

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH FERNAND DE PERCIN

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

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

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

SHAUN ILLINGWORTH

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TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Dr. Fernand de Percin in Venice, Florida, on August 17, 2009, with Shaun Illingworth. This interview is made possible in part by grants from the Classes of 1942 and 1949, which subsidized the travel portion of this trip. Thank you very much for having me here today. To begin, could you tell me where and when you were born?

Fernand de Percin: I was born on the 8th of June, 1921, in Middlesex Hospital in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

SI: What were your parents' names?

FD: ... My mother's name was Josephine Paulus, her maiden name, one of the Paulus families in New Brunswick, and my father's name was the same as mine, Fernand de Percin. He was Senior. ... My mother was born in New Brunswick. My father was born in Martinique, in the French West Indies, and he came to this country when he was twelve years old and was educated here and was a citizen later.

SI: You have ties going back to the American Revolution on both sides of your family.

FD: I have never checked this myself, but I've heard that there was a Bernard de Percin who served on Lafayette's staff in the American Revolution, yes. I've seen that in writing. ...

SI: Your mother was part of the Paulus Family.

FD: Yes.

SI: They were the dairy and milk family of New Brunswick, correct?

FD: Well, yes, but she wasn't part of the dairy. She was in another section, but they were all related. ...

SI: What did your father do for a living?

FD: My father was a CPA and he was, until 1929, when the ... stock market crashed, he was a treasurer of a French banking firm and, strangely enough, his business address was 1 Wall Street.

SI: Did he ever talk about why his family came here from the French West Indies?

FD: Well, yes and no. I know what happened. He was born and was raised [there] and he was twelve years old in Saint-Pierre, Martinique, and they had Mount Pelée. I don't know whether you ever heard of Mount Pelée, but, ... in 1902, when he was twelve, Mount Pelée started to rumble and spew gasses, and so on. ... My grandmother ... became nervous and left and went over to Fort-de-France and, the next day, Mount Pelée erupted and wiped out thirty thousand people in Saint-Pierre, every single person. [Editor's Note: Volcanic activity at Mount Pelée began in April 1902, leading to the massive eruption that wiped out Saint-Pierre on May 8th.] They said that, in the history, there was one person in the jail, deep down. ... I don't know how true that is. ... At any rate, and then, the thing I cannot understand, and I'm sorry I didn't ask

when I was younger, is how they happened to come to this country, because, with her family history, she had family in Martinique, she had family in France, there was a Marquis de Percin who died during World War II in Lyon, ... but she came to this country and taught French at a very private, exclusive ... girls school in New York City, the Todhunter School. It was mentioned in Eleanor Roosevelt's centenary exhibit that toured the country. [Editor's Note: First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt taught at the Todhunter School (which merged with the Dalton School in 1939) for many years.] It showed Eleanor with the principal of the school and somebody else standing in front. ... My grandmother became very close friends with Eleanor Roosevelt and they corresponded after my grandmother retired, and my daughter has the letters from Eleanor, all in French. ...

SI: Your grandmother spent her whole teaching career at that school.

FD: Yes.

SI: Did your mother ever work outside of the home?

FD: Oh, yes. My mother taught school in New Brunswick for, goodness sakes, thirty or forty years. She was a schoolteacher. At first, she subbed. In fact, I had the worst days of my academic career ... when I walked in Roosevelt Junior High School one day and found her in the room as a sub. For two weeks, I had her for French, English and home room. It was miserable, yes, but, then, she taught later at Lord Stirling Elementary School and she continued teaching there forever, I think. I forget when she retired. She subbed, too, as she got older.

SI: Do you have any idea how your parents met?

FD: You know, I don't. I really don't. In fact, that's another question I should have asked, I guess, when I was younger. Wait a minute, let me think a minute; I think, early on, my father worked for Squibb [now the Bristol-Myers Squibb Company, a pharmaceuticals company], and Squibb was in New Brunswick. ... I don't know whether it's still there, the Squibb plant, but ... there was a Squibb plant in New Brunswick and, as I say, he was a CPA and he worked, I believe, now, I can't say this for sure, but I believe that he worked there. ... Of course, my mother was in the town and, somehow, they met.

SI: You grew up in New Brunswick.

FD: Pretty much. Very early on, because my father, by that time, was working in New York, ... we lived, for two or three years, in New York City, but, then, we moved back to New Brunswick. ... I lived on Jones Avenue, and then, on Seaman Street and the last few years, ... the last ten years, on Townsend Street, almost at the women's dorm for NJC [New Jersey College for Women], right where it is on Jones Avenue [Jameson Hall].

SI: Now, people who go to Rutgers think of New Brunswick as being so developed, but, from what I understand, it was not developed in that area when you were growing up, in the 1920s and 1930s.

FD: Well, I can remember making dirt dams in the gutter of George Street when I was a kid. It wasn't even paved. [laughter] ... Well, yes, it was a different city than it is now, I guess. We had neighborhoods and we had groups of guys who would get together in the neighborhoods, you know. ... You played ... and knew those people and, also, others from all over town, because, when you were playing sports, you'd play against the others, although you were playing with these people who were from your own neighborhood. Now, you don't see that anymore.

SI: Did your neighborhood or group have a name?

FD: No. ... Do you know New Brunswick at all?

SI: Yes.

FD: Well, it was in the area of Jones Avenue, George Street, Commercial Avenue, up to Seaman Street, and so, it was a square and most of guys just fell in that area.

SI: Did that neighborhood have a particular ethnic characteristic? Were there, say, a lot of Irish?

FD: Well, there were some Irish and some German. There were a good many Catholics and I'd say half of them went to Sacred Heart Church, which [was] pretty much Irish and others, and the other half went to St. John's, which was German. So, we had both.

SI: Would you say it was a working-class neighborhood that you grew up in, or middle-class?

FD: I'd say it was mixed. ... I don't know what you consider working-class. Yes, everybody was working, but most of them were, or at least the ones I knew, were pretty much professional. I mean, they had an education and worked in various capacities using that education. There weren't any, well, I'd say very low working-class, laborers-type. I don't know whether I'm making myself clear or not.

SI: They were more like your father, where they had a profession and might go into New York City.

FD: Yes. ... My mother and father were both what you might call professionals ... and the same with my cousins in the area, and aunts and uncles, and so on.

SI: Did you have a lot of family in the area?

FD: Well, yes. Within a block, I had my cousin, ... who was the oldest in his family. I had three (O'Grady?) cousins, and then, another block away, I had five (McCann?) cousins and, up near Buccleuch Park, I had a Paulus cousin, and aunts and uncles, of course. So, I had quite a family, and my mother was living there. ... Well, that's about it, I guess, as far as family is concerned.

SI: Okay. Were your parents very involved in neighborhood activities?

FD: Well, my mother was, not my father so much, because he commuted to New York and was working there, and he didn't have the time, but my mother was sort of busy. ... Well, after I was a certain age, I guess, she started teaching again and, of course, you get involved when you're teaching. ... In the elementary schools, in, in fact, most of the schools, they were a part of the community, I think, more than they are today. The teachers get involved in community-type things, ... and some of them do today, of course, too, but ... New Brunswick was a small town. It was a professional town, with Rutgers and NJC, now Douglass College, I guess. Is it still Douglass?

SI: It is called Douglass Residential College now.

FD: Oh, okay, Douglass. My wife was a graduate of NJC, ... and then, you had the other kinds, because, ... well, there was Squibb's and Mack Truck, I think, whether that's still there, and a few things like that. ... Of course, then, you had the laboring class who worked in those places, as well as professional, too, I guess. ...

SI: I know there were other populations in New Brunswick, like the Hungarians, and so on.

FD: Oh, yes. ... When I went to high school, we had Hungarians, Polish, Italians. I was probably one of the few French, if any ... [with] French background anyway. You had the Irish, German and blacks, too.

SI: Did the groups intermingle a lot? Was there any interaction?

FD: Well, we did with sports and in classes, but, actually, the groups tended to be neighborhood groups. So, if you were, let's say, in the neighborhood I was in, you weren't likely to associate every day ... with somebody up in the Buccleuch Park area. ... You knew people from there, because the town was small and they had leagues for basketball and softball and everything else. ... You'd be playing against those people, all your life, really. So, you became acquainted with them.

SI: Did all the groups get along well? Was there any conflict?

FD: Well, I don't remember any gang difficulties, like you have today in areas. I imagine that there were ... occasionally, very occasionally, actually, as I remember, fights between people. In fact, I remember very, very few fights. I'd say that they got along quite well considering the diversity of ethnic groups ... you had. ...

SI: During your childhood and early years, the Great Depression was in effect for much of that time. How did the Great Depression affect your family?

FD: Well, my father lost his job, because he was in the banking industry. ... He lost his job and, because of that, he went back to Martinique and we were going to go down and stay with him. In fact, we did go to Martinique to stay but my mother didn't particularly care for the educational system down there. So, she came back and she taught and he was down there. Then, at the time he was going to come back here, World War II started and he could not leave. The French had a

law that once you're French ... you were always French, and, when you are on French territory, you had to have a French passport. ... When my mother and I went to Martinique, we had to have French passports, even though we were both born in the States. ... In fact, in 1939, I spent the whole summer ... in the West Indies, mostly on the Island of Martinique, and I had to have a French passport, and it said, "Exempt from military duty in time of peace." ... I left Martinique three days before war was declared. I left on a British ship and, when we got to St. Thomas, it was held up for two days while they painted stripes, camouflage stripes, painted all the windows, portholes and everything, black, and, when we took off, we didn't use lights, no wireless, no flag, nothing. For five days, from St. Thomas to New York, I don't think anybody knew where we were, and, of course, those were the days, early days of World War II ... when the Germans were sinking all the British and French ships they could, and this was a British ship I was on. ...

SI: I want to go back to the Great Depression, but I want to stay with that for a minute. When you were in French Martinique, was the war being discussed a lot that summer?

FD: ... Well, of course, I was really an American, but, yes, there was concern there that there would be a war and, of course, there was World War I, which France was in. It didn't bother me as much because I was an American and ... I thought I'd be going back to the States and going to college. ... So, it did bother my father and I found, later, that he had arranged, if I didn't get on the British ship that came through three days before war was declared, he had arranged to rent a boat to take me to Dominique [Dominica], a British Island. ... If I missed the ship, he was going to send me out right away, because he felt the war was pretty close and was going to start, and it did. It was interesting coming back, because we were mostly Americans, but we were on a British ship.

SI: Were there any fears of being attacked by U-boats? Were there any alarms or alerts?

FD: ... I didn't [have any]. ... I was eighteen. I think some of the adults onboard felt that way. In fact, for the first few nights, well, for two reasons, maybe, but the first few nights out, most of us slept up on the deck. ... The two reasons were that it'd be easier to get off the ship if it was torpedoed, if you were up on deck, and the other was is that all the portholes were closed, painted black, and there was no air conditioning. So, while we were still in sort of tropical waters, we did sleep up on the deck. It was a small ship and it was pretty noted. Later in the war, it became a ship with a charmed life. Finally, the Germans sank it, but it was called the [SS] *Nerissa* and it was the Furness Bermuda Lines. [Editor's Note: The SS *Nerissa* was converted into an auxiliary military transport shortly after Dr. de Percin's voyage. It was sunk by the German submarine U-552 on April 30, 1941, in the North Atlantic, after having made thirty-nine successful crossings from Canada to the United Kingdom.]

SI: To go back to the Great Depression in New Brunswick, did you see the impact of the Depression on your neighborhood and on the city as a whole?

FD: Well, I was young, so, I might not have noticed it. I'd have to say no, except, in my own immediate family, of course, my father lost his job. We did have, whether they were from New Brunswick or not, ... from time to time, men stopped at the [back door]. Well, mostly men, I don't recall any women, but most stopped at the back door and asked for food or for a job to earn

money to buy some food. My mother usually gave them a meal, but that's the only thing I really recall about the Depression, except that my allowance went down to a nickel a week, from ten cents.

SI: Did you have to cut back on things?

FD: ... Well, yes, we gave up the car we had, eventually, not right away. This didn't hit us until, oh, for two or three years. Of course, the Depression went on pretty much for ten years. I tell my kids that, as a member of the Greatest Generation, I lived through the "Roaring '20s," the Depression '30s, World War II and four kids, and you couldn't ask more. [laughter]

SI: Talking about the 1920s, do you remember anything about the era of Prohibition? Does anything stand out in your memory about that?

FD: No. ... My grandfather was a Paulus and German, and we'd go down to Sunday dinner quite frequently and I remember, all during that period ... he'd have some beer. He'd always have a few bottles of beer and I always got a thimble full. ... Of course, during the Prohibition, there was all kinds of areas where you could get liquor. I mean, that's when the West Virginians and the Virginians and the people like that were producing liquor in their areas, but I didn't notice it particularly, because I was still pretty young and I didn't drink. ... So, it didn't bother me. ... I didn't hear anybody else complaining, that I can remember. They may have, but maybe they didn't do it in front of kids.

SI: In your household, did a lot of French or German traditions live on?

FD: French or German?

SI: Traditions, where they kept up anything, like food or the holidays?

FD: Well, no, not the holidays, not that I can recall the holidays. There might have been some, [from] both my mother and my grandmother and other areas, where the food they served might have been Irish or German or French, and so on, but I really don't recall anything ... like that, to any great extent. ... I'm trying to think, but, again, I was sort of young.

SI: Did they teach you French?

FD: Well, we spoke French at home. In fact, I still speak French with some of the people here. There are three or four who speak French and we converse. ... Not in any depth, we just do it for the heck of it, for fun, but my mother and father spoke French at home and I spoke with them. ... Of course, as I said, my mother taught French in high school, junior high school, at any rate, and, when I was in Martinique, I spoke French that summer that I spent, in '39, there. We spoke nothing but French, and I've forgotten a lot of it, but I've forgotten a lot of other things, too, now.

SI: Can you tell me a little bit about your early education before you went to Rutgers, the schools you went to in New Brunswick?

FD: Oh, Lord Stirling Elementary School, Roosevelt Junior High School, New Brunswick High School, and I was a lousy student.

SI: Why was that?

FD: Why? I was spending too much time playing basketball in various leagues and other stuff, but I was a very poor student. I just didn't study.

SI: Were there any subjects that ...

FD: Everything. [laughter]

SI: ... Interested you? Okay; I thought I had read that you had gone to Rutgers Prep. Is that true?

FD: I went to Rutgers Elementary School, from the first through the sixth grade. ... A lot of the people, well, particularly the girls, then, transferred, and I transferred, too, to junior high school, or the seventh grade, anyway, ... because the girls couldn't go on into Rutgers Prep. It was solely for boys. So, they had to leave, and we had a good group. We had a great group of people all the way through junior high and high school, because many of them came from Rutgers Elementary School and they were all educated. Their father, one was a judge, two were ministers and things like that. So, we had a great class. That Class of '39 there was terrific. That's why I was left behind. They were all good students. ...

SI: New Brunswick High School had just recently opened when you were going into it. It had just been built.

FD: Oh, no, I think New Brunswick High School was there for years. I'm not sure when it started, but it had been there pretty much all my [life]. I can remember it almost all through my childhood.

SI: Okay, maybe it was simply expanded.

FD: I'm not certain of that, but it might have gotten [expanded]. Well, they might have gotten larger, and they did send kids from, is it Milltown or somewhere else? from the other areas in the surrounding area, that they sent into New Brunswick for schooling until they built a high school in those areas. Do you know John Archibald?

SI: Yes.

FD: Okay. Well, John's father taught there and he lived out of town.

SI: Yes, out by Middlebush.

FD: Yes, and he was a classmate of mine, of course, in high school and in college, but he's an example of somebody who came from outside the suburbs of New Brunswick and into town to go to high school. Do you see him?

SI: Yes, I see him every once in awhile.

FD: Say hello to him.

SI: Of course. He has been very active in getting us to interview many of your classmates.

FD: Yes, I know he has.

SI: How did the kids from the City of New Brunswick and the kids from out of town get along?

FD: Oh, we had guys that came in and played on our basketball, softball teams and everything else. They were considered pretty much residents of New Brunswick, to us, at any rate. They weren't, but they were in our schools and they were friends and we simply considered them as part of our town.

SI: You were on the high school basketball team. It was not just pick-up games.

FD: ... Well, yes and no. I was on the high school JV teams. I couldn't make the [varsity team]. I loved basketball, but I couldn't make the varsity team. I think, in 1938, now, I'm not sure of this, if I recall, New Brunswick High School won the State Championship in their class and, also, went to the Great Falls, Upper New York, State Championship. [Editor's Note: New Brunswick High School won the New Jersey Group IV title by defeating Memorial High of West New York, New Jersey, in March 1938.] ... Have you ever heard of it?

SI: No.

FD: Well, you'd have to look it up. It was a tournament for the Eastern, sort of the Eastern, part of the United States, or at least the Northeastern, including New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and so on. ... They'd select the best teams and they had a tournament and that [was] at Great Falls, New York. ... New Brunswick High won that tournament, too, that year and, strangely enough, and, again, I'm not certain of this, so, you'd better check it, I think that St. Peter's High, Rutgers Prep and Highland Park all won their State Championships that year. I'm not certain of that, ... so, check it out, but at least if they didn't win, they had darn good teams, all four schools, but I was never good enough. I made the JVs and that was as far as I could get, but I enjoyed it.

SI: Was there any particular rivalry at that time?

FD: Oh, between St. Peter's and New Brunswick High, yes, in football, basketball and everything else. St. Peter's had a very good team, basketball team, and the games were always close when ... the two high schools played.

SI: Were you involved in any other activities in high school?

FD: No, not really. I was not a joiner in either high school or college. I guess I was in the Science Club or the Biology Club, but I can't think of anything else offhand.

SI: I know, later on, in your career, you were heavily involved in the sciences. Was there anything early on that piqued your interest in science?

FD: ... Any area of science that I liked?

SI: Yes, early on.

FD: Well, when I went to Rutgers, I was an ag research major. ... The reason for that is, well, one of the reasons was that ... the tuition was less, because the state experiment station was there and, for some reason, I think when I started, the tuition was 110 dollars a semester. I'm not sure of that; check it out. ...

SI: It sounds close.

FD: Yes, but part of that was because [of] the state experiment station. It was like Cornell, you see. If you went to Cornell, ... they had a forestry school, I don't know whether they had an ag school, but the state experiment station for New York, or one of them, was there and your tuition was then much less. I don't know, maybe it was a leftover from the land-grant law that was passed, you know, that established the land-grant colleges. ... Incidentally, I think that law, the establishment of the land-grant colleges, and the GI Bill from World War II were probably two of the greatest things that helped education in this country. [Editor's Note: The 1862 Morrill Land-Grant Act led to the founding of Cornell University and numerous public universities across the country. Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, was designated a land-grant university in 1864 and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station was established under the provisions of the Land-Grant Act.]

SI: Absolutely. Had your parents always encouraged you to think about college? Was it always expected that you would go?

FD: You know what? ... For some reason, I've thought about that a lot, and it wasn't a matter of encouragement, it was just the knowledge that you were going to go. My mother and father didn't talk to me every day, unless they were trying to get me to do homework or something, but it was just accepted that you were going to go to college. There wasn't any "if, ands and buts" about it.

SI: Growing up in New Brunswick, before you came to Rutgers, had you had much interaction with the University in any way?

FD: ... No, not with the University, but ... I had a number of friends, classmates, whose parents were associated with the University, two ministers, and others who were professors, or so on, with the University, both in the Ag School and at the main campus.

SI: When you were growing up, did you have to work after school or work in the summers? Did you have a part-time job?

FD: No, I did not. I'm trying to think. When I was in college, I did work, part-time. I got a job, and I was happy to have it, in a grocery store. I worked at the post office at Christmastime and I think in the Summer of '42, '41 or '42, '42, I'm pretty sure, I was accepted as a chem. lab assistant at the DuPont plant in Parlin, New Jersey, along with Ross Brower. He and I commuted. I don't know whether you ... know him?

SI: No.

FD: Ross Brower, ... he was killed in World War II. He was a navigator, I believe, on a B-17. He was killed on a raid over Germany, and he and I were good friends. [Editor's Note: Ross B. Brower, RC '43, served as a navigator with the 445th Bomb Group, 701st Squadron. He was killed-in-action when his plane was shot over Germany on September 27, 1944.] ... He had a Model T Ford and he'd pick me up and we ... drove to Parlin and back all summer. ...

SI: I wanted to ask you a little bit more about your time in French Martinique, your time in the West Indies. Before that, had you been following the news coming out of Europe about what Hitler and Mussolini were doing?

FD: You know, I really hadn't, personally. I'm sure that my parents and others were following it. We knew some of the things. I knew some of the things that were happening in Germany, [the] invasion of Poland, you know, and things like that, and, also, of course, France and England getting into the war. Well, I was exposed to that when I had to take the British ship back, but that really didn't bother me, or I wasn't concerned with it that much. I probably didn't understand what it all meant, and it was taking place in Europe.

SI: What was that summer like in the French West Indies? What sort of things did you do?

FD: ... You mean in New Brunswick?

SI: No, in the French West Indies.

FD: Oh, well, down there, ... well, there were two things. During the day, most days, my father had relatives there, and so on, and I'd go out with the sons and daughters and we'd go swimming at one of the clubs along the coast, or we'd go up in the mountains. ... It was a vacation, really. Now, my father had a perfume shop and ... I'd worked at that, but that was only when some large ships came in the port with tourists. ... What he did was import perfume from France and keep it in bond, so that when he sold it, there was no tax on it. He was exporting it again, and he didn't sell any of the perfumes on Martinique itself. He just sold them to tourists. ... Anyway, a person from the [government], ... an officer, ... would be there to make sure that what we were selling was going to a tourist and not to somebody living in Martinique. ... Of course, that was wiped out, you see, when France got in the war, but this was '39, before it was started.

SI: How long was your father away from your family? When was he able to come back?

FD: Well, he was away all the time I was in high school and college, from the time we went down in '32 or '33, and I forget what year, and my mother decided she ... didn't want me to live there and came back. He came back here after the war was over and I saw him briefly. I had my orders to go overseas and I saw him briefly. I shouldn't say after the war was over, but after France was no longer under the Vichy Regime, he was allowed to leave and he came back. ... He was establishing businesses down there and he went back down later, and my mother was to follow him, but, when he was on the Island of Guadeloupe, he dropped dead. ... I was stationed at Clark Field in the Philippines and I got a telegram telling me he had died. That's when I found out about it.

SI: The Vichy Regime did not allow people like your father to come back to the United States.

FD: ... No, they were pretty much under the control [of] or in cahoots with the Germans, you see, and he was not allowed to leave the [island], but he had entrance to any part of the island and he helped our Navy. We had a naval attaché there all the time, Commander Blankenship, I believe his name was, and my father could wander around the island, and so on, and he would report. [Editor's Note: Commander Ernest J. Blankenship served as consul-general and naval observer in Fort-de-France in this time period.] German submarines would come in and refuel and resupply, and so on, and he'd pass all this information on to our naval attaché. ... When he died, my mother got a letter from Secretary [James V.] Forrestal, he was not Secretary of Defense, but Secretary of the Navy, thanking her for the work that he did and the information he provided to our naval attaché, and, incidentally, ... that summer, when I was there, a British light cruiser came in the port. ... One of his friends had been an officer on it, a [Royal] Marine officer, and we went out and spent a day on it. ... It was one of the ... biggest sea battles ... and the first in the war, when the *Ajax*, the *Achilles* and the *Exeter* sank the *Graf Spee*. ... I spent a day onboard it when it stopped in Martinique. [Editor's Note: The German cruiser *Admiral Graf Spee* was utilized effectively as a commerce raider at the outset of World War II. Following an all-out effort by the Royal Navy to find and sink the *Graf Spee*, the British cruiser HMS *Exeter* and the light cruisers HMS *Ajax* and *Achilles* made contact on December 13, 1939. In the ensuing Battle of the River Plate, the British forced the *Graf Spee* into the neutral port of Montevideo, Uruguay. The captain of the *Graf Spee* decided to scuttle the warship just outside the port on December 17th.]

SI: Other than that Summer of 1939, had you gone to visit your father prior to that?

FD: ... Well, no, not from '32 to '39, I hadn't. You see, what happened was ... [in] the Summer of '39, my mother sent me down to visit him. ... When I came back, she was going to leave and go down and live there. ... I roomed at Rutgers, actually, that first year, but she couldn't go and he couldn't come back.

SI: There was no direct contact between 1932 and 1939.

FD: ... Oh, letters and things, yes, not visits, between '32 and '39, no.

SI: To get into your Rutgers experience, what were your first few days and weeks like at Rutgers?

FD: ... My first few days and weeks at Rutgers?

SI: Yes.

FD: Well, I'm not sure I remember too much about them. I ... became familiar with, or friends with, a number of people. ... I don't remember too much about my coursework. ... As I say, I wasn't a good student, so, it was probably difficult for me, but one of the people I made friends with and whom I liked a great deal was one who received a Rutgers award recently, Walt Alexander. [Editor's Note: Dr. Walter Alexander, II, ENG '43, was inducted into the Rutgers Hall of Distinguished Alumni in 2009.] He lived in my dorm, right across from me, that year. He was a great cross-country runner, too. ...

SI: Which dorm did you live in?

FD: ... I can't even think of the name, but it was way up and on George Street. If it'd been down a little, it'd been right across from Johnson and Johnson, and it was ... the Quad. I don't know whether it's still there. Is any of the New Brunswick Campus still there?

SI: Yes. The Quad is Pell, Hegeman, Wessels and Leupp.

FD: Yes, it was a rectangle. I lived there.

SI: Near Bishop House.

FD: But, I forget which one I was in, and Walt, as I say, lived right across the hall from me.

SI: What was living in a dorm like then?

DF: Well, we raised hell, some of us. Some of us, like Walt, were good students. [laughter] I got in with a group that was just lively, I guess. We were always running around, doing things. I didn't study well and I didn't do very well.

SI: Were there a lot of pranks, or just a lot of parties or sports?

FD: Not parties so much. We were just active and sort of active in sports and things like that. ... Well, that first year, I don't think I had a class out ... on the Ag School. Actually, [in the] ag research course at Rutgers, at that time, I had almost all my classes with the premeds or biology majors. Later, I think in the sophomore year, I elected a soil [course], I had to take a soils course, and that's the first ag course I think I took. ... Later, I took ... a plant physiology course later, but that might have been in the Botany Department, I'm not sure. I didn't take many ag courses, ... most of the time, except, I have to retract that, in my junior year, I elected a meteorology course. ... They had just started the Meteorology Department there and Dr. Erwin Biel was the head of it and he was terrific. ... I took this, and then, I took another one, then,

finally, I'd taken all his courses and, in my senior year, I was helping [him] grade papers. ... I loved it, and that got me started, I guess, in meteorology. He was a terrific teacher and, during the war, he went to Chicago, which had one of the best met departments in the world. ... [Carl-Gustaf] Rossby was there, [Herbert] Riehl was there, all those people, and they wanted him to come full-time to Chicago and teach, and he refused to do it. ... He'd go half time to Chicago, and then, half time at Rutgers and he stayed at Rutgers until he died, but he was in the Ag School. ... That wasn't a real ag course, if you know what I mean, ... although he was on the Ag Campus and was, I guess, part of the Ag School.

SI: It sounds like you were enrolled in the College of Agriculture, but you lived pretty much like a Rutgers College student.

FD: Well, I was enrolled in the Ag School but I ... lived near the Ag Campus.

SI: You did.

FD: Well, when I lived on Seaman Street, I was two doors off of Nichol Ave ... and I spent all my time on the Ag Campus, fishing in the pond that they had there. ... Whether it's still there or not, I don't know. I spent half my time running around the Ag Campus.

SI: Yes, but before you were a student at Rutgers.

FD: This was before, when I was very young ... because I lived there, but most of my classes were on the campus across town, and I eventually joined a fraternity there, Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity, so that I'd spend time up there, too. ... When we had dances, of course, we had the women stay at the fraternity. ...

SI: Why did you want to join a fraternity and why did you choose that fraternity?

FD: ... To tell you the truth, I never thought of joining it, but they came to me and asked me if I wanted to join. ... I have to be perfectly frank here, as I look back, I wonder why I did it, because, at that time, maybe not at this time, when you took your oath, or whatever it was, you had to swear you had no black blood or Jewish blood.

SI: Really?

FD: Yes. Now, whether they all did that or not, I don't know, but, later on in life, that annoyed me. I said to myself, "You should have had the guts to say no," and I didn't, but, then, we weren't as, I don't know, as concerned. ... It wasn't something that we were involved in on an everyday basis. I'm sure that that's all changed by this time now.

SI: Yes. I know that there were Jewish fraternities and non-Jewish fraternities back then, and that there was a lot of prejudice against African-Americans.

FD: Yes. Well, it sort of surprised me, you see, because, when we took the oath, we were going through hell week. ... Suddenly, I was asked, "Do you swear you don't have any ... black or

Jewish blood?" in me, and I said, "Yes, I swear," and I wasn't even sure whether I did or not. I don't think I did, but I'm not sure, and it wouldn't bother me if I did, but, at that time, I just [did not protest]. ... There were all these upperclassmen standing around ... but I think if I went back to college today, I don't think I'd join a fraternity; well, ... I'd look into it more closely. I'd have to see just what they stood for and some of the things that I didn't think about at that time.

SI: Did you get heavily involved with the fraternity? Did you do a lot of activities?

FD: Oh, yes, yes. We had a great many parties there, dances in the fraternity itself, not the major dances, but just fraternity dances, and, of course, on the major dance weekends ... we'd have our dates stay there. ... I was the social chairman, I think, at one time, for awhile, for a year or something, but, yes, I was active, and I played, of course, in the intramurals. I played on the basketball, softball, touch football teams for the fraternity.

SI: Was that a big thing, for the fraternity to do well against the other fraternities in sports?

FD: Oh, yes. They had leagues ... and all the fraternities had teams. It was a regular league ... so they were active. All the fraternities were active in sports. ... Now, you know, there were, what? a couple of dozen or something. I don't know how many. I can't say that every single one did, but most of the ones I knew, and I knew people who belonged to those fraternities and they all had sports teams, but it was intramural sports. ...

SI: How was the relationship between your fraternity and the administration?

FD: Well, ... while I was there, I knew of no conflict or any disagreement in the fraternity I was in. I know, later on, I got news where somebody had died in our fraternity, Lambda Chi Alpha, and they closed it down for a couple of years or something. I've forgotten, but that was long after I was gone, and I guess ... other fraternities had difficulties, too. I think one of the difficulties, would be ... in fraternities all over, not just on the Rutgers Campus, was the drinking.

SI: Was there a lot of drinking when you were in the fraternity?

FD: Well, I didn't drink. I didn't even drink beer then. So, I wasn't involved. If there was drinking, I didn't know about. I'm pretty sure, probably, there was, ... but I couldn't say definitely that there was.

SI: Did Lambda Chi have the house that was at the end of College Avenue?

FD: Yes, way up. ... You had to walk up about twenty steps to get to it, and it was on, as you're going, what? south, whatever, ... at the end of College Avenue, up there on the left-hand side.

SI: Near the park?

FD: Yes.

SI: Did you ever live there?

FD: Beyond the gym, just at the other end of the gym, across the street from the gym property. Is the gym still there?

SI: Yes. [laughter] Your house, I am not sure if they tore it down, but there is now a Jewish housing facility called the Chabad House there. There is a housing facility for Orthodox Jewish students there now, next to the gym, I believe where your house was. Did you ever live in the house?

FD: ... No.

SI: Did you always live in the dorms?

FD: In fact, I think that's one of the reasons I joined, is because I'd have been a commuter and that whenever there was a major dance or any kind of activity, I had no place to go. Now, ... I guess there were places that commuters could go, ... and I was living at home, in town, and that made it convenient for me. I ate lunch there every day, and sometimes dinner, but I ate lunch there because I was over on that campus and my home was across the [town], practically on the NJC Campus. ...

SI: You were there when Pearl Harbor was attacked.

FD: Oh, yes.

SI: What do you remember about that day?

FD: ... You know what I remember that day? I was doing homework in my room and I was listening to the Giants football, and I don't know who they were playing, ... on radio. ... All of a sudden, you could hear the announcer saying, "Quiet please, quiet please," or something like that. "May I have your attention," and then, they said, "All military personnel, report immediately back to your base," and I didn't know ... that Pearl Harbor had been attacked. All I know is that I heard this announcement and, later on, I correlated, of course, with the Pearl Harbor attack. ... They were calling all military people back to their bases, because it was an emergency, and that's what I remember most vividly. Of course, then, there was all the news about Pearl Harbor. ... When we got in the war, I immediately went down to the draft board and enlisted. Of course, that was '41. ... The war started just as I was completing my first semester of my junior year. I had final exams, and then, I went down to the draft board. ... I did enlist, but I wanted to fly and I couldn't pass the physical and I came back. ... I don't know, I was talking to the draft board people and I don't know how the discussion came up, but I happened to mention, or they mentioned ... the Army Air Force needed meteorologists, and, here, ... I was taking a couple of courses in it. ... I mentioned it and they said, "Well, why don't you put in for the Air Force meteorological cadet course," and I did and I was accepted, but that cadet course was ... nine months long. ... You had to have two years of college and a year of calculus and a year of physics to get in, and it was only given in five schools, MIT, NYU, Chicago, Caltech and UCLA, and, being nine months ... long, you had to wait for a class to start. ... In September of

'42, I was put in the Active Reserves and I was finally called up to active duty, I think in January of '43, or something like that, and, believe it or not, I was a cadet, but ... that was just a high class private. You got better pay and, when I got my orders to report to active duty, I got a lower berth Pullman ticket from Newark, New Jersey, to Boca Raton Country Club in Florida. [laughter] I don't know whether you know Boca Raton, but it's one of the big country clubs over on the East Coast. [Of] course, it wasn't like it is today. [laughter] ... We spent one month there before we started school. I went to the "Chicago School." ... It was a GI school they established in Grand Rapids, Michigan, because I guess they needed another school, they needed more meteorologists, ... but most of the professors were from Chicago, because they were pretty close.

SI: To go back to when you enlisted, why did you decide to enlist so early?

FD: Why did I want to enlist?

SI: Yes.

FD: Well, it's just the thing to do, really. I mean, we were in a war and I felt that I had to be part of the war. ... Almost everybody enlisted; ... not everybody, but most of the people I knew immediately enlisted, or started to, at any rate. Some didn't, but I just felt that if we're going to be in a war, I had to be part of it.

SI: What attracted you to flying?

FD: ... Well, I guess it was that it sounded like an exciting thing to do. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

FD: Go ahead.

SI: You were saying why you were interested in flying.

FD: ... You know, we had ... sixteen million men and women under arms in World War II. ... It wasn't just that I was alone [in] enlisting; almost everybody I knew went down to the draft board when we got into the war. Not everybody, but almost everybody I knew went. It was just the thing to do. It was part of your life cycle there, at that time. So, I went down and, frankly, there were times when I was in the service that I was not happy with where I was or something, but I would never, absolutely never, trade my World War II experience for anything else.

SI: What was the training in Florida like? What was the training in Boca Raton like?

FD: ... Oh, it was class work. Oh, you had all kinds of classes. ... We had a lab that went for four hours every day. We had twenty-four hours a week off, from Saturday night to Sunday night at six o'clock, six to six, and the other days of the week, we spent in class. Well, we had an hour of marching every day, or something, but, most of the time, we were in classes, with all different meteorological courses.

SI: That was in Grand Rapids.

FD: This was at Grand Rapids.

SI: Okay. What about at Boca Raton?

FD: Oh, Boca Raton, it was, like, physical training, which I loved. Most of the time, we were doing that. After lunch, the people there, the cadets there, had an hour or two hours of drill, marching, but the meteorologists were told, "You can't go out and drill. You have to take this math review course," and so, we all slept through the math review course while the others were out in the hot sun, marching, ... but there were other courses, too. For example, we had a rifle range for both the .45 and the carbine and we had the classes where we were blindfolded and had to strip and reassemble both the .45 and the carbine. ... When I went overseas, I had a carbine and a .45 and I ... kept them soaked in a bottle of, or can of, oil the whole time I was overseas, to keep ... them from rusting. ... I used them once, when I was stationed near the coast, well, actually on the coast, and we'd roll fifty-five-gallon drums out, barrels out in the water. When they got far enough out, we'd fire at them, see how soon we could sink them. ... That's the only time I fired the carbine, after I had the training to shoot. ...

SI: What were you expected to be able to do at the end of your training at Grand Rapids?

FD: Well, let me explain. I was at Grand Rapids for ... six months. Every third month, we'd get a week off, and, in between the second third and the last third, ... they transferred the school to Chanute Field, Illinois. ... I was commissioned there and I was assigned to a weather station in Virginia, and my training was to forecast. I had an interesting experience there, because I was on duty one night when it seemed every weather station east of the Mississippi was closed and we were still open for awhile. ... We had planes coming in galore, and we were a very small airbase, Blackstone Army Airbase, and we had about three planes. We had a bunch of Italian prisoners who did all the KP [kitchen patrol] and all that kind of thing. ... We didn't have more than a hundred men there, but we still had this weather station and we stayed open after all these other stations were closed. ... We had all these aircraft. It took a week or two to get rid of them, because we didn't have the fuel. We had to have fuel sent from all over the place to get rid of all these aircrafts, but ... one of the aircraft that came in had General Hap Arnold on it. [laughter]
[Editor's Note: General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold commanded the US Army Air Forces in World War II.]

SI: Wow.

FD: And he came in and said, "Lieutenant, can we get out of here?" and I was finishing what they call a tephigram. It's a chart you do that would tell you ... when the weather might clear up. It was very complicated and, frankly, I don't think it was worth anything, but I was just finishing that off and I said, "Sir," I said, "I don't think you're going to get out of here until tomorrow noon, maybe not even then." I said, "The chances are fifty-fifty that it'll clear up even by tomorrow noon to where conditions would allow you to take off." He was going to Washington, and so, they took off in staff cars. We didn't have any to give him. He had to call over to Camp

Pickett, with a hundred thousand men across the airfield from us, and they sent drivers ... to take him up to Washington, but I wouldn't have driven up in that fog. ...

SI: Do you remember roughly when that was?

FD: Let me think a minute about that, and I'll tell you why. Yes, it was in the Spring of '44, but what month it was, [I do not recall exactly]. ... I'll tell you why I remember, because I was commissioned and assigned to the station and I was commissioned on the 30th of November of '43 and assigned [there], but, in February, or the end of January, February of '44, I received orders to go to the University of Chicago Tropical Weather School ... in Rio Piedras, at the University of Puerto Rico. ... We were housed in San Juan, but we went to school there, and that was a three-month course. ... There were twenty officers selected. It was tropical weather forecasting, and this happened after I got back. So, I would say it would be in, maybe, May or June, or something like that. I can't [recall exactly], ... because we were there February, March, April, sometime in that timeframe, and Arnold closed the base down, because, while he was there, he went around and talked to the enlisted men and they all complained. ... About a month later, the base was closed and I was transferred over to Norfolk Army Air Force Base in Norfolk, Virginia, and I was there one month when I got my orders to go overseas.

SI: What were they complaining about?

FD: Oh, the food, the life, anything. Complaining was just a *modus operandi* in the military.

SI: Did you think the base should have been closed or that it was not being run right?

FD: They closed the base down. Actually, I couldn't see any reason to have it there. ... We did nothing. There was no training going on. The airfield was there, but ... Camp Pickett could take care of that. ... We were just a small Army Air Force base; might have been some reason in the beginning of the war. ... I was down in the weather station and I'd say ninety-five percent of the time, I'd do the forecast and everything, but I had no customers. Occasionally, a plane would come in and have to go refuel and go someplace else and I'd make out a forecast. ... It would go over to operations and they'd clear the guy and he'd take off, but I really didn't [do much work], and it was hot. We lived in tarpaper shacks, wooden shacks, somewhere in Virginia ... and I think that was another complaint, too, but I think ... most of the complaints, and the ones that you heard the most of, ... was the food, but, strangely enough, I didn't mind the Army food.

SI: Did they have any amenities for officers there?

FD: Not on our base. Some of the ranking officers, I was a second lieutenant, ... the CO [commanding officer] of the base and the adjutant, and so on, every night, we only had about two staff cars and a couple of jeeps, ... they'd go over to Camp Pickett. ... Of course, a camp of a hundred thousand, they had a big officers' club and all kinds of ... recreational activities going on, but I never went over to Pickett once while I was there. Of course ... I was only there two months, and then, I was gone for three months, then, I was there another month and it closed. The base closed and I was transferred to Norfolk. So, I was never there enough to really [get into it], and I had no desire to go over.

SI: Weather forecasting today is so different. What was involved in predicting the weather back then?

FD: Well, for example, today, and I don't know what the training is like in the meteorological departments ... in the country, but, when I went through cadet school, we had to plot the data around every station in the country, and there were, what? two hundred or more. ... The data would come in on a Teletype, and we got so [that] we could read that Teletype and one place would be two letters, two digits for cloud cover, another for precipitation, and the first couple were the station numbers, so [that] you knew what station it was, and things like that. ... I doubt that they do that today. Everything is computerized and everything else. ... When you plotted your own weather map, by the time you got around to drawing a weather map, ... the fronts and lows, and so on, you knew where they were, because of having plotted all the data. You knew almost exactly where the lows or highs and what-have-you were, and I enjoyed forecasting. I can't say I was the best forecaster, but I enjoyed forecasting. The trouble is, in the Tropics, you didn't have fronts. You had, we called them "waves in the easterlies" and, now, they call them tropical waves, like the one that just hit Panama City, a tropical storm, [Tropical Storm Claudette].

SI: Aside from plotting the information that would come in on the tickertape, would you utilize weather balloons or anything like that?

FD: Oh, well, yes. When we were going through cadet school, we learned how to make hydrogen and fill balloons, make radiosonde and pibas measurements. ... We had to learn everything that a weather observer [knew]. We had observers and forecasters, and the observers did the observations. They went out and took the temperatures, and so on, every hour and did things like that. We had to learn to do that, because ... essentially, when an officer was on duty in the station, he was the ranking person there and he had to know ... everything that the observer knew.

SI: Were observers mostly enlisted men or would they be other officers?

FD: Yes, most of them were. Now, forecasters could be enlisted men, sergeants, mainly. They could be forecasters as well as the officers, but the observers were almost all enlisted men. I can't think of any. ... You know, most of them were probably below staff sergeant.

SI: How big was this unit at the small field in Virginia? How many men were you working with?

FD: Well, we had three officers. ... We had a bunch of observers, because we were open twenty-four hours a day, ... but I don't remember really how large. We had three officers and probably a couple of enlisted forecasters, too, in other words, sergeants, and then, a group of observers. ... I think one of the things that wasn't too good, [that drew], probably, some of the complaints, is that there were no activities on the post. We were so small, we didn't have an officers' or enlisted men's club, we didn't have this [or that]. We didn't have anything. There was no place to go. When I was off duty ... the only time I spent out of my bunk was when I

was in the lounge at the officers' quarters, and it was maybe as big as this room and [offered] nothing to do. You could play cards, I guess, and things like that.

SI: Did you correspond with your family at all?

FD: Oh, yes, I corresponded with my; well, she wasn't my fiancée yet. She became my fiancée while I was stationed at Blackstone. I dated her when I was in the cadet school, and I had seen her when I was a high school senior. I had seen her walking. She was a year ahead of me. She was the Class of '42 at NJC and I had seen her a number of times walking up George Street to the campus, because I lived almost on the campus. ... I said to myself, "Now, who's that?" and I never found out until a classmate invited me over for dinner one Sunday, and it was Si Klosky. I don't know whether you know his name or not, Simon Klosky. He was a chem. major and he was the Class of '43. He died about two years ago, here in Bradenton. ... I went over and there she was, and then, I started dating her. She was a twin; there were two. ... She was a dietician major, her sister, Marilyn, who's still alive, was a chem. major. See, their father was a PhD in chemistry, and so, Si was a chem. major and Marilyn was a chem. major. ...

SI: You got married while you were in the service.

FD: ... Yes, but only after I came back from overseas, because, when I was transferred to Norfolk, ... I was then engaged. ... We planned to get married in October and this was in May or June or something, I've forgotten, and I suddenly got orders to go overseas and I had to report to Tooele, Utah. Do you know where that is?

SI: No.

FD: It's between Salt Lake City and Dugway Proving Grounds, Tooele, T-O-O-E-L-E, for staging. You know, you made out all your paperwork. You, again, practice qualified on the range with carbine and .45s and did all that sort of thing for three or four days, and then, ... we were shipped to San Francisco. ... There, we were at an air base, ... I think it's probably closed now, and I can't remember the name. ... We were told, "If you haven't gotten your orders to go overseas by four in the afternoon, you're free to go into town," but the third night we were there, third day we were there, we received orders that afternoon. ... We flew in a DC-4 from San Francisco to Nadzab, New Guinea, 250 miles an hour. [laughter]

SI: How many stops did you make?

FD: ... We stopped at three places, and each place was routine. We were there about four hours while they refueled the plane, put on fresh box lunches and coffee. We had wooden bucket seats, not regular seats, and things like that. ... We stopped at Hawaii for about four hours, then, we flew to Canton Island and we were there, again, four hours, then, to Guadalcanal for four hours, and then, we finally landed at Nadzab, New Guinea. ... To this day, looking at maps of New Guinea, ... I've never been able to find the name Nadzab. I was stationed two other places in New Guinea, Hollandia and Aitape, and they're on the map, but I cannot find Nadzab. [laughter]

SI: When you were training in Puerto Rico, were you trained to do what you did in the Pacific?

FD: Well, as I look back, when we were commissioned, or [on the] paperwork we made out, they asked us where we'd like to go, where we'd like to ... be stationed, and, of course, everybody put down United States first. ... I was foolish, maybe, but I put down the Pacific [first] and European second, and that was probably why I was stationed [there and why] I was sent to the school in Puerto Rico, the tropical weather school, because I'd put that, and then, later, was sent to the Pacific. The Army generally didn't do things that way, but, that way, they were sort of cohesive. [laughter]

SI: As a general question, how did you adjust to life in the military?

FD: ... You know, I had no problem. I'll tell you why; it was very organized. When we were in cadet school, we had the West Point rulebook on our dresser. You had to roll your socks a certain way and have them in a certain place in the drawer, and none of that bothered me. I knew what to expect, I guess, and, if I did it, that was it, and doing it didn't bother me. As far as adjusting in the military, *per se*, I didn't have any problem. I mean, I was there to do a job and I did my job and that was it. I got along, I think, with all the officers I was stationed with and most of the enlisted men who were, at one time or another, under my supervision. I can't remember any difficulties I had with anybody.

SI: Once you got to New Guinea, what was your next assignment?

FD: ... I got to Nadzab and we were ten officers sent over, and we were AAA priority, meaning they really needed meteorolo[gists], forecasters. ... We got to Nadzab and I got the impression they didn't know what the heck to do with us. We were there three weeks and I finally got orders to go to Townsville, Australia, which was the headquarters for our weather squadron, but it also ... had an airfield. I wasn't part of the headquarters personnel, although I lived with them, but I was in the weather station. I was there three or four months, and then, I was transferred up to Hollandia, New Guinea, ... which is in Dutch New Guinea. Now, I think it's Indonesia. There's Papua New Guinea, which is the British/Australian part of New Guinea, and I was stationed there four or five months, and then, I was sent down to Aitape, A-I-T-A-P-E, New Guinea. ... This was interesting, because it was in an ANZAC base and they were still doing a lot of fighting at another place about fifty miles to the south called Wewak. These were two different places and they were both on the coast, and the ANZACs were the Australia-New Zealand Army Corps. Essentially, although our American group operations and weather had our own bivouac area, ... essentially, we were assigned to the Australians for support and they, in turn, supported us with food and things like that, and I was stationed there three or four months. ... While I was there, I did, I probably shouldn't have done this, I did fly down to Wewak, just out of curiosity, where they were still doing the fighting. There were still a lot of Japs in New Guinea, even though we were going up into the Philippines. ... The Aussies and the ANZACs had the job of ... finding them and wiping them out. So, there were still [major engagements]. The big base hospital for the whole area was at Aitape. I flew down there with a bunch of cigarettes. We were issued cigarettes and beer and I took all my cigarette cartons down and traded it to the Aussies for two Jap pistols, a Jap flag and a Jap cavalry sword. [laughter] ... I don't have the pistols, but ... my kids still have the flag and the sword.

SI: In the places where you were in New Guinea, did you have to worry about Japanese stragglers or holdouts?

FD: No, I didn't, and I was lucky. You go where you're assigned, and I happened to be assigned to airfields where there weren't any [air raids], where the Japs were not bombing. ... I know of other people who were and I know certain officers were killed from Jap bombing. ... There were weather officers who made the landings at the various places where there were airfields, and, of course, there were certain casualties there, too, but I was never [there]. It was just, you know, just chance; I was never assigned to one of those places. When I left Aitape, ... I flew up to Manila and I was assigned to the Far Eastern Air Force Weather Central, and, as I recall, there were ... groups of six to eight officers, not all Army and not all Air Force, Navy, Marine, and so on. ... We were assigned a certain part of or place in Japan where landings, invasions, might take place, and we were to study all the conditions of that area, not only the weather, but the oceanography, any of the engineering aspects, that we had this group of officers with all the multiple trainings and it was our job to determine whether this would be a feasible place for a landing. ... Then, they dropped the atom bombs and that was it, and let me tell you this right now, dropping the atom bomb saved tens of thousands of American lives, and probably millions of Japanese lives, because, if we hadn't dropped that ... they would have continued to fight. I flew up to Atsugi in Japan, when I was stationed at Clark Field. I flew to Okinawa, Naha, then, up to Atsugi, Japan. While I was there, I took a train into Tokyo, and along the embankment ... there were caves loaded with *kamikazes* and all other kinds of weapons systems. ... When I got to Tokyo, I got to the Emperor's Palace [the Tokyo Imperial Palace] and stood at the drawbridge over the moat into the palace, and I looked around and didn't see ... anything higher than I was, taller than I was, in all of Tokyo. That's probably not true, but the firebombs, the firebombing the [B-]29s did of Tokyo, probably killed three or four times the number, I'm not sure of the number, but three or four times the casualty rates of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. [Editor's Note: Tokyo was a frequent target of Allied bombing raids. The B-29 raid on the evening of March 9-10, 1945, resulted in unprecedented destruction. Casualty estimates vary, but many place the death toll at a hundred thousand people, exceeding the initial death tolls for both atomic raids.] I mean, just the whole city was leveled. It didn't seem like anything was taller than I was, but the Japanese were very enterprising. They had filled in the basements of ... buildings with soil and were growing vegetables.

SI: To go back to your time in New Guinea, were you mostly just forecasting for the airbases there?

FD: Yes. ... At Hollandia, there were three airbases, and I was stationed at Sentani Base, and I forget the name of the other two, but it was a big base, and, of course, it was twenty ... or thirty miles in from the ocean. The Navy had a big base at the port there, because we had to go down there for supplies and, occasionally, I'd have the job of going down and getting the supplies for the station. ... There were naval ships all over, and, incidentally, ... on the way up to the Philippines, when I flew up to Manila, we flew in and stayed overnight at Tacloban [City]. ... As I flew in, there were no major carriers, but ... I must have counted twenty or thirty baby aircraft carriers, what they called the small ones, not the large ones, but I just couldn't believe that our country had that kind of resources that ... we could get. ... When the Japanese surrendered, well, before they actually signed the surrender papers, they brought a bunch of the

higher ranking Japanese down to Manila, where I was stationed. ... I was stationed at the Far Eastern Air Force Weather Central, and, also, at; oh, gee, I can't think of the name of it, one of the famous forts. Fort McKinley, I think it was, in Manila, but they took these Japanese and they drove them up for fifteen or twenty miles and, on each side, because I drove up that road to go to Clark Field when I was ... transferred, on each side, wingtip to wingtip, and ... I don't know how deep, were B-29s, not even painted yet, just silver. I mean, the capacity for production in this country was just fantastic. ... When I saw all those aircraft carriers, and then, I saw all the B-29s, I wondered how that could have been produced in such a short time and, of course, that was just part of ... what we had done.

SI: What was different about forecasting in the Southwest Pacific as opposed to forecasting in the United States?

FD: Well, in the tropics, you have no warm and cold fronts and you have what ... we call tropical waves, "waves in the easterly." They now call them tropical waves, and these are low pressure systems, mostly--well, they're in the upper atmosphere, too--and they come by and because they are low pressures, ... unless you have data, you see, you don't know when these are coming. ... Let's say ... if I were forecasting in the United States, we had a course in cadet school called single station analysis, and, if you just had the one station of data, you get a wind shift, a temperature change, a pressure change, even a precipitation change, and it tells you whether it's a warm or cold front and ... maybe how close it is. You can guess or make a good estimate, but you can't do that in the tropics and, unfortunately, ... when we were forecasting, the Japanese had everything to the north, or almost everything. ... Any weather up there, we'd get a ship report or an aircraft report from aircraft coming back from raids, and so on, but that wasn't enough, really, to forecast. ... Farther south, we had data in Australia, but, as you may or may not know, the circulation is exactly opposite in the Southern Hemisphere from what it is in the Northern. The circulation around lows and highs are exactly the opposite. Well, here, we were forecasting north to a place we didn't have any data, and, when we went south, we were forecasting at a place ... where the circulation around highs and lows was entirely different from what we were trained in. [laughter] ... We were in an area where ... there were no fronts and we didn't have any data coming in.

SI: That must have hindered the forecasting effort quite a bit.

FD: ... Well, you got to know some of the local conditions. There were mountains and things in the area and at least you could forecast for the local things. ... What the difficulty was, if you had an airstrike go out, let's say to the north someplace, ... you didn't have data for what the ... weather was at the target or, essentially, on the route most of the way, but we did have planes going back and forth and we'd get some indication from those, but it wasn't easy things. I had a funny incident occur in Hollandia. This is sort of a funny story from World War II. ... We had an observer who had a master's degree in physics from NYU and [he was] from New York, and I don't think he had ever driven until he got in the service. ... I was the forecaster on duty and he came down to be the observer that night and he came rushing in ... to the station and said, "Lieutenant," he said, "I had an accident," he said. I said, "What happened?" He said, "I ran into an aircraft," and I said, "Let's go look at it," and it was dark, of course, and we went out to look at it. Well, MacArthur's Headquarters ... was right at Hollandia, Sentani Air Force Base, where

I was stationed, a paved, macadam road going up to this beautiful air-conditioned place. I never saw him, all the time I was there, six months, but the aircraft this guy had run into was the *Bataan*, MacArthur's aircraft, but, by that time, I think he had a B-29, so ... he wasn't using that. [laughter]

SI: How did most people view MacArthur in that area?

FD: MacArthur? I think they viewed him as a conceited ass, in a way, but, also, as a very good leader in strategy and things like that. He puddle-jumped. See, the Aussies, the ANZACs, were left to clean out the Japs in New Guinea, but he only made landings at certain areas and took over those areas, established bases there and kept moving forward. ... I think that [was positive], but he was an egocentric and I don't think that you could like him personally, at least I don't think I would like him personally, but, at least at that time, I had respect for what he was doing. Now, whether everybody felt like that, I don't know. We didn't discuss him very much. We had enough problems just living. [laughter]

SI: When you were forecasting, what was your daily routine like?

FD: ... Well, at Hollandia, for example, we were only three officers, a first lieutenant and two seconds [lieutenants], and the TO; you know what a TO is?

SI: Table of organization?

FD: Yes, called for a major, captain and several first and second lieutenants, forecasters, let's say a total of maybe [five or six], because we were on duty twenty-four hours a day, at an active base. ... We were three officers; ... only three forecasters staying on duty twenty-four hours a day ... seven days a week. ... It wasn't easy, because you'd go and eat dinner and you ate at a mess hall five miles from where we were quartered, ... in tents. Let's say you're on the night shift; you go there at four o'clock, eat, and then, go down to the station and the observer would follow you. They had the same problem. Then, in the morning, you'd have to go five miles over to ... eat again and, if you wanted to get up at noon, ... if you were on duty all night, it wasn't easy because the humidity ... and temperature ... were high, ... and if you were on duty all night and tried to sleep all day, ... you were in a tent with mosquito netting. ... You're practically on the Equator. So, it was very warm, hot and humid, and it wasn't easy doing that day after day after day after day. ... We did it for about five months, and then, finally, we got some officers and a captain, and a couple more lieutenants, and we had more people and it was a bit easier. Down at Aitape, we didn't do any forecasting. We just took weather observations for the ANZACs. ... They had an airfield there and we took the weather observations and I was in charge of the station down there. We just had one officer and the rest were enlisted men.

SI: What were your impressions of the Australians and the New Zealanders?

FD: ... Oh, I had a terrific respect for them, really terrific. You know ... the casualties they suffered in Africa; they were depleted. The manpower, they were really depleted, and I enjoyed knowing them. I had a great deal of respect for them. When we were at Aitape, we played them,

softball one day and cricket the next, and they won at least half the softball games and we never won a cricket match. [laughter]

SI: What were your impressions of New Guinea? Did you have any interaction with the native people?

FD: Well, you know, the problem is, you were at military bases. ... I didn't really get to know New Guinea. I got to know the military bases I was stationed at, but these were all entirely different from what you might find [off base]. I guess the closest I came was Aitape, because we were stationed on the water and we had jungle, and so on. ... Just outside the perimeter that the whole base was at, you'd find nothing but jungle, or wetlands, swamp and things like that, but I never got to know New Guinea that well. I can remember that it was hot, that it was humid and things like that, and dusty, because they created roads and there was no pavement. ... You'd ride those roads in the dry season, or when it hadn't rained for some time, and you could hardly see fifty feet ahead because of the dust, because there'd be a line of vehicles, but we lived through it.

SI: How did the rainy season and the monsoon season affect your work?

FD: The monsoon? Well, I don't know whether you'd call it monsoon, but there was a rainy and a dry season in Australia, let me say, at Townsville. ... When I was there, it was the dry season, and I don't think the visibility ... at the airfield went up over three or four miles the two or three or four months I was stationed there. Strangely enough, my brother-in-law, Si Klosky, who was my classmate, was in the Navy and he'd been [there]. His ship had put in to Townsville and, when I got back, he said, "Did you ever see so much mud in all your life?" It did nothing but rain when he was there. So, it was two different climates. It was better forecasting, because although it was getting into the tropical or subtropical area, you still had fronts, ... but, for planes going ... north, up to New Guinea, again, you ran into the problem of no frontal systems and tropical waves that were new to people at that time. ... The data were not there to forecast for them, because they came from the east. We called them "waves in the easterlies."

SI: When you went to the Philippines, were you put into this multi-branch unit to study the Japanese landing sites right away?

FD: ... Just the one specific area in Japan, and I don't recall where it was or even what island it was in Japan, but it was in our area where somebody thought we might want to make a landing. So, we weren't the only group. There were a number of groups like this assigned to different areas and specific areas to study the conditions, to see if it was feasible at any time to make a landing. ...

SI: Did you start that right away or were you doing other things before you were assigned there?

FD: Well, when I went to the Philippines, I was immediately assigned to the Weather Central there and assigned to that group. I don't know about other officers. I think they were, too. ... Our group was just put together at the time and we were given that. ... I forget what month it was there, but it was in the summer, I know, and it went on until we dropped the bombs, and then, they dispersed us. I remember going into Manila, to an opera, believe it or not, in Manila,

in the war, and sitting in front of us were about twenty Russian officers, all in their woolen uniforms. I almost passed out looking at them. [laughter] Well, you know, they had heavy winter woolen uniforms. They [had] collars up to here, and they were all sitting there at the opera. I don't even remember what the opera was. I had one interesting experience; when I was stationed up ... at Clark Field, I had to forecast for ships going up to--aircraft, ships, I call them ships, but aircraft--going up to Okinawa, because the battle for Okinawa was terrific, you know, and the casualty rates high. ... They were depleted in supplies and everything, and they had a hurricane hit there and it was a "force five" one. ... The name of the hurricane was Louise and they had a picture on the *Time* Magazine cover and they called it "Little LuLu." [Editor's Note: Typhoon Louise struck the Okinawa area on October 9, 1945.] I don't know whether you remember, you probably don't remember, Little LuLu in the comics. It was a cartoon in the paper, and they called it "Little LuLu." ... The picture of the hurricane, taken from above, was on the cover of *Time* Magazine.

SI: I have heard a lot about that hurricane.

FD: You have?

SI: Yes. Particularly, it was very devastating on Okinawa and, also, for the ships that were deployed.

FD: Oh, yes, the ships had to leave port and some of them didn't get off in time. I don't know whether any of them sank ... but I'm sure there was some damage done to a lot of them. ... You see, there, again, and I can't say this for certain, but ... again, that hurricane came from a direction where there were very few forecasts. What is to the east of the Philippines? Guam, and Guam's a whole day's flight away ... because I came back that way. ... I flew to Guam, and then, to either Johnson Island or Kwajalein, I've forgotten, and then, to Hawaii, and then, got into San Francisco in the middle of the night when I flew back. ... You see, there again, there were data lacking and you're talking about a tropical storm. ... I'm sure they picked it up when it got closer and that's why all the ships [left port], because we had ships out there and aircraft going out, but there were no weather stations, *per se*, that were transmitting data on an hourly basis as we had here in the States.

SI: How long were you in Japan?

FD: Not very long. ... I flew up out of curiosity. The Air Force had a rule that every forecaster was supposed to fly the route that they were forecasting for, and nobody ever did, because ... we were all so short-handed. If people flew, we'd have nobody back at the weather station, ... but I took advantage of that and caught a flight to Okinawa, and then, up to Atsugi in Japan. I think the whole ... trip took me a week, or something like that, but I did get to see part of Japan and the women in the rice paddies planting the rice and things like that, and I saw Tokyo, which was not much to see. It was really leveled.

SI: At that time, what did you think of the Japanese? What was your opinion of them?

FD: Well, of course, they were the enemy then, ... but, you know, the Japanese are people. When I was taking the train, when I took the train from Atsugi into Tokyo, everybody else on the ... train was Japanese. I was the only foreigner, and an Air Force officer at that, and they were afraid of me, really, but there were some kids on the train. ... There were a couple [who] belonged to one woman and I sort of got friendly with them by winking at them, you know, and so on. ... I forget, I had some kind of candy or something ... or maybe it was gum, and I finally took one out to eat it and they were watching me. So, I held the bag out, and then, they hesitated. It took them awhile, but they came over and, finally, they took one, but they didn't eat it. They went back to their mother, and she looked at me and it took her awhile, and seeing that I ate one, that she finally told them they could go ahead, but they were really frightened. We were murderers, as far as they were concerned, but, of course, they weren't responsible, really, for what their government did. ... I don't think this country should have gone to war in Afghanistan and Iraq. I think it was the silliest thing, along with Vietnam, that we've ever done in this country. We never seem to learn. We shouldn't be in the Middle East in a war. How can you fight a people where there are five different [groups]--there's the Shiites, the Sunnis, the Ba'aths, the Kurds--where they kill each other. You're not going to have a democracy there. The minute we move out, in six months or a year, they'll be killing each other again and there'll be no democracy. We're wasting money, we're wasting, particularly, lives; I should get off the topic.

SI: You can say whatever you want.

FD: And I worked in the Pentagon for twenty years. I was on the Army staff in the Pentagon and I knew a lot of officers there who thought that Vietnam was stupid.

SI: I want to get more into that.

FD: But, yet, Vietnam, we had one enemy. Here, you not only have four or five enemies, you have those enemies blowing each other and themselves up, and how can you establish a democracy ... or government in a situation like that? ... The other thing that bothers me is, if Hussein, and I'm not saying we didn't do right getting rid of him, if we had to go over, but, if Hussein ... was the leader in Iraq today, do you think he'd be sitting there with Iran producing a nuclear weapon?

SI: Probably not.

FD: You see. So, I mean, that's my interpretation.

SI: To go back to World War II, do you remember where you were when V-J Day was declared, when you found out the war was over?

FD: On V-J Day, yes, V-J Day, I was in Manila, because I was still assigned to that group. ... We weren't transferred out of that until after. Well, it depends on what you call V-J Day. ... We may have been transferred out of there before MacArthur went up and they signed all the papers, but ... we were there when the Japanese indicated they had surrendered, and they brought some of the Japanese envoys down. I told you how they took them up on the road and there were the B-29s that hadn't been used yet. I don't know what they did with them all.

SI: Was there any celebration that night or that day?

FD: I don't remember any great celebration. I think, if anything, ... yes, there was relief and a certain amount of joy, I guess, because the immediate thought was, "Boy, this is over and I'll be going home." When, we didn't know, but we knew that when the war was ended, eventually, we could go home, whereas when the Japanese were still fighting, we had no idea how long it was going to take. It could've taken another three or four or five years if we had to invade Japan, and all we could see [was that possibility]. ... We didn't go overseas for one year, and then, get shipped back. We went overseas and we were there until the war ended, unless you were wounded or sick or something. ... There was no time limit to your duty overseas. I was lucky, because I was only over there for about a year-and-a-half, but there were people there who had been there ... three or four years.

SI: Did you come back in 1945?

FD: I came back in December of '45, and we were married the end of December, when I got back, in Washington, DC, where my father and mother-in-law lived. At the time, he had retired.

SI: Did you go into the Reserves then or were you discharged?

FD: No. I got married, and then, ... I came down with something I contracted, I guess. I can't say this for sure, because I don't know what I had, and I'm not sure the Army Air Force or the military knew what I had, but I came down with something. ... I was hospitalized from January until July, for almost six months, up in a hospital in Boston, and the first six weeks or eight weeks, I was separated from anybody else. I was really in a room by myself. I don't know whether they [were quarantining me or not]. I think it was something I probably got overseas that didn't manifest itself until later, but I was there, and then, ... of course, when I was finally discharged from the hospital, then, I was discharged from the service, at Fort Dix in New Jersey.

SI: You had not been sick at all when you were overseas.

FD: I was not sick at all, but I had jungle rot. Everybody got something. The thing you didn't want to get was scrub typhus or malaria. ... When I got up in the Philippines, in Manila, four or five of the officers, ... of the ten officers I had flown overseas with, I knew they were stationed there someplace and I started making inquiries. ... They were in the hospital, all of them, with one thing or another. You just didn't [stay healthy]. I had jungle rot, blisters, one blister on every finger, on both sides of every finger, like that, and the medics drained them twice a day. ... In the middle of all that, I was transferred from Hollandia down to Aitape and we were on the water and I thought to myself, "Gee, when I was a kid, my mother used to take me down to Asbury Park in the saltwater pool if I got any sign of poison ivy." So, I started going into the salt water and the darn thing dried up in about two weeks. They were still treating me. ... The ANZAC medics were still treating me, but they were thinking in terms of either shipping me back to the US or shipping me down into Southern Australia, where it was cooler, in the cool area of Southern Australia, but it dried up quickly once I got into the salt water.

SI: You were discharged at Fort Dix in the middle of 1946.

FD: Yes. In July of '46, ... yes, July of '46. ...

SI: You had already received your degree from Rutgers.

FD: Yes. I got the degree from Rutgers, really, through happenchance. I told you how I had enlisted and was waiting to be called. In September of '42, they put me in the Active Reserves. I had been accepted ... for cadet training, but I had to wait because, as I said, ... the programs were nine months long and there were only five schools [which] gave them. ... They had a bunch of people waiting for various classes, and so, I had to wait to be called to active duty. Well, when the war started, Rutgers went into a tri-semester, I don't know whether you knew that or not, went into a tri-semester, so that I immediately went into my first semester of my senior year during the summer. ... In the summer, I took the first semester of my senior year, and, in September, when I was put in the Enlisted Reserves, I had started the second semester of my senior year. ... They had established a policy at Rutgers; if you were in ... your last semester of your senior year and your grades were okay, you got your degree. Now, I wasn't there for graduation. My mother went up and got my degree and I've never found it. My daughter wrote and she got me one, but it was Rutgers, the State University [of New Jersey], which it wasn't then. So, it wasn't really the degree I would have received if I had been there. ... When I came back, my father had died and, I don't know, it just had disappeared.

SI: When you left the service in 1946, what did you do next?

FD: Well, I immediately applied for graduate training at Caltech and I was accepted. Now, I knew nothing about Caltech, except that I met officers and [learned from them that the] Caltech Meteorology Department emphasized not the mathematical aspects of meteorology, but the forecasting and prognostication. They had a Krick weather service there, and [Dr. Irving P.] Krick was a colonel in the Air Force and he helped make the forecasts for the Normandy landings. ... I liked that, because I liked the forecasting. So, I wrote and I was accepted and I went out there, and I didn't know anything about Caltech. Do you know anything about it?

SI: No.

FD: Well, let me tell you about it.

SI: Sure.

FD: If you're interested. Caltech, from the day ... it existed and it was established, has always been ranked in the top ten academic schools in the country. In the year 2002, it was voted the best; this was according to *US News and World Report*, where they rate the colleges and universities every year. ... In another publication, I recently [read], and I cut the clipping out, and I have it someplace, rating ... the best universities all over the world, and they had the list of ten and I can tell you exactly what they were, Harvard and Yale, and either Oxford and Cambridge or Cambridge and Oxford, Caltech was fifth. This is for the whole world, and Chicago was eighth and Columbia tenth. ... Not that I agree with that. I don't see how they can

rate universities and compare universities in various other countries. ... They have a tutorial system in England and things like that, but it was interesting just to see what they had, the ten schools that they had. ... I'll tell you the other thing that I'm impressed by at Caltech; you know how many students they accept every year, freshmen?

SI: No.

FD: Two hundred. They have an undergraduate enrollment of eight hundred and it hasn't changed since I went there, and eight hundred graduate students, and a student-faculty ratio, I think it was four or four-and-a-half-to-one. It's just a tremendous school. ... Here in the East Coast, we don't seem to recognize it, but it's ranked, almost all the time, higher than MIT. I didn't know this, don't say I planned it. I didn't know it when I went there. Later on, I found more and more out about it and I was grateful that I had a degree there. I went out and was going to ... study for my PhD there, but ... my wife was back in Washington and pregnant with our first child and the cost of living out there was just far more than I could afford for all three of us to be living there. So, she stayed back in Washington with her parents and our first child was born in Washington, DC, and I didn't see him until he was three months old, when I came back from Caltech.

SI: When did you complete your master's studies?

FD: ... In June 1947, in meteorology, and I had some geophysics. I had a geophysics professor who was German, he might have been an American citizen then, Beno Gutenberg. He ... seemed to be about three feet high, but he was funny and he was a terrific teacher, and, believe it or not, you ever heard of the Richter scale, for earthquakes?

SI: Yes.

FD: Well, he helped Richter design that. ... Richter was the proponent, and so on. ... I was walking around the campus and he came along with Richter and stopped and said hello to me and introduced me to Richter. So, I met Richter. I also met Simpson, who helped develop the hurricane [scale]. He was involved ... with the hurricane intensity system and, at an AMS [American Meteorological Society] meeting, I met Fujita, who's the one who developed the tornado [scale]. So, I met all three of the people who established the earthquake, tornado and hurricane rating systems. I mean, just through chance; I didn't know them well. ... I just met Richter that once, and Fujita, I shook hands with, and, also, Simpson, from being at the American Meteorological Society meetings that they were at. You'd meet people, you shake hands and that's the end.

SI: Did your graduate studies have a focus? Were you writing a thesis? What specifically were you studying at Caltech?

FD: Well, at Caltech, ... if you focused on anything, it was forecasting, but that wasn't all we took, and we did take, as I say, some geophysics courses and an engineering course, in which we were told to design a study of all the conditions for a power plant and a dam in San Luis Obispo in California, and none of us knew a thing about it. We had to study all the conditions, not just

the weather, but everything else. ... We found out, later, [laughter] after we'd gotten our grades and completed the course, that ... the Corps of Engineers had done the same thing and it was all on file down in LA someplace. [laughter] We wouldn't have gotten it, of course, even if we had wanted to get it, but most of the time was forecasting. Krick had his weather service there, so, you could see how a weather service provided weather information to various users, vineyards and a number of different places. ... I found I liked forecasting, but that wasn't all we had. I mean, ... we did do forecasting, and then, I went to Penn State and taught ... a year or so in the Meteorology Department there. ...

SI: When you were at Caltech, did you have to write a thesis?

FD: Not a thesis. Well, yes, you could call it a thesis, but not a dissertation, yes. ... Mine was "The Correlation of Trough Passages at Point Barrow, Alaska, with Canadian Polar Outbreaks in the United States," and, also, we had to give a paper at ... the Caltech seminars. They publish and distribute the schedule all over the ... LA area and the ... auditorium is crowded. In the week I was there, Oppenheimer gave a paper. They put out this schedule weeks in advance, and I had to give, you had to give, lead, a seminar ... which was more difficult than writing the paper, because you had faculty and the students ... sitting in the aisles attending these things. So, you had a crowded group, and a very highly intelligent group, but I lived through it.

SI: You said you spent a year at Penn State.

FD: Yes, and I didn't like teaching and, frankly, I didn't like the head of the department. He was a German who believed in only two things, his violin and doing research, and I'll give you an example. ... Penn State had a very highly rated track team and ... they had an outstanding miler. ... I don't know how I got into this, but they had a need for somebody to make weather obs[ervations], wind observations, really, at these meets, because, if the tailwind was so great, the record, any, wouldn't stand. ... So, I volunteered to do that, and this irritated the heck out of the head of the department. Here, I was helping the university and he was irritated that I wasted my time going up there when I could have been down at my desk in the lab doing research. ... I decided [not to pursue teaching] then, but I met two professors in the geography department there and they were consultants to an Army organization down in Washington called the Environmental Sciences [Division]. ... They said, "They need people," and I went down and they hired me and I worked with them, actually, not in Washington, but at Alexandria, Virginia. ... The Major there, who was in charge, my first boss in government, was working for his doctorate at Harvard, and he left and I became the ... Acting Chief, and then, the Chief of that office. ... It expanded from about ten people to thirty or something, but, then, they built a new lab up in Natick, Massachusetts. ... While I was ... in Alexandria, I was continuing graduate school at night school and on the weekends out at Maryland. So, I had accumulated [credits], and then, ... they built a new lab up in Natick, Massachusetts, and they consolidated a number of labs, the Food and Container Institute in Chicago and various labs in other parts of the country, all in one place. ... When I was transferred up there, I became the head of the Extreme Regions Branch in the Environmental Sciences Division. ... The Environmental Sciences Division had an anthropology branch, a psychology branch, a stress physiology branch, with MDs and physiologists, Extreme Regions Branch, a geography branch and a field support branch, that if you went out in the field, they would provide you with tents, stoves, clothes, etc. ... The head of

that division ... was a food expert and he was known nationally and internationally, and he was an educator. ... The Major who had been in charge of the first office was then a colonel and the Assistant Chief of the division, and he had ... gotten his doctorate from Harvard. ... He called me in one day and he said, "You know, you were going to school down in Maryland." I said, "Yes." He said, "Are you continuing?" and I said, "Well, the distance is too great to do this." He said, "Why don't you go to school up here?" and I said, "Well, I've got three kids and a family and a house and a job," and he said, "Why don't you try anyway?" and he said, "Go into Harvard." So, I went into Harvard, and this was in January, and I went in and saw the dean of the graduate school and he said, "Well, we'll accept you, but ... people who are graduate students do not start in February ... at the second semester. You'll have to wait until September." So, I went back out and I told Herb this, and he said, "Is that so?" and he picked up the phone and he called the graduate dean. ... I could only hear his conversation. He said, "You don't accept students starting in February?" and ... then he said, "Oh, I see." He said, "Well, I find that hard to understand," and the dean might have said, "Why?" or something. He said, "Because I have my doctorate from Harvard and I started in February," and there was dead silence. ... He said, "Thank you," and hung up and he said, "Go back in." I went back in and I started in February, [laughter] but, by that time, I had so many credit hours, I did not take one formal course at Harvard. I met with four professors, by appointment. It was like private tutoring, but it was also difficult, because they'd give you assignments and, when you came back, you were the only one there to answer questions. My supervisor was ... a professor of meteorology and the head of the Harvard Blue Hill Meteorological Observatory. Then, I had a biology professor who was the head of the Harvard Forest at Petersham and the Harvard Forest at Black Rock Forest ... on the Hudson someplace, and I had the head of the geography department. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

FD: Who was just the only person left in the geography department and, when he died, they closed it. They didn't have a geography department, and then, I had a geology professor. So, my orals were in meteorology, biology, geology and geography, and the geographer was a social geographer, city planning and things like that ... not a physical geographer. But I met with them by appointment. ... The office gave me two full days a week off to go to Harvard and, because I could meet by appointment, I could arrange to meet ... on the two days that I would have free, whereas if I'd had a course and it might have been on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. ... I had so many credits hours by that time and so much graduate training at ... Caltech, Penn State and Maryland, that they didn't feel I needed any formal type thing and they gave me assignments when I met with them. So, I went there and, eventually, ended up at Harvard with a degree.

SI: When you were with the Army Environmental Services in Alexandria, what types of things would you be doing?

FD: We were studying the impact of the environment, ... particularly in the extreme regions area, ... on the soldier, his equipment, food, everything that would impact on troops ... and equipment, and that's what we were studying and I found it very interesting. ... I'd been in the Tropics, of course, for most of ... World War II and down in Martinique, and I'd been in the desert areas out in the Southwest United States, ... because I established a micro met[eorology] site at ... the Army's Yuma Test Station. ... They were training, doing the same thing in the

desert that we were, or you do at anyplace, in the Arctic, and so on, to see the impact of the environment on the troops and their equipment and food and things, and operations. ... They didn't have a weather station. So, they really didn't know what they [the conditions] were. They knew in general terms that it was hot and dusty and ... dry, and so on, but they didn't know specifically what to design stuff for. ... In the summer out there ... you just couldn't go out and climb into a jeep. Touch anything, the metal was so hot that you'd burn yourself. Now, not that they couldn't [cope]; they did things, I guess, that they used plastic, and so on, later. ... The other thing [is], I look at these troops in Iraq and Afghanistan and they're loaded down with equipment, the backpacks and all kinds of stuff, and I think to myself, "Those guys are out there in a hundred degrees and how do they stand it? Just the water intake that you need, how do they supply that?" One thing I had of interest, when I was working for the government, which was in the last three or four [months], I got up to the level where I was appointed to all kinds of committees. ... The last committee I was assigned to was in the bowels of the Pentagon, three floors down, way down, and I was the Army representative and there was an Air Force major general, an admiral of some sort, ... representing the Navy--I don't know, I could never get the ranks of the admirals from the braid, what their rank was--and he had a Marine colonel backup. I was the Army representative and the chairman was the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a four-star Air Force general, and I'll probably get arrested for telling you this; you know what the subject matter was? how to conduct war in the Middle East. This was in 1980. That may still be classified, I don't know. [laughter] They declassify ... all the time, but we brought in a number of consultants or experts in their field. We didn't do it all ourselves, but we brought in experts. One of the first things they ... thought to do, "Well, we'll put water tankers at the end of the Mediterranean and run pipes clear across Middle Asia to wherever we had to go." Water pipes! ... They would last about ten minutes. ... Every resident of any place would be tapping into that water for irrigation or for drinking ... or just to destroy it. You could never do something like that, but that's why, I guess, the committee was established. It was interesting. It was the last three months and I retired in July 1980.

SI: You worked for the Army from about 1960 to 1980.

FD: Well, ... I worked for the Army from 1948 to 1980, with one exception. In '60 and '61, I left the Army and went over to the National Science Foundation and, there, we handled proposals from universities ... for the construction or renovation, in the physical sciences, of facilities to be used only, or that part of the facilities be used only for graduate training or research. For example, one of the big ones I handled was from [Dr. James] Van Allen; you know the Van Allen radiation belts?

SI: Yes.

FD: Okay, he was head of the department out in Iowa. ... They needed about two million dollars, but half of that was going to be for undergraduate training, the other half would be graduate training and research, and so, they came in for a request. We could provide up to half of what they needed. ... They came in for ... half a million dollars. ... It was interesting because we had panel members. We only had four in the office and we couldn't handle all the site visits, and, also, all the cross disciplines in the physical sciences. You go into a physics department and you have high energy, nuclear, general, and about two or three others, and you

can't be an expert in everything. So, we had these panel members, and I traveled with Fred Rossini, who was Dean of Science at Notre Dame, Ossie Osburn, who was Vice-President for Research at Penn State, Bill Havens, who was head of the physics department at Columbia, Ken Pickar, who was head of the mechanical engineering department ... at Georgia Tech. I traveled with these people. ... We'd get these proposals in, and then, we'd establish a travel schedule to site visit. We had to site visit those areas. ... Our method of doing this was to visit, go to the ... university and, the next morning, visit with the faculty of the department asking for the grant. ... Then, we'd have lunch and discussions with the president and the financial people in his administration, because we had to make sure that they weren't asking us for a grant and, if we gave it to them, then, they'd go to the state or try to get it. They had to have the money first, and I had a luncheon with Kingman Brewster, who was then the provost, but became President at Yale and our ambassador to England, [Robert F.] Goheen, the President of Princeton, and the funniest one and the one with the greatest sense of humor was at Johns Hopkins. ... We went and he said, "You know, when I got this job, they established a faculty committee to make a recommendation to the administration," and he said, ... "The faculty committee recommended a person and the administration said, 'Fine,' and hired me, and the faculty was in an uproar. They said, 'We meant Ike, not Milton,'" Ike Eisenhower, not Milton, his brother. He told that on himself at a luncheon. [laughter] So, it was interesting, and, when we went to MIT, we met the provost and had lunch with him. Then, he took ... us down and showed the research he was doing on lasers and, two years later, [in 1964], Charles Townes ... received the Nobel Prize in Physics. ... While I was at Caltech, incidentally, ... most Sunday afternoons, I played touch football. The chemistry department had a ... team and we got a pickup team. We played touch football down on the athletic field, and one of the ... players that played with the chemists was Linus Pauling, a two-time Nobel Prize winner. [laughter] I'm boring you silly.

SI: No, it is very interesting. They are all interesting figures, but, to focus on your career in the environmental sciences and extreme regions research, what are the highlights that come to mind, the things that you are most proud of?

FD: Well, one of the things I remember, well, highlights, we came up with studies. ... Actually, my dissertation was done on a micro-climatic study at Big Delta, Alaska, which is about eighty or ninety miles southeast of Fairbanks. ... My dissertation was done on a micro-climatic study that we were doing for the Army up there, ... not just the base itself, but ... they had a range of about 250 square miles in the area and we had stations out there. ... I'll give you an example of why it was needed. The first time I went up there was before I'd started this study. When I took over as Extreme Regions [head], I said, "Okay, I want to go through the Army survival school up at Big Delta," and so, I went up there for a month. There were only two civilians. All the rest were Army, Navy, Air Force ... and Marine officers, and, while we were there, they took us down in the flats, in the channel of Jarvis Creek, I think it was, and where they had a firing range. Now, you go down an embankment of about two hundred feet. ... This was in winter, so, there was no water. It was a braided stream and you had channels, and so on, but everything was frozen. ... They were firing and they missed. This was supposed to be a first round hit and the weapon missed, and I always carried my little sling thermometer, and it was this big, which wasn't real accurate, but at least gave you a ... close approximation of the temperature. ... I finally asked one of the officers, I said, "Is this ... weapon temperature sensitive?" and he said, "Yes," and I said, "Where'd you get your temperature from?" He said, "The FAA [Federal

Aviation Administration] station up at the airfield." Well, the FAA station was recording five degrees and, down there, according to my thermometer, it was twenty below. ... That's why they were missing, I think. ... One of my biggest [thrills], and there's a book over there by Lowell Thomas about him [*Sir Hubert Wilkins: His World of Adventure* (1961)], one of the things I remember is that, for the five or six years I was up at Natick, at the lab level, and even down in Alexandria, Virginia, at my station, the Army had as a consultant a Hubert Wilkins, who was Sir Hubert Wilkins. He did more exploration and flights over the Antarctic than [Admiral Robert E.] Byrd did, and he was an Arctic expert. ... He was a consultant on cold weather problems, particularly. He was born in Australia, in Aborigine country. ... His office was across the hall from mine and he was the ... person who had the idea of taking a submarine under the Arctic ice. ... He took the first submarine under the Arctic ice pack in winter 1933, in a World War I submarine, and, before he left, he wrote a book about why ... he thought it was necessary and would be interesting. He had two hundred fifty copies ... published, gold leaf, with a jacket, and so on. He took all those books with him on the sub. If he hadn't come back, not one of them would have been distributed. ... One morning, I walked in and there on my desk, opened, [on] the flyleaf, was a notation that he had left me, copy seventy-two, I think. ... He had notated, "To Dr. F. de Percin," and so on, "with compliments, Sir Hubert Wilkins," and, also, the commander of the submarine had signed it. That's one thing. Another thing I have that's really scarce is that; do you know the IGY, International Geophysical Year, '57 and '58? [Editor's Note: The International Geophysical Year, a period of intense international scientific study and cooperation, lasted from July 1957 to December 1958.]

SI: Yes.

FD: Okay, Paul Siple, up there, [pointing to a framed magazine on the wall], on *Time Magazine*, was a good friend of mine. He established that South Pole Station, but, the next year, one of the people [who] worked in my branch wanted to go down to the South Pole Station and he went. We sent him. Incidentally, Antarctica is the only continent I've never been on, [laughter] and I could have gone easily if I had wanted, but I was interested in [the Arctic]. Down there, you have an icecap surrounded by ocean and, up north, you have an ocean surrounded by land, and I liked that better than [the other]. I found it more interesting, but, anyway, he went down, and that was the year that Vivian Fuchs made the first trans-Antarctic crossing, from one side to the other. ... In doing so, they went through the South Pole Station and stayed a few days. ... Coming from the other side was a group establishing fuel and ration areas, so that Fuchs could complete his journey. They'd completed them together. All the members were either Australian, New Zealand or British, of those parties. ... This ... person, Dr. Paul Dalrymple, knew that was going to happen. He had these envelopes made out, in color, a tractor train going over ice, a dog sled team going over the ice and he had British, Australian and New Zealand stamps. ... They had the time dates that the first party came, the second party came, and then, the date that they all took off ... but, also, on that envelope, he had the signatures of every member of the parties. ... He had twenty of those envelopes, and his two were destroyed. ... Included in that signature [group], and the leader of the party coming from the other direction, was Edmund Hillary. So, I have this, and my son has already contacted museums, and so on, who might be interested in it, because this is one of, at most, eighteen in the world. ... The book that Sir Hubert gave me, well, there were two hundred fifty of those. I don't know how many would be left now, but Paul's [envelopes], the fellow who did this is Paul Dalrymple; ... he kept two copies for himself

and they were destroyed in a fire in his home. ... There are eighteen left, and this was back in 1958. So, how many are left? I don't know. I don't know whether all this is of interest to you.

...

SI: It certainly is. You retired from the Army in 1980. Did you do anything after that in terms of your career?

FD: Yes, I took up a course in the county on basket weaving. There's one there and one hanging in the kitchen, and my kids each have baskets. ... I played tennis, I jogged and I traveled. My wife and I went to the Galapagos, we went to Machu Picchu, we went down the Amazon Basin, we did Scandinavia, did Turkey, Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Germany, France, Switzerland, and England. ... In this country ... we went [to] the Elderhostel courses that they have at various places, things, and I kept busy that way. ... I started playing tennis and I played a lot of tennis, and then, when I came down here to Venice, ... for ten years, I played on the Venice tennis team, both the sixty and seventy and over teams in the Sarasota County League. We were the only public court team. All the rest were the country clubs, and I played, while I was doing that, twice a week. I played softball four times a week, on the fifty, sixty, sixty-five and seventy over teams. ... Up there in Washington, well, I went fishing and ... I kept busy. That's about it, I guess. I had a mundane life. ...

SI: No, it sounds very interesting.

FD: [laughter] The only other thing that might have been interesting is that when I first went down to the Army staff, ... this was during the Cold War yet, the Army had completed, out on the Greenland icecap, an under snow camp. I'd been up there in summer, when they were just starting that camp, but, then, a year or so later, it was completed. Everything was under the ... icecap. Well, they had air vents, you know, towers coming out and escape hatches coming out at the ends of the side tunnels. So, it was one main tunnel, and then, the side tunnels. They had the kitchen and the quarters and a research tunnel, which they didn't heat, because it was all being done on ice, but the thing that was interesting [was], I went out there for a month and stayed with them for a month. ... This is what I was going to tell you; this is the first under snow Arctic camp powered by a nuclear reactor, and the only other civilians there were the technologists for that, from the organization that sold the reactor to the Army. ... Also, it was the first time that an ice core was drilled and obtained from the surface of an icecap to base level. Now, that's only two thousand feet up there. Since then, they've drilled eight thousand feet in the center of Greenland, and even more, I think, in the Antarctic, but this was new and they were doing this. ... They were doing it while I was there, and then, when I got back to the Pentagon, at some later date, I got called and [they] said, "Be down in the concourse." ... I went down there, and they had reached base level, and they had shipped ice from the base level area down to the Pentagon. ... The VIPs, and I was just there because it was my program, or part of my program, had cocktails and the ice dated back to the time of Christ, from the core that they had drilled, which I found interesting. I haven't had a martini like that since. [laughter] ...

SI: I have just recently seen a program about core samples and how much information they can derive from them.

FD: Well, I don't know what the temperatures [were]. They found a lot of things. For example, wherever there was a major volcano [eruption], they had ... a year or so of dust, and so on, from the eruption of Krakatau and things like that, and they established a lot of other things. They did pollen analysis and they could do oxygen content of the atmosphere, [and] so on. You know, this is 1960, what's that? forty, almost fifty years ago that I was there, but the lab that was doing this, mostly, and whether it still exists, I don't know, was the Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory. ... It was ... practically on the, Dartmouth Campus, up ... at Hanover, New Hampshire, and they were doing a lot of this research work. ... They could use those cores to [find out different things]. Well, just the oxygen content of the atmosphere at that time would be of interest today, and the CO₂ content would be a heck of a lot different. We're spewing carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide and everything else into the atmosphere. ... They could track those gasses then that are caught in the ice ... at the time.

SI: Is there anything else you would like to add about your life?

FD: Well, the only other thing was, in 1958, during the IGY, I was invited to participate in a six-man scientific party. Now, strangely enough, I was in the Army and I was a meteorologist, but this was funded by the Air Force, although it was established under the US program, during the International Geophysical Year, from the National Academy of Sciences. ... I was along as a meteorologist. There was a geologist who was a PhD from Harvard and was ... our scientific leader. We had a limnologist, a glaciologist and a hydrologist, and we flew to northern Alaska, north of the Brooks Range, and we were in an area at the south end of Lake Peter's{; you got a minute?} ...

SI: Sure.

[TAPE PAUSED]

FD: For five months, we were right there. This is Barter Island, here is Kaktovik now, and the six of us were isolated there. This was Lake Peters, this is Lake Schrader and we were there for five months making measurements of various sorts, and it was very interesting. ... To show you ... what can happen up there, three visitors came on a boondoggle up there, you know, they were friends and to visit us, and they got there, got up to our camp. The only way of getting in was flying, of course, and they got to our camp and they were going to stay for two or three days and they had the reservation, flight reservations from Fairbanks, ... two were from Boston, one from Washington, back. We got weathered in. We couldn't even make contact [over] this distance on our radio, which we did every night, to Barter Island. For one week, we could not make radio contact there, and these guys were up there. Their wives and families met them at the airport, thinking they were on the aircraft, because there was no way of saying that they weren't, and they were with us for a week. We put them on KP. [laughter] All up until that time, they were guests, but, when they ... were there for another few days, we said, "Hey, you've got to do something around here." [laughter] ... Here's Fairbanks, here's Big Delta, Delta Junction, and Big Delta from Fairbanks down. They call it Delta Junction because from Fairbanks to Big Delta is the Richardson Highway--it's not the ALCAN Highway--and, at Big Delta, at Delta Junction, the Richardson goes south to Valdez and the ALCAN, the Alaska-Canada Highway, then starts right there, but that's where I did my dissertation work. I've been there and I used to

go to Juneau for meetings, for three or four or five years, I've forgotten, at a joint meeting of the US Army and the Canadian Army on cold weather problems. ... Then, I used to go to Point Barrow to meetings that the Navy had because the Navy Arctic Research Lab was at Point Barrow. So, that's some of the area I traveled, but ... the interesting part of this is that this whole area now is the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

SI: In your career, when you would do these studies, was it to provide information on that type of environment or were you applying what you had learned?

FD: ... I was doing the weather and they were studying [other areas]. The glaciologists and the geologists stayed at Mount Chamberlin, [which] was about nine thousand, a little over nine thousand, feet. At one time, it's been ranked the first, second and the third highest ranges in the Brooks Range. I don't know what it is, but it's one of the highest, and the glaciologists and hydrologists would spend the week up there. They'd come down once a week for supplies and fuel for their Bunsen burner that they cooked on, and so on, and, of course, they were measuring the condition. A hydrologist would go down in the snout of the glacier, where the melt would come, and he established his instruments down there ... to measure the melt water, to see how much [of] the melt water was from the glacier. ... The glaciologist would study the surface and periphery of the glacier. Then, we had the limnologist, who ... would study the conditions of the lakes. They took scale counts from fish and everything and, incidentally, the lake was loaded, just absolutely loaded, with lake trout. You couldn't cast once without getting a strike. Whether you hooked it or not was another thing, but it was just loaded with lake trout, and then, the geologist was doing the geologies of the area, not just the lakes, but out. ... Because my instruments would record, I'd have to go on these two or three-day trips with him, because one guy, regardless of what you see in the movies, one guy ... doesn't go out alone in the Arctic, or in a situation like that. So, I went with him and, because of that, and I have a picture, ... it's in an US Geological Survey official publication, because of that, he named one of the streams after me, Coke Creek. So, Coke Creek is on the map.

SI: How did you get your nickname?

FD: ... Oh, because I had a French grandmother and she said, "*Mon petit coco sec*," and "Coco" was what my mother called me and others called me in the family, but "Coke" was shorter. I could have been called something else, because the other grandmother called me, "*Mon petit chou chou*," which is, "My little cabbage," but I didn't go for that. Well, it didn't matter anyway. That's how I got my nickname.

SI: You had four children.

FD: ... Yes. ... The first two were sons and the next two were daughters and the first two, one went to Hopkins, the other Maryland. They're both engineers; one a mechanical and the second one a chemical, and he worked for EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] for his entire career. In the last twenty years, he was in, twenty or thirty years, actually, he was in hazardous waste disposal and the EPA sent him to Europe to help with problems. Other government agencies, Army, Navy, Air Force and states would ask for his help in how to get rid of hazardous waste. ... My oldest daughter went to Iowa State and she was going to major in math and physics.

Instead, she found a computer science course there and that's what she majored in. ... My youngest daughter went to Cornell and she was an architect major to begin with. She was accepted in the architectural school and God only knows what her major was when she changed. All I know is that she went there, she took courses and she graduated, and, if you want to get that publication right there, just so happens she just sent me that, but her picture's been in the paper, in the Denver paper, at least ten times. ... There she is there, and they had a summit meeting out in Denver, oh, months ago, and she was invited to be one of the six guest speakers. ... The main speaker was [Secretary of the Interior Ken] Salazar, who; I forget his exact name. There were two. One was the ... man that resigned because they found they hadn't paid taxes. ... He would have been appointed as one of the heads of one of the government agencies. The other one is the head of the Department of Interior. ... One chaired the session, one was the principal speaker, and she was one of the guest speakers. Then, they had ... breakfast together and she got a ticket to one of the reserved portions of the inaugurations and, incidentally, she just called today and, over the weekend ... she got a ticket to the town hall meeting and was there with Obama.

SI: The health care one.

FD: Yes. She's in the health area.

SI: She is [Denise] Dee Dee de Percin.

FD: They spelled her name wrong; that's another thing. It's just a small D-E. The D-E is small letters and ninety-nine percent of the people, you can stand over them and tell them, when they're writing your name out, and say, "It's a small D-E," and they'll put a capital "D." [laughter]

SI: She is the Executive Director of the Colorado Consumer Health Initiative.

FD: Yes.

SI: That is very nice.

FD: I just happened to have that. My oldest daughter is working in computers and, ... for a number of years, she was a consultant to the City of Richmond, and then, they decided that it'd be cheaper to hire her permanently. So, they hired her permanently and she now works permanently for the City of Richmond ... at a computer. I don't know what she does; I don't understand computers. In fact, my oldest son is in computers and has been for twenty years. My second son uses computers, but at least he stayed in the area he went to school in. [laughter]

SI: Is there anything else you would like to add about your life or anything else?

FD: No. The only other thing is that my wife was Rosilyn Klosky, Si Klosky's sister. She was a twin and she was my wife for fifty-four years, until, the 22nd of August 1999; she'll have died ten years ago of cancer. ... She was a treasure. We traveled the world together, and that's about it. I hope I haven't confused you, bored you.

SI: No, not at all. It has been fascinating. I have wanted to do your interview for a long time.

FD: The only other thing I can tell you about is that I was looking over some of the books I kept there, textbooks, and darn if I don't see my freshman botany book from Rutgers, right there. I still have it. [laughter] Well, it's got everything about plants in it and, if I want to check on what something of a plant is, I can take that out. It hasn't changed that much.

SI: That is one thing I forgot to ask about; do any of your professors from Rutgers stand out in your memory, besides Biel?

FD: ... Let me think; I can see them, but I can't remember their names, you know what I mean? I can [see] my zoology professor, a physics professor, Cottle was my organic chemistry, [William] Rieman from quantitative analysis. Oh, what's her name? Jeez, my mind goes when I try to think of something. He was dean of the chemistry department, and I dated his daughter for a number of years. Actually, I went to school, this was in 1939-1943; I know their names as well as I know my own, Roxanna Read, and that was Dean [William T.] Read. ... Roxanna Read, well, I went to school in Rutgers Elementary School with her brother, Thornton. ... He was sick a good deal of his life, but I knew him and I guess that's how I met her, and I was about three ... years ahead, I think, when I was dating her, I was either a junior or a senior and she was starting. She was brilliant. They both were. They were both brilliant. ... Biel was the one I remembered, and I'll tell you why, because he was the one who took the greatest interest in me. Of course, I was practically his only student, so, maybe that's why he did it, [laughter] but he was very, very interesting and a terrific teacher. He had come from Austria. His name was Dr. Erwin Biel and, for years, I thought that he was Jewish and had escaped from Austria before the Nazis took it over. ... When he died, I found out he was Catholic, [laughter] but maybe he escaped anyway, because they were after the Catholics as well as the Jews, the Germans, in fact, any religion except the one they believed in, I think, most of them; but Biel was the one I remember the most. ... I don't know whether any of this helps you or not or any of it's interesting.

SI: All of it was interesting.

FD: That's my career in a nutshell.

SI: All right, thank you very much. I appreciate your time.

FD: Well, you're welcome. I enjoyed it and I had somebody to talk to this afternoon. In fact, I probably talked too much. [laughter]

SI: No, absolutely not. When you get the transcript, which will be a little while; it usually takes six months to a year.

FD: Okay, don't worry about it. I'm retired and I'll, hopefully, still be here, but at least you have the information.

SI: At that time, if you want to add anything, you can add things.

FD: Or I'll check it, and so [that] you'll have it accurate, at least. ... If I think of anything else, I can do it. The only thing I can think of is that my kids all donated to the World War II Memorial in Washington, so, I'm in the computer and you can go there and get my name up in the computer. [laughter]

SI: Good. Thank you very much, I appreciate it.

FD: You're welcome.

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

Reviewed by Paul Shi 11/1/10

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 12/21/10

Reviewed by Fernand de Percin 1/20/11