air force?

JC: Well, ... without having had much experience with boats, I had sort of a romantic idea about being at sea, and that appealed to me. ... I ... also had an impression that living on a ship was a lot more pleasant than trudging along and sleeping in trenches and foxholes, and things like that, so that appealed to me.

KP: Why do you think you had that impression? Was it from films you had watched, or from your reading about the war?

JC: I guess reading about it. ... I had had some contact with people who were in the army around here. There were army bases all over the place. Fort Dix and ... there was one out in ...

KP: Camp Kilmer?

JC: Yeah, Camp Kilmer.

KP: You joined the navy and you participated in the V-7 Program?

JC: Yeah, I guess that's what it was called. ... I was sworn in New York City and put on a train and sent to South Bend, Indiana at Notre Dame, and I spent the first 30 days there, it was sort of a boot camp status, learning how to march, and all of that kind of stuff, which had very little to do with operating a ship. But it was, I suppose, an exercise ... in creating an attitude of being willing to follow orders. I think that's probably the psychology of doing that sort of thing.

CT: Did you join the navy right out of college?

JC: I joined the navy, I think I was probably still a student; I think I probably had not yet graduated. ... But they weren't ready to take me, so I stayed on at Rutgers after I graduated for the summer, ... because I was going in the navy and had heard that navigation was based on spherical trigonometry. I took a course in spherical trigonometry, which was tough going.

KP: I read that you also played in Larry Kays Orchestra at Hasbrouck Heights. Do you have any recollection of that?

JC: Yeah. How'd you know that?

KP: It was in your alumni file.

JC: Oh, okay. Yeah, ... that was while I was in high school and while I was at Bergen Junior College. It was a nine or ten-piece orchestra and we used to play high school and college proms and things like that, and for club dances. It was a lot of fun.

KP: Had you ever thought of maybe becoming a musician as a career?

JC: No, I knew somehow or other that practicing law would be a little more lucrative, a little steadier than being a musician. (laughter)

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JC: Recently, I've taken up the saxophone again and this summer I played ... with the Brewster Town Band in Brewster, Massachusetts, playing Sousa marches and some concert pieces. And some of the marches were ones that I played while I was in high school, and that I'd played while I was here with the Rutgers band. ... It was nice. I was amazed that I could pick it up ... and still play. [It] took a while to get used to it, ... but I still am glad I made the choice, ... because I know that ... I was a first-rate lawyer and judge. I know I would not have made a first-rate musician. (laughter)

KP: Had you traveled much before you had gone to South Bend as part of the navy?

JC: No.

KP: What is the farthest south and north and west you had travelled or lived? Do you have any recollections of the trips? You said, you had lived in Detroit, Michigan.

JC: Yeah, but I have very little recollection of that. The farthest north I got was my family drove to Nova Scotia one summer, and I stayed up there at the house of my grandfather in Ketch Harbor. That's the farthest north we got. We used to go down to the Jersey shore in the summertime. While I was at college here, I remember going to Washington D.C. a couple of times, with classmates. I remember going with Tom Conte to visit his brother while he was at Georgetown.

KP: How would you travel?

JC: Car.

KP: Did you ever hitchhike at all while you were in college?

JC: Some, not much.

KP: The V-7 program, from what I have read, was a very demanding program, with a lot of people who basically washed out, especially the boot camp. How many people in your class made it through boot camp?

JC: I don't remember.

KP: How effective was your training in making you an officer?

JC: There were some aspects of it that were good, I thought. Navigation was particularly helpful, I thought. Without any hands-on experience anything about ship handling was really not meaningful. The rest of it was a lot of teaching you to sort of fall in line and follow regulations and follow procedures and don't rock the boat and do as you're told and that sort of thing. And, my experiences when I finally got on a ship was that a lot of people did very well by improvising ways of doing things, ... and the officers who were most disliked and despised were the ones that who insisted on doing everything by the book, and made life uncomfortable for a lot of people. As for example, there was one fellow who was what we used to call a "ring twister," meaning he graduated from Annapolis, and he had the distinction of taking the course at Annapolis for five years rather than the customary four. But ... his way of getting along in life was by doing everything by the book. Because he didn't know any other way, and he couldn't think of any other way, and he was not the kind of a person who could improvise on-the-spot ways of doing things, and he had this hang-up about black socks. Sailors were supposed to wear black socks, and a lot of them complained that the black socks made their feet hurt, and they used to wear white socks, and he would put them on report, and they'd get called up, you know, before the captain for wearing white socks, you know. That's the kind of thing we used to call "chicken shit." (laughter) He was not a popular man among the enlisted men, and I had the problem that I was his junior officer, and so I had to tread kind of a thin line and not antagonize him too much, but try to get along with the men and try to get them to do whatever tasks were assigned to us, ... and try to avoid getting them put on the report. It was reported to me at one time that one of the men somehow or other one time got a hold of a gun and was stalking him and fortunately was stopped, but, you know, it could have been a bad situation. Fortunately, eventually, he was transferred to a battleship, where his style of command was more in fashion.

KP: Really, so battleships were the most rigorous in terms of following regulations?

JC: Yeah.

KP: Was that because the people in naval aviation were young turks who were out to prove something?

JC: I would say the aviators were ... like the army air force people, you know, ... they wore their uniforms in a different way from the other people. In the army air force they always took out the metal band that held the cap in position, and they liked a "crushed" look on the cap. (laughter) Well, the naval aviators didn't quite do that, but ... they were respected, because they were brave, they took more risks than most of the rest of us, and they were pretty damned important, so they were given sort of leeway, and that did rub off, to some extent. It was also ... the destroyer

people were also a lot more relaxed. It was commonplace to see a destroyer sailor with a heavy beard; it was not commonplace to see a sailor on my ship with a beard. They didn't have, they didn't wear beards.

KP: When going through training what type of ship would you have liked to have had? Did you get the type of ship you wanted, or did you have any say in it, or any thoughts?

JC: I don't recall having had any specific desire for a particular kind of a ship. ... There was kind of a status of assignments. An assignment to a carrier was a pretty good assignment; an assignment to a battleship would have been a pretty good assignment; assignment to a cruiser would have been pretty good; assignment to a destroyer would have been a pretty good assignment; an assignment to one of these light carriers that were converted liberty ships, would not have been recognized as quite as prestigious an assignment; an assignment to a landing ship--that was not very good. And I remember one guy on my ship who was from Yale, and ... he had been an All-American center from Yale. He was a pretty good football player, and he was kind of a rambunctious guy. He came into the navy through the reserve training program they had at Yale, so he didn't go through one of these V-7 programs, he came directly from Yale and was commissioned. And, but, you know, being a football player and a little bit of a ... freewheeling, comedian, kind of a guy, he came down to the wardroom one day, the wardroom is where the officers ate, and gathered, and socialized, and talked, and what-not. And they had a bulletin there, and they had an announcement, an ALLNAV, which meant it went to all navy personnel, and it announced that certain officers who had certain months of experience, and were United States Naval Reserve, because there was a distinction in status between USN and USNR. USN meant you were from the academy, and ... virtually all of the commanding officers, all of the admirals, all of the captains of the big ships were USN.

KP: So it was not like the army, where you can literally rise through the ranks and ...

JC: No.

KP: There was a real distinction made ...

JC A real distinction. And this ALLNAV said, that they would accept a limited number of ... USNR officers who wished to transfer to USN. And this guy, whose nickname was "Beefy," turned around and announced to the assembled officers, "Gee, did you see this ALLNAV? Now I don't know whether to go USN or W.P.A." (laughter) Next thing we heard he was off the ship, he was sent to Quantico, Virginia, and assigned to a landing ship. That is the pits, you know that? But he distinguished himself, you know? ... He was a good officer, but he was the kind of guy that the "ring twisters" couldn't abide, you know, the guys that had to follow the navy regs, literally.

KP: Your ship was a new ship?

JC: Yes.

KP: And you were with it from the beginning.

JC: Yes.

KP: What was the original corps of officers, who were they? How many Annapolis and how many non-Annapolis?

JC: The upper echelons were for the most part Annapolis people; there were a few who had gone into the war early and who had moved up to lieutenant junior grade or lieutenant who were made division officers, and the lower echelon officers were all USNR.

KP: Among the officers, did you have any mustangs, enlisted men who had come up through the ranks?

JC: Yes. We had one, and ... he was an ensign. ... He had spent his entire time in the navy, and he had moved up and was commissioned. He was in charge of the flight deck, and he was of vital importance. He was ... not an Annapolis man. ... He came up through the ranks, and he was a very practical guy, a kind of a guy who would do a lot of swearing, salty language. And, but the kids that worked for him, I called them kids then. Some of them were kids, some of them were really thirteen, fourteen years old and somebody lied to get them in the navy, you know. But, he knew how to keep these kids moving, because, simultaneously, on occasion, you would be launching planes from catapults and landing them. And, in preparation for a big strike you would have to coordinate getting the planes from the hangar deck up to the flight deck and launching them, and that was this fellow's specialty. ... There were some warrant officers, a couple of warrant officers aboard. Now, they were not commissioned, but they had the ... rank of warrant officer is above a chief petty officer, but below an ensign. We had a couple of them. One of them was a torpedo man, and he was an interesting guy, because he was the only man on the ship who had access to the 200 proof grain alcohol, which we had at one Christmas Eve. Awful stuff.

KP: What did you all do to pass the time?

JC: Played cards, swapped stories, wrote letters. There were occasions when we were at a place where it could practically be done where we went ashore somewhere. The navy had a strange way of doing things. Every ship carried a supply of beer, but you couldn't drink anything alcoholic on the ship, so you would come into a place like, I remember being at Ulithi Atoll. And, they would send a recreation party ashore, and every person going ashore would be issued two cans of beer. Well, as soon as you got ashore there was a little trading going on, you know, the guys that didn't want to drink the beer would sell it to the guys that wanted to drink more than two cans of beer, and, but that kind of thing went on, yeah. We would play softball games and stuff like that when we got ashore, and if there were SeaBees there you'd buy things from the SeaBees, war souvenirs. I never bought any of that stuff, but, some of the guys did.

KP: Did you ever trade equipment for food?

JC: Any what?

KP: Any equipment. I know that people on smaller crafts, for a carton of eggs they got a jeep. Or was the aircraft carrier too big for that?

JC: No, but I do recall that one time they returned an aviator to us who had crashed, and they had rescued him, and they returned him to us, and we gave them ten gallons of ice cream. (laughter) See, they didn't have ice cream on the destroyers, but we, on our ship, we had the facility of being able to make ice cream. It was made from powder, you know, the instant kind of stuff, and it wasn't very good, but, you know, if you hadn't had any ice cream for a year, it was great! (laughter) Yeah.

CT: Where were your best shore leaves?

JC: Pearl Harbor, San Francisco, Seattle. But there was one time when we left Pearl Harbor, and we didn't get back to Pearl Harbor for thirteen months. We were underway most of the time, except going ashore at Ulithi or some place like that, and that was because, we had the capacity of taking new ... fighter groups and bomber groups by air, you know, you'd fly the old ones off and fly the new ones on. We could take aviation gasoline ... and fuel for the engines from tankers, and, in turn, we would refuel destroyers, we would get ... well, we usually went to, after we occupied Guam and Saipan, we would go to Guam and Saipan to get ammunition and bombs and large items of food and things of that sort, but we used to get food and things like that from supply ships while we were underway, and still sailing in a zig-zag formation to avoid submarines. We didn't like that. It was during that time that somebody said, "There's a Russian supply ship in the formation." And then a rumor spread that the Russians carry women on their ships! Everybody got their binoculars out to look and see if they could see a woman. (laughter)

KP: So when you went on shore leave after thirteen months, were there any indigenous people on the islands you stopped at?

JC: I didn't see any. In Ulithi they had been moved off, I believe. I don't know where they were taken, but we saw none there. I never encountered any.

KP: So when you went on shore leave you mainly saw American marines or army or navy?

JC: Right, right.

KP: Except when you were in Hawaii or San Francisco, or Washington.

JC: That's right. Yeah.

KP: What did you think of Hawaii; what was your impression of Hawaii?

JC: I liked it. And I went back there a couple of years ago, back to Pearl Harbor, and was surprised to see that about half of the tourists were Japanese, including at the Arizona Memorial.

KP: Were you surprised at how much Hawaii had developed since you had been there?

JC: Yes, yes. ... I wouldn't go back to stay in Waikiki again. It's just overdeveloped, too much. I would go to some of the other islands, but when I was in the navy it was the only island that we got to. ... But I ... did get to travel all around the island, and I thought it was very interesting, very nice.

KP: What was most striking for you?

JC: ... I was interested in and amazed to see that when I was there in the navy, even at that time, the ethnic make-up of the people; there were at that time a lot of Asians in Hawaii. A lot of Chinese, a lot of Japanese, a lot of Polynesians, and I would say, it's even more so now.

KP: Did you expect that diversity when you got out there?

JC: No. The first time, no I did not. Another thing I remember being surprised at, the barbers were women. I had never seen a woman barber. Now it's commonplace, relatively. In fact, I go to a woman barber, ... she doesn't call herself a barber, she calls herself a hair stylist. (laughter)

KP: What was the make-up of the crew? How many were regular navy, and how many were draftees or enlisted during the war?

JC: We didn't have any draftees, that I know of. I think they were all volunteers. It was pretty much an all-volunteer navy as I remember it. What was the make-up? I would say the officer corps was pretty much middle-class, American, recent college graduates, white. I saw no black officers or officers of Asian derivation. There was one group that was all black, and they were the mess attendants, who were assigned to wait on the tables in the wardroom, for the officers, and to sort of act as chamber persons, cleaning the officers' rooms, and I thought, I learned that many of them had been given that assignment under false pretenses. They had volunteered for the navy and weren't told what kind of assignment they were gonna get. Although a lot of them, besides that duty, were given gunnery posts. And I had some of them under my command, who manned 20 millimeter guns. ...

KP: Was this in addition to their duties as stewards?

JC: Yeah.

KP: So they'd be stewards, but then they would man other posts?

JC: Right, right. Everybody besides some kind of operational assignment had a battle station, and the battle station may have been a gunnery battle station, even though normally you did something else, worked in a kitchen, or whatever.

KP: What duties did stewards have at the gunnery stations?

JC: Well, to take care of the guns, to shoot them when told to open fire. (laughter)

KP: So they would actually man the guns?

JC: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

KP: What was the relationship between the black stewards mates, and the white sailors? Was there any tension?

JC: Yes. Not so much between the sailors and the stewards mates, but ... we had a lot of southern officers who were accustomed to speaking to black people in commanding, derogatory-type terms, and not in terms of politeness, and that irritated me. But, there wasn't much I could do about it, you know. These were people that grew up in Alabama, places like that, where that was the culture. But it was a matter of tension, and I remember at one point I was assigned to some kind of a duty in connection with stewards mates, and I don't remember exactly what it was, but I became friendly with the chief stewards mate, and he used to complain to me about these people ... who would speak harshly to his men. They didn't complain about doing the work, but ... they just didn't like to be shouted at in derogatory terms, and I don't blame them. It shouldn't have been done.

KP: Your captain, Captain Stumpf. What recollection do you have of him?

JC: He was very well liked by the men. He was a take-charge person. I remember when we got torpedoed, he came on the loudspeaker system and announced, this was a couple of hours later when things calmed down a little, but he made an announcement to the crew, and talked about the damage that had been caused, and the fact that several men had been killed, and that we were gonna try to get back to Pearl Harbor by using the engines to steer by, and then, he said, something like ... "I gotcha here and I'm gonna get you outa here, so let's all do our job."

KP: And that was the right thing to say at that time?

JC: Yeah, yeah.

KP: Do you have any other recollections of his leadership? Given the size of the ship, did you have very many dealings with him and what types of dealing would you have with him?

JC: Well, I stood deck watches, which meant that I was the officer in charge at the time, and ... many of the watches would be at night, and I would be the only commissioned officer awake, who was in charge of the ship. The captain was asleep, the admiral was asleep, and most of the other high-ranking officers were asleep. ... You know, when you're 23 years old, that's a hell of a responsibility. You got 3,000 men and millions of dollars worth of equipment, and all these bombs and airplanes and what not. It's pretty, pretty scary. I remember one time--this was when we were searching for destroyers that had been reported sunk in the typhoon--there were three destroyers that had been reported sunk in the typhoon, and we were searching for survivors or whatever we could find. And, every once in a while, one of the ships would pull out of

formation and move in a way that the rest of the formation wasn't moving, and you had to be aware of that. And, at this particular time, one of the destroyers, instead of going in the same direction that we were all going, turned around and came towards us, and it was a real black night, but we were, in my judgment, thousands of miles from any enemy ships or planes, and I turned on the truck lights. And this was contrary to general orders, because you weren't supposed to show any lights at all after dark. But I turned them on, because I didn't want that destroyer to hit us. I wanted to make sure that he knew where the hell we were, and I turned them out immediately, and the next day the captain gave me hell and said, "Why didn't I wake him?"

KP: That was something that you should have woken the captain for?

JC: Yeah, yeah. But I didn't. I just did what I thought I should have done under the circumstances, and I got called down for not awakening him and letting him make the decision. And who's right? I don't know.

CT: When was the first time you remember encountering the enemy?

JC: Time what?

CT: The first time you remember encountering the enemy?

JC: Well, I don't know. ... Let me take a look at the ...

KP: The first time you experienced enemy combat, were you scared or were you ...?

JC: Sure. Anybody's who's not scared is crazy, ... but ... the question that you have to ask yourself is even though you're scared are you gonna get control of yourself and do what you have to do. And I would say the large majority of people were able to overcome their fear and do the things that they had to do. I think probably the first time I saw any enemy action was on the way to Kwajelein. Kwajelein was an atoll out there in the Pacific and it had a fairly large air base, and it was important to neutralize it, and I do recall reports that there were enemy planes around, and I remember seeing one of them shot down from a distance; oh it was maybe fifteen, twenty miles. My battle station at that time was in the forward five-inch director, which was one of the highest places on the ship. So, I could see farther than most of the other people could see; I could see probably 30 miles.

KP: When you were at battle stations, how many men were you responsible for, and how many guns?

JC: Yeah, well, immediately I had a crew in the director. The director was a ... device that ... was ... armored-plated, and it was the control station from which the guns were operated. ... In the director I had, I think, three men, one of whom was a radar operator, another one ... operated elevation of the guns, another one operated the angle [of] the guns, and ... we had talkers who would send information down to a station in the plotting room, where they had a device about as big as this desk, which was a computer--a mechanical computer with all the clickety click, clunk

clunk-- and they would crank information into it, based upon either radar observations or visual observations, and the computer computed information to send to the gunners to give them the proper elevation and deflection to use to hit the targets. The director controlled two twin five-inch mounts, each of which had probably half a dozen men. In the plotting room there were about a dozen men. We also had two single five-inch guns on the port side, each of which had, oh maybe, four men ... who would load and fire the guns, and I don't remember, have I answered your question?

KP: Yes. One other question comes to mind because you had mentioned earlier, informally, that you went to gunnery school after you served three years as a gunnery officer. How much training had you gotten to be a gunnery officer and how much did you learn on the job? How dependent were you on your petty officers and your other enlisted men?

JC: Most of it, I learned on the job. There were book courses that we had and there were courses that some of the other officers gave. ... There was an officer of commander rank, who was a gunnery officer, and he was an Annapolis graduate. Not a flyer, I don't think; I'm not sure about that. So, most of it was on-the-job training.

KP: What is your most vivid memory of the navy? Is it combat?

JC: Yeah, I would say so. On this particular operation to Kwajalein we had launched a lot of planes during the early morning, and they attacked ... the air base at Kwajalein and did a lot of damage, but they hadn't destroyed all the airplanes, and late in the afternoon three torpedo planes came out, flying low, and I mean like about 50 feet off the water, and the reason they did that was because they would not be able to be detected by radar. And, all of us had recognition training to recognize foreign planes, enemy planes, as compared to our own planes. And I recognized these three airplanes as Japanese torpedo bombers. And they flew over the destroyers, nobody saw them, nobody noticed them. They flew over the cruisers, nobody noticed them. I called down to gunnery control and, ... "Request permission to open fire." No answer. So then, what the hell I'm gonna do, you know. So I said, I'm not gonna wait here until they drop their torpedoes, so without getting the order to open fire, I gave the order to open fire, and we opened fire, and we shot down the first two torpedo planes, and we damaged the third one, and the 40 mm mount that was below us finished it off.

... Because of that experience I was faced with the problem of, was I gonna be called down for not getting permission to open fire, or what was gonna happen? Well, ... my immediate superior, the ring twister fellow, who couldn't do anything but by the book, climbed up. ... I was second in command of that director, he was first in command, and he climbed up and said "Good shooting Crane." (laughter) So maybe that settled it, I don't know. But anyway, eventually the navy decided that they wouldn't court-martial me. They gave me a medal; so they gave me the Silver Star Medal, which I thought was, maybe, overrated for the circumstances, but, because all I thought I was doing was what I was supposed to do, and what I had be trained to do, and what I should have done under the circumstances. And that's the kind of a thing that happens when, sure, you're scared, but you gotta do what you're trained to do, otherwise, you know, it's gonna be a disaster.

CT: How close did the planes get?

JC: Maybe 50 yards, 100 yards.

KP: You mentioned your ship had taken on a torpedo attack.

JC: That same night, we were the subject of attack, and planes came out from Kwajalein, and they dropped flares, and we were silhouetted, and then we were under attack by what we called "Betty's." They were twin-engine aircraft that could launch torpedoes, and we did take a torpedo in the stern, which disabled the steering mechanism, and killed a few people down there, and there was an enlisted man who was in the navigation department who managed, by operating a hand control, to get the rudders amidships, so that we stopped going around in circles. But we were burning and before that, before he was able to get the rudder amidships, we were going around in circles, and we were burning leaving smoke, and these flares were in the air and we were, of course, open to additional attack, and the rest of the fleet had been told to get away from us, because we would have been the immediate subject of intensive attack, but the intensive attacks didn't happen. ... Maybe they didn't have any more airplanes, I don't know. But, we eventually were sent back to Pearl Harbor, and we had a destroyer escort, and we had hoped that we could be repaired in Pearl Harbor, but they didn't have the facilities or the equipment, or maybe the know-how, I'm not sure, but they sent us to Bremerton, which is near Seattle, so we were in Bremerton for a month or so.

KP: And you have fond memories of Bremerton?

JC: I liked being in Bremerton. It was ... interesting, and I liked being in Seattle. Seattle was an interesting city, and I'm going there again next month. I haven't been there since.

CT: You mentioned this point before?

JC: Pardon?

CT: How much information did the command actually let the sailors know? Did they tell them exactly what was the mission and where they were going?

JC: We would not get information until we got near where we were going to launch an attack and do our activities. There was always fear of somehow or other something leaking out. One of the things we had to do was to-- the officers all had to censor letters. And you couldn't talk about anything in operations, where you went. So we had scissors, we used to cut out these things. ... It was a pain in the neck, but some of it was interesting. ... I had forgotten about this, until I mentioned this censorship. We had some Indians aboard, some Navajo Indians. And they were good people. But they had strange names, like one's name was ... Sylvester Badcob, and he used to write letters to his sweetheart, Suzy Peaseed, and, you know, he used to try tell her where he was and what he was doing. This was the biggest event in his life, but we used to have to cut it out.

KP: Was it strange reading other people's mail?

JC: Yeah, yeah. But you get used to it, you know. You became acquainted with writing styles of people. I had never seen people put "ha-ha" in their letters, you know. They'd say something and then write "ha-ha." (laughter) People still do that? I guess they do.

KP: Yeah.

CT: Was there always a rumor mill among the sailors, in terms of where they were going?

JC: Oh yeah. Yeah, and in some ways they were pretty accurate.

KP: After an attack, or before or after any action, would attendance at religious services, chapel, go up? What was the attitude of men in general?

JC: I would say attendance at religious services was generally rather sparse. I would attend the Protestant services occasionally which, incidentally, were conducted by the Catholic priest, because the captain said, ... "He wouldn't allow more than one goddamn chaplain on his ship." (laughter) So the Catholic priest had to conduct the Jewish services, the Protestant services, and the Catholic services.

NK: The jack-of-all-trades.

JC: Yeah. And he had to stand at the quarter-deck when the men went ashore in Honolulu and were handed condoms as they left. He didn't like that too much, but he was there to observe.

KP: I have been told that chaplains also, when you came aboard, would check your luggage.

JC: Chaplains?

KP: Yeah, I think that might be on smaller ships, though.

JC: Not on my ship.

CT: Were there brothels at Pearl Harbor?

JC: Were there brothels at Pearl Harbor? Yes. I never saw them, but I was told about them. Yes, I don't know who operated them.

CT: Most of the men went to them?

JC: A lot of them did, and a good friend of mine who was out there, ... who was an officer on another ship, told me that his duty was to stand in line where all these men were lined up to go

into the brothel, and if they didn't ... have an erection they had to go to the back of the line, because they were only allowed three minutes. (laughter)

KP: Is there any other enemy action that you remember? You mentioned that you experienced Kamikaze attacks.

JC: Yes.

KP: How frightening was that?

JC: I think that was probably the most frightening, because you know that here's a human being that's gonna kill himself in order to damage your ship and maybe kill you, and that's really a frightening thing because, you know, it's not in the American psyche to kill oneself deliberately. Generally speaking, Americans will accept danger and expose themselves to danger, but not deliberately kill themselves. And this is what the Kamikazes did.

KP: You had experienced enemy action before?

JC: Yes.

KP: The fact that he was deliberately trying to ram his plane into you?

JC: Yeah. Yeah, and this particular plane came down in a sort of a nose-dive and hit the island in the vicinity of where the captain ... and his people were stationed, and a lot of men were seriously injured and with the bomb explosion and the flash of the gasoline and what not, some of the gun crews were injured. It was very frightening. But, it didn't seriously affect the operation of the ship.

KP: Even a hit by a Kamikaze?

JC: No.

KP: How many were lost, do you remember, in the Kamikaze attack?

JC: Oh, maybe six or eight men who were ... on the bridge at the time.

KP: Were men killed at sea, where were they buried? Were they buried at sea?

JC: Yeah, they were buried at sea. ... The bodies were put in canvas bags, and a five-inch projectile was put in with it to make sure they would sink. And, there would be a 21-gun salute fired by the marines, and the burial service [was] conducted by the chaplain, and then the bodies would be dropped into the sea. We had several of them.

CT: The Lexington saw action at the Battle of Leyte Gulf?

JC: Leyte Gulf. Yes.

CT: How was that?

JC: Well, that was a very busy action, ... we launched a lot of planes, and we had the unusual experience ...

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

KP: This continues an interview with Judge John F. Crane on September 22, 1994 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Kurt Piehler.

CT: Curtis Tao.

NK: Natalie Kosonocky.

CT: You were mentioning the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

JC: Yeah. One of the interesting things that happened was that we had a torpedo plane pilot who didn't come back. He was shot down. We learned that he somehow or other landed his plane in some backwater area, and was befriended and hidden by some Filipinos and eventually smuggled out, and we got him back--back aboard the ship. And he told us about his experiences, and ... he was the old man of the squadron at 27 years of age. He was the oldest guy in the squadron. ... Torpedo plane ... was a kind of a difficult plane to fly because, well, first of all, ... they were a two-man plane; they had a gunner. It was kind of heavy lumbering plane, not maneuverable like the fighters, and so they were pretty vulnerable to attack, and the Battle for Leyte Gulf was a fiercely fought battle. The Japanese had strong a force in Mindanao, I guess it was, in the Philippines. ... Eventually, we did take the Philippines, which was a very important fight.

I think one of the most interesting experiences, ... I think we used to call that the First Battle of the Philippine Sea. Then we had the Second Battle of the Philippine Sea, and I remember one occasion ... the pilots used to call this the Marianas Turkey Shoot. They shot down something like 400 airplanes in one day, 400 Japanese airplanes. This huge force of Japanese airplanes was launched, and ... the range-- they were so far away, that they could not possibly have made it back to the carriers with the limited supply of gasoline that they had, and the plan was that they would come, they would attack the American force and that they would land at Guam. But, our planes were so superior in many respects in terms of maneuverability, in terms of resistance to gunfire, and our fighter director control ability was so superior, that ... we could direct the fighter planes in, ... and these squadrons of Japanese planes wouldn't even know that someone was after them. Radar was one of the many types of devices that was of crucial importance to winning that war. I never thought that the Japanese were any less valiant fighters than the Americans. It was just that we put more ships, more guns, and better equipment into the fray ... than they did, and that's the way we won.

KP: What did you think of the Japanese at the time, before Pearl Harbor and during the war?

JC: Well, I didn't know much about them before the war. During the war, of course, I was subject to the propaganda, and we were told, you know, if you get captured you will be put on some terrible island in a dungeon-like setting and you'll be eating rice and fish heads. That's what they used to say. And, so, there was a pretty negative attitude about the Japanese. Later, when our people went in, the reports that came back were that the local people in Japan weren't so bad after all. So, maybe it was the military clique that was promoting all of this. But I often think nowadays, that what the Japanese wanted to accomplish, was the establishment of what they called the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. What the hell do they got now? (laughter) They're dominating industry and commerce in all of Asia. They're even going into China, aren't they, and ... setting up manufacturing enterprises and what not? And, they certainly penetrated the North American markets. So, ... maybe time accomplished what they couldn't accomplish with the war. And we helped them do it. By rehabilitating their country, by freeing them of the obligation of maintaining a defense force. So, economically they prospered very well. So, I often have misgivings about what did we accomplish in the war, in the long run.

KP: A lot of veterans of the Pacific campaign have never bought Japanese cars. Did you feel resentment?

JC: I did for a long time. My wife bought a Honda. I can't remember exactly what it was, but it was a good, little automobile, tiny automobile. They're making bigger ones now. Yeah, ... even now when ... I pick up a rental car, I try not to get a Mitsubishi, because the Mitsubishi's manufactured all of the airplanes that attacked us and I still have an aversion to that.

KP: You had experienced a typhoon?

JC: Yes.

KP: Was it just one or did you experience several?

JC: I think there ... was more than one. I remember the one in particular, where the three destroyers were lost, and I remember distinctly being terrified at the weather. The waves were 50 feet high, and relentless winds. We lost a jeep over, that just rolled off the deck, broke loose from the lashings that held it down. ... It was just something that you had to endure. And it was terrible.

KP: Were you the officer of the deck at all during any of the storms?

JC: Yes, I was. It was very difficult to maintain course and speed with the high waves and the winds and what not. And, I guess, fortunately, the enemy would experience as much difficulty, so ... we didn't experience any enemy action during the typhoon. That's all we had to contend with was the typhoon.

KP: Had you given any thought to making the navy a career?

JC: No.

KP: Did anyone try to give you a sales pitch?

JC: No, I wasn't given a sales pitch.

KP: Several people we have interviewed recalled being given a presentation about reenlistment.

JC: I don't remember that. When I was at Anacostia, I had so many points that entitled me to an early discharge, ... mainly because of the Silver Star Medal, that everybody knew I was going to get out soon, and I was just hoping I could get out soon enough to get started in law school.

KP: You had been sent to gunnery school. How did that come about?

JC: ... I found out how it came about. I visited a friend who had been on the Lexington at the Department of Naval Personnel in Washington D.C., and he told me I was being what they called "fleeted up," which meant that I was gonna go to a newer ship, a bigger ship, and given a heavier responsibility and a promotion in rank. So, ... I was tentatively assigned to the F.D.R., a brand new carrier, which was scheduled to be involved in the invasion of Japan, and I was to be in charge of the forward five-inch gunnery batteries. And that probably would have meant that I would ... be given a promotion to lieutenant, ... which at the time I was a lieutenant j.g. jr. grade. ... But I was just as happy that I didn't have to go on the Franklin D. Roosevelt and to miss all that action in the invasion of Japan. Nowadays, people are debating whether or not it would have been so bad. I thought it would have been a disaster. It would have been absolutely horrible.

KP: How did you feel about the dropping of the atomic bomb at the time?

JC: I was glad it happened. I thought it was a courageous act on the part of President Truman and I think, you know, ... there are always people who like to revise history, to accord with their personal beliefs. It's a tragedy that so many people died and so many were people were injured seriously. But that's war.

CT: How did you feel when you heard the Japanese had surrendered?

JC: I was glad that the war was over. I was in Washington D.C. at the time, and the city absolutely went wild. It went wild! People dancing in the streets, getting drunk, and kissing the girls and all of that kind of stuff. (laughter)

NK: Had you been there for V-E Day, as well?

JC: No. ... When I came to the gunnery school, I managed to get an apartment in Silver Springs, Maryland, which was within a long commute of Anacostia--all across the city! And, I brought my wife down there. I was married in 1943 before the ship went into the Pacific, and so she came down, and we lived in this little garden apartment. It was pretty nice.

KP: You were married just before you went into the service and were separated.

JC: No. I was married after I was in the service.

KP: You were separated for quite a bit of time. Did you see your wife on any of your leaves in Washington State?

JC: Yeah, ... when we came to Bremerton, she came out there, and we spent time together. ... I guess we had a rented room in a house there [that] we went to. I remember I took a leave and we went up to British Columbia, stayed in Victoria, British Columbia, and that was very nice. I'm going back there in October. Not with my first wife; my first wife died after 30 years of marriage, and I have been remarried.

KP: Did you correspond much with your first wife?

JC: Oh sure.

KP: Did any of your correspondences get saved?

JC: Yeah, there's still a big box of it up in the attic. I don't know what to do with it.

KP: Well, you will give it to the archives.

JC: Nah. (laughter). Too much of this "I love you, sweetheart." (laughter)

KP: You went to Harvard Law School?

JC: Yeah.

KP: Did you apply while you were still in the navy, or had you applied before the war had begun?

JC: No. ... I applied when I was in the process of being separated from the navy, being discharged. ... I think I applied to Harvard, Yale, and Columbia, and I guess things were in pretty much a state of disarray at the law schools, because they had not done very much during the war. They probably had some token classes going, but not very much, and here they were suddenly faced with these large numbers of people that wanted to go. So, I got on a train and went up to Cambridge and ... I visited Professor Warren Sevey who had been designated to interview returning service men, and he put me on a acceptance list. I don't remember what happened with Columbia and Yale. I don't remember.

KP: Did you think before the war that you would be going to Harvard Law School?

JC: Not specifically. I had thought that I would probably go to a law school different from John Marshall Law School, because I recognized that it was not a first rank law school, although I

won't put down the professors, they did the best they could, but they were all practicing lawyers, and not academic people, specifically.

KP: How crucial was the G.I. Bill in allowing you to go to Harvard?

JC: Very important. It paid my tuition, it paid me 90 dollars a month, which enabled me to rent an apartment. I got various part-time jobs. I was in the U.S. Naval Reserve, and I met once a week with the U.S. Naval Reserve, and went on cruises in the summertime. That got me a little additional income. So I was able to graduate from Harvard Law School owing about five or six hundred dollars. Nowadays, people are graduating owing 50,000, 60,000 [dollars], and not knowing how they're gonna pay it off. I would say the G.I. Bill was very important. If it hadn't been for the G.I. Bill, I don't know how I would have financed my law school education. I don't know what kind of employment I could have had.

KP: And you would have probably had to go at night.

JC: I probably would have. Yeah, yeah.

KP: What was it like to have been an officer of the deck, a gunnery officer, and then have to go back to school?

JC: Well, most ... of my classmates were in a similar position, almost all of them were returning veterans. And their ... objective was to do the best they could, graduate as soon as they could, and get on with the business with making a living, and getting a career started. So, we were more or less all in the same boat.

KP: Was there a camaraderie there, in terms of you all having the common experience of being in the military?

JC: Yeah, I would say so.

KP: In terms of your attitude towards your professors, would you say, not that you were disrespectful, but you were less differential after your experiences, as an officer and seeing a large part of the world that you might not have seen?

JC: I would say, no. I would say that the experience of being in the military and giving deference to people in superior positions, that carried over. The behavior of the students that I was associated with at the time was entirely different from the behavior of law students today, and particularly, the behavior during the 60s, the 70s, and 80s. I think ... there was no radical activity, there were no protests, the main objective of the students was to absorb as much of the principles of law as could be absorbed ... and get ready to get into a profession that we all wanted to get into. Some of them wanted to be academics, and some of them wanted to go to Wall Street and make a lot of money, and some of them wanted to get into the country and be country lawyers. ... Most of them did what they wanted to do. But, none of them thought about, you know, knocking down the doors to the dean's office or occupying the dean's office or anything

like that. ... I have been critical of the administration of, not only Harvard Law School, but other schools, where they have been so deferential to the students and handled them with kid gloves, when they should have made a lot of arrests and treated them as law breakers. There was one guy who did that, and he's a Japanese, in California. What's his name? Hayakawa? Who was...

KP: Oh yes. Hayakawa.

JC: Yeah. He was chancellor of the University of California, wasn't he?

KP: Yes.

JC: But anyway, maybe things are settling down now, I hope.

KP: How long did you remain in the Naval Reserve?

JC: All the time I was in law school, and when I graduated from law school, I tried to get into a unit in New Jersey, and couldn't find a unit that had a berth for my rank. So ...

KP: So you left.

JC: ... I just kind of drifted out. ... And when I was 37, I remember getting some kind of an order from the Navy Department saying I was retired as overage in rank.

NK: How old were you when the war ended?

JC: Let me see now. ... The war ended in 1945, about 25, I guess.

NK: Did you feel old after having this experience?

JC: I felt like I had experience beyond my years, because the responsibilities that were thrust upon me were seen to me to be more than would ordinarily have been thrust upon someone of my age and experience. Maybe that was good, I don't know. Maybe it was good. And maybe that helped me later in life to assume responsibilities that were thrust on me. I went on the bench in New Jersey at age 40, which at that time was considered to be very young to become a judge. Nowadays, it's commonplace. People become judges in their early and mid-thirties. But those days, it was very unusual for someone to come on the bench at that age.

CT: Did you have any close friends die during action?

JC: Yes. I remember one of my friends who was a bomb disposal officer who died in a bombing raid on another ship. He was not on my ship, but he was a fellow who had served on my ship, and I knew him, and I knew his wife, and I felt keenly ... suffering his loss. But you had to get used to stuff like that because people were dying all the time. And now that I have reached the age I have reached, a lot of my friends are dying now.

CT: What percentage of the squadron--I mean the pilots who you began with on the Lexington--how many were still around by the time you went to gunnery school?

JC: Oh. Those air groups were changed fairly frequently, and the pilots would be sent back to either Hawaii or back to the states and then reassigned to other groups. ... There were a lot of losses among the pilots, especially among those who were engaged in attacking the Japanese fleet. And there were accidental deaths too; sometimes a plane would get launched and ... it wouldn't get airborne quickly enough, and it would splash down in the water and sometimes the pilot would get out and sometimes he wouldn't. There were quite a few of them that would get lost.

NK: What was morale like when you were on the ship? Did you have a feeling that you knew from the very beginning that the Americans were set to win the war, or was this a very up and down feeling?

JC: Oh, I think morale was very good, but I knew it was going to be tough, because ... I was friendly with an officer ... who had been in the Battle of Midway, and his ship was sunk. And ... he went in the water and was fished out of the water, you know, he had that terrible experience. So, I knew that there could be some really tough experiences. But, nevertheless, I think morale was good. I only remember one instance where a man became so despondent that he was taken off the ship. But I guess he was suffering from acute depression or whatever, ... and this was long before we got into ... any action. ... He was a young man, an ensign, same rank as I was. ... There wasn't much talk about him, but I was aware ... that it was a mental depression situation, and I think he had attempted suicide ... but that wasn't talked about very much. That was unusual. It's the only incident I can remember of that sort.

CT: How did your war experiences affect your legal career, as a lawyer and judge?

JC: Well, I think ... it gave me confidence, ... in my own judgment. It gave me confidence in my being able to deal with other people in a supervisory situation, which happened to me when I was a deputy attorney general and I had other lawyers to supervise, and I was first assistant prosecutor in Essex County, and I had about something like twenty lawyers to supervise, and I think my experiences helped me with dealing with that. And then, when I became a judge later, I became an assignment judge in Passaic County and again I was in a supervisory position, so I think my experience in that regard helped. And I think also the fact that I was in unexpected situations in combat helped me to be able to deal with unexpected situations that would happen during a court proceeding. You know, you'd get a witness who was behaving, or misbehaving, behaving inappropriately, or maybe there'd be an outburst in the courtroom, things like that happen, and you just have to be prepared to deal with them, somehow. So, in that sense I think it was helpful to me.

CT: You became fairly politically active straight out of the service.

JC: Well, the first job I had was law clerk to a United States District Court Judge and, in that capacity, I was not permitted to be politically active. And I did not until I left that job and began

practicing law privately, and then I got into political activities. I became committeeman in the Democratic Party, and eventually became a town chairman, and active in ... the local county politics, and I ran for the assembly, and the voters wisely chose not to elect me, and I think my life would have been, maybe, a lot different if I had been elected to the assembly.

KP: Did you hope for a career in elective office?

JC: At that time I did. But in retrospect, I think I probably was better off, later, to go into the attorney general's office and pursue a career in legal work, rather than being in political life because, ... I think, life is more precarious in political activity.

CT: Did you always want to be a public official? Did you want to run for public office?

JC: Yeah. I think I mentioned earlier, when I was in high school, I was on ... whatever the local committee was, you know, that ran the ... student affairs committee, or whatever they called it. Yeah, ... I did things like that.

CT: How long has it taken you to be able to talk about the war?

JC: I think this is the first time I've talked in such detail about it, because during many years, I suppressed a lot of the memories, and I think I told Kurt one time on the telephone, after many years I couldn't watch that program Victory at Sea, because it was all about these terrible battles and what not that I had been in and it just evoked such unpleasant memories that I didn't want to deal with it. And I think I've been able to handle that now, as just something that happened to me, and I no longer have the terrible horror of recollection of it and some of the things that I've recalled are rather amusing, like my recounting the story about my friend, "Beefy" Reed. (laughter) And a few of those things.

There are other interesting things that happened. I remember a fellow ... who was a lieutenant; he had the rank of lieutenant, two stripes, and he was a southern fellow, and it's quite common among southern people to give a ... child, a military first name. Like, I remember one of the black sailors, his first name was General. And this particular fellow, who was a white officer, his first name was Colonel, but he was a lieutenant. And ... very often ... we'd come into a naval base, like maybe at Pearl Harbor or, I remember this happening in Trinidad, ... we did our shakedown cruise in Trinidad, and we'd go up to the base and he'd get on the telephone, he'd call the transportation office and said, "This is Lieutenant Colonel Tatum. I want a jeep down here on the double." (laughter) And they'd send a jeep down. They thought maybe he was a marine lieutenant colonel, and they'd really snap to attention. Sometimes sailors did tricks like that, you know.

CT: What did you think of the Korean and Vietnam Wars?

JC: I was glad I wasn't in it. I thought the Korean War was a mistake, particularly General MacArthur's behavior in conducting it. ... I applauded President Truman's action in removing him from command because I think he would've gotten us into another world war situation with

mainland China, because at that time, mainland China was supporting Korea, both politically and militarily. And it would have been a disaster for us to get involved in a war with China. Maybe we had better equipment than the Chinese, but they had an inexhaustible supply of men, and it would have been awful. Historically, it would have been a disaster.

The Vietnam War, I understood how that thing escalated, and I think that was a mistake, too. We probably should not have been in it. But, most people didn't see that developing or escalating in the way it did and, fortunately, it ended. But, it was one of those things with "get the hell out." We never declared victory or declared defeat or whatever. We just got out.

KP: At the time of escalation, 1965 and 1966, did you think we should have gone into South Vietnam?

JC: Well, I have difficulty recollecting my political viewpoint. What year was that?

KP: 1965, 1966, 1967, these were the years of escalation under Johnson.

JC: ... I think I disapproved of the escalation, but I think I probably ... [understood] the reason why Kennedy wanted to go in. But in retrospect, it was probably a mistake. And the escalation, I thought, was a mistake and it didn't work, and I think the military people should have told Johnson it wouldn't work.

KP: You have had a very distinguished career in public service. You had been part of the Meyner Administration.

JC: That's correct.

KP: What did you think of Governor Meyner? Did you have any experiences with him?

JC: I liked him, first-rate guy. I liked his style of governance. I liked the way he managed the state government. He was a very frugal person, and I think he had good judgment. There is an exhibit at Lafayette, of a lot of mementos of his administration, which is worthwhile [and] taking a look at.

KP: You became a judge. What are the rewards of being a judge, in terms of your career? Do you have any disappointments about serving on the bench?

JC: Well, I didn't make as much money as many of my colleagues, who went into the active practice of commercial or corporate law, but that really doesn't bother me, because I've learned to get along. I've always lived within my income, and I put two children through college ... each of whom has a graduate degree. My younger daughter is a graduate of Rutgers Law School. My older daughter is a graduate of Bard College, and has a master's degree in art education from Risdy. So I'm proud of that. I'm proud I accomplished those things. But personally, I got a lot of pleasure out of doing the work, and doing it well, and I moved through all of the chairs in the judicial system serving as a trial judge, assignment judge, appellate division judge, and, on

invitation, occasionally sitting on the supreme court. So, I felt I had an opportunity to experience all of the facets of the court system. I enjoyed that very much.

KP: What was your hardest case? Do you have any memories of your hardest case? Or your most difficult case?

JC: I think some of the most difficult ones were in the criminal field. A lot of them were difficult. I had the unpleasant experience of having to sentence somebody to death, but that wasn't carried out. Some of the cases technically were very difficult; some of the cases took a long time to try, but all in all, I think I handled them well. I've never been reprimanded for any of my activities. And since I have retired, I've been busy doing arbitration and mediation work, and I'm glad to say in fourteen years of doing arbitrations, I've never had one overturned. So, that makes me feel pretty good.

KP: Is there anything we forgot to ask?

JC: I can't think of it now.

KP: Well, thank you very much.

JC: Okay, it's been more interesting than [I thought]. ...

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