

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH FRANKLIN S. SIMON

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW BY

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KP: This begins an interview with Mr. Franklin S. Simon on April 5, 1995 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Kurt Piehler and ...

KM: Kelly Martin.

KP: And I guess I would like to begin by talking a bit about your parents and New Brunswick when you were growing up. Your father owned a business in New Brunswick.

FS: Yes, that's correct, but that's going way back. And, in ... 1929-1930, I'm sure, you know, that the so-called Great Depression started, and their business, while it didn't fail, they never went bankrupt, he paid off his creditors. I think he was crazy by today's standards, but they did. And, they went out of business, he and my uncle, went out of business, and he had very good political connections, particularly with Harold Hoffman, who was either then a freeholder, but later became governor. And he got a good ... federal job. I don't want to say, very good, but he was Deputy United States Marshall. So, in my family we always had food on the table and everything, at a time when many people were very deprived and had a very, very, hard time. We didn't have an easy time, but we always had a roof over our head and, ... let me give you just one little insight. I always remember the amazing thing. ... As I mentioned previously, I went to Boy Scout camp; I loved Boy Scouts. And, I was able to go for six weeks in the summer at seven dollars a week. Others, of the guys, thought that my family must be multi-millionaires to be able to afford forty-two dollars for the season, plus a dollar a week spending money. We weren't multi-millionaires, but everybody was fairly poor, so we really, at those ages, we didn't really much know the difference.

KP: What type of business did your father have?

FS: Well, it was a dry goods business. It was right where the parking deck of the Hyatt is now. Lower Church Street, which was wiped out by that parking deck. But, that was a big business district in New Brunswick in those days. And, they were probably in business there for about fifteen or twenty years. I don't remember when it started; I really can't remember that. My mother also was very close to that business, and she retired as a department manager ... for Sears, in New Brunswick.

KP: When did she start working for Sears?

FS: I would suspect that it was in the mid-1930s, but it would be very difficult for me to pin that down.

KP: So, Sears has a long standing connection with ...

FS: Oh, yes, yes, yes. I know of three Sears locations. One was on Neilson Street, again, not too far from where the Hyatt garage is now. Then, later, it moved to Albany Street where J&J headquarters is now, almost where the tower is. And there was a reasonably modern store there, but then, of course, ... that got torn down when J&J built the headquarters, and they moved out to the highway where they are now, U.S. 1. ...

KP: So your mother went to Sears after your father's store closed down?

FS: Yes, yes. My mother was a very good businesswoman and my father wasn't so good.
[laughter]

KP: You grew up used to the fact that your mother would work outside the home?

FS: Oh, yes, definitely, and I realized how good a businesswomen she was, and my father was not necessarily, but as a government worker, he was very loyal. He was reasonably well-educated for that day and age, very literate and all. And, he did have some sideways associations with World War II and the Nuremberg Trials in that he was like a general office manager for an eminent judge, Judge William Clark, who sat on the Nuremberg Trials. And my father did some clerical-type work for him, even though his title was Deputy United States Marshall. You'd think he was running around with a gun and transporting prisoners. ... He did start that way, but, ultimately, he became an office-type person.

KP: When you say he was the office manager for Judge Clark, where did he perform these duties?

FS: Newark. Newark Federal District Courts.

KP: And he stayed in the United States and performed these duties for the judge?

FS: Yes, that is correct. Yes.

KP: And, in a sense, did he sort of take care of the Judge's affairs?

FS: Exactly. While the Judge was in Europe and sitting on the various things, in addition to Nuremberg, my father took care of all of his domestic affairs. I have even some letters, but none of them have any historic value that I can see. ...

KP: They were not about the cases or ...

FS: No, they were mostly about local politics, New Jersey and northeastern politics, some federal politics. But they didn't really hit on wartime things. I really looked at them for that. They don't have ... any value, as far as I can tell. And, in some cases, they're very derogatory towards certain individuals. It probably wouldn't be very good to have people see them because they were confidential correspondences. My father was ... a confidante of his, certainly.

KP: Of Judge ...

FS: Of Judge Clark.

KP: It sounds like your father was very active politically.

FS: He was. That's actually why he got a good ... paying government job, and paying meant good in those days. You know, 1930, well, people just didn't have enough to eat. My wife's father was very poor and was unemployed for a long time and it was difficult to put food on the table. So, there certainly were plenty of people who didn't do very well at all.

KP: Your father was also a Republican.

FS: Yes.

KP: Long standing Republican?

FS: Oh, yes, yes. ... He wouldn't allow any other word to be said in the house, very conservative. [laughter] But, that was not unusual for that era. You know, you're coming out of Victorianism, and people were, generally, socially very conservative. And, financially conservative, also.

KP: So, your father probably did not believe in debt?

FS: Oh, absolutely not. If you didn't have money, you didn't buy. And unfortunately, ... we were imbued with the same thing, which was very wrong. I mean, I'm not doing badly today at all, but I could have twice as much total worth if I had known that you go and take mortgages on things and leverage your money. But, no, it was taught to us, you don't do that, it isn't done. ... [laughter] We were taught economics of a short period, rather than long-term economics. And Rutgers didn't do anything to straighten that out either, nothing at all. I only had one course in economics, and ... it was just really rather poor. It didn't give you any practical insights into anything.

KP: What did you father think of Franklin Roosevelt?

FS: ... You know, you don't see many people today, I guess, that thought ... Roosevelt was a tyrant. But, yes, he thought he was quite a tyrant. He's taking away your personal rights.

KP: So, he really took the Republican hard line?

FS: Yes, yes. Hard line, I would say that's a very good term.

KP: Were your parents active in a synagogue at all?

FS: Yes, well, always very active members, but again, in those days, you remember that money was very scarce. So, if you were able to even contribute financially, you were ... doing something pretty good. But, active membership, yes, particularly my mother, more than my father.

KP: Which synagogue was it?

FS: Right here in New Brunswick, Anshe Emeth; it still exists. It's the oldest congregation, I believe, in this area. About 140 years, something like that.

KP: And were your parents observant in terms of any dietary restrictions?

FS: No, no. ... And, in those days, a lot of people who previously were, gave it up because of the financial constraints, and, you know, the government did give food away, and you sort of accepted it. ... If you were really hungry, you took what you could get.

KM: Did you remain in the same house during the Depression? Were there any moves?

FS: No, they did lose a house as loads and loads of people did, and, I think, about 1936. ... What happened was, you had the FHA, which is a lot like present-day, government sponsored, mortgage plans. And, what happened is, if you were really smart, and you came up against financial problems and didn't have any money, you simply stopped paying your mortgage. Well, the government was so slow in those days, and maybe they still are today, but, in terms of foreclosure, you could go two years without paying anything before you actually had to sign your house over to the government agency that guaranteed the mortgage. So, a very astute lady told my mother that that's the thing to do. And, I think that we got away with it for two years with just simply paying nothing. And I remember that my father had an insurance policy that matured. Life insurance was a big thing in those days. Today, I think, it's nonsense, but in those days it was a very big thing to people to have life insurance. His policy matured, and he got a few thousand dollars, and they bought another house in ... Highland Park. And that was 1937, and actually even when we got married, we occupied a very small apartment in that house. So, that was a fairly long time. Only moved once in those years. It was a pretty stable situation. I was born in New Brunswick, but I was only a few months old when we moved to Highland Park. Highland Park was a very nice community, excellent public schools, much better than they are today. Today they're fairly good, too, but they were excellent in those days.

KP: Did your parents have an expectation that you would go to college?

FS: Yes. Yes, but not necessarily in engineering. To this day, if somebody asked me why I opted for engineering, I can't tell you. Ultimately, I feel I became a pretty good engineer. But, ... I was probably even more adept in biology. I was pretty good at that stuff.

KP: You said that Highland Park was an excellent school. What sticks out about it? What made it so good?

FS: Well, for one thing, many faculty members of Rutgers lived in Highland Park in those days. Maybe they still do. As a matter-of-fact, on the north side, we called it Hungry Hill because Rutgers couldn't pay them either. They got paid in script. They simply got certificates that said, "We owe you some money," which were possibly changeable into groceries or something at certain locations, but I don't know that. ... Nonetheless, those people were pretty interested in education. Our school teachers, in those days, tended to be from the Midwest. They were pretty rigorous. Actually, I had a Latin teacher I was scared to death of. Kids probably don't even take

Latin today, do they? And I still have a good background in French ... and have always used it. So the languages, including English, were a rigorous curriculum. ... We did poetry, we did the classics. My kids didn't have anywhere near the amount of that, that I had. Now, of course, that's in addition to the math and sciences. It was a good school. It was a well-run school system.

KP: And it sounds like there was an expectation that a large number would go to college?

FS: I think, from Highland Park, probably, ... even in those days, more than fifty percent. That was quite exceptional in those days.

KP: You mentioned before we got started that you were a very active Boy Scout.

FS: Yes. I just always loved that.

KP: Did you become an Eagle Scout?

FS: No, I never did quite make Eagle. I aspired toward it, but I didn't make that.

KP: But it sounds like you stayed in it for a number of years?

FS: Yes, I did. That's correct.

KP: And you mentioned in the preamble that in many ways looking back on it, it was quite militaristic.

FS: Oh, yeah. Well, you had to line up and put out your hands with space for the next guy and march in formation and things of that nature. That was part of it. And then, of course, ... the patriotic things. You know, salute to the flag, all of those kinds of things. So, it was very similar to the military in those respects. And the physical things. You know, the playing basketball and the teaching about exercise, first-aid. It was all good stuff.

KP: And where was your troop? Was it based in Highland Park?

FS: Highland Park, yes.

KP: What was the organization that sponsored it?

FS: That was the Highland Park Reformed Church, still there on Second Avenue. The troop, I believe, is still the oldest functioning troop in this county. Troop Two, it was an oldie. I later became a Boy Scout Commissioner, thirty years later, which I did for about ten years.

KP: So, it sounds like you have very fond memories of Boy Scouts?

FS: Very fond memories, yeah. Excellent, it was really good. The summer camps were excellent.

KP: Where was summer camp?

FS: Summer camp was at Blairstown, New Jersey. I think that's the Golden Chain Camp now. The Boy Scouts don't have that camp anymore.

KM: When you graduated high school, were you a little younger than your classmates?

FS: Yes, I was among the youngest. That is correct.

KM: Was that because you started early?

FS: Yes, I started earlier, but it's only a freak of the birthdays. March. They would take a certain number into kindergarten classes, to start. Well, you filled it up, and maybe, in that year they were able to extend it through to April, or something like that. So, my birthday was the end of March; I was included. It was no hard, fast rule. It was just a matter of how many people they could take in at any particular time.

KM: Unlike today.

FS: Yeah, today everything is by rules. You can't discriminate. And in those days, we didn't know the word minority. And, if anything, minorities maybe meant Hungarian and Polish people. [laughter] You know, the European immigrants, particularly Eastern European immigrants who were, a lot of them, in this overall area of central New Jersey. That's what it meant.

KP: How were the Hungarian and Poles viewed at the time?

FS: Well, there was no discrimination, but I would say that ethnic groups stuck very close together. In those days you didn't have to speak English in New Brunswick, particularly French Street. You spoke Hungarian. My wife did not speak any English when she started school. There was no "English as a Second Language," at all. And, at that age, you learned very, very fast. There were particular words that she didn't know. One teacher, when they were crowded in the hall on a cold morning to keep out of the wind, would say, "Are you squashed?" and she always remembers that she had no idea what the teacher was asking. But, today she has a degree in English from Rutgers. ... Well, I'm just saying, going from not speaking English at all, at the age of five, to a degree in English without any extra programs. Children learn very, very fast. You shouldn't interpret that as meaning I'm anti-English as a Second Language programs, but, if the objective is not to ultimately teach the person English, then it's wrong. In other words, you use the second language as a device to teach them the English, but otherwise, I think it's just knocking them out of the overall opportunities of our society because you're not going to get a good job if you don't speak English.

KP: Your wife was born in New York City?

FS: No. She was born in Cleveland, but they moved here when she was six-months-old. In fact, we lived within a block from each other, but our families never knew each other.

KP: Oh, okay.

FS: We only lived within a block from each other for a very short time. And my wife still speaks fluent Hungarian.

KP: How did your family and yourself feel in the 1930s with the rise of Nazi Germany?

FS: It was the day and age when you almost, sort of, kept quiet and didn't bring attention to yourself. It was probably, in retrospect, a very wrong thing to do.

KP: So, you do not remember ever having discussions about it?

FS: Oh, no. There were discussions, like, "There's gonna be a parade," or demonstration and, "maybe, we should go out and anti-demonstrate," but, "no, let's not make a spectacle of ourselves." ... It was that kind of day and age. It was different and probably very incorrect.

KP: In a sense, your father and mother didn't like what was going on?

FS: Oh, no. Of course they didn't like it.

KP: But, they did not want to really take an active role in protesting.

FS: Well, I don't want to say they didn't take any role in protesting, but it was not overt. It was not before the general public. It was not the kind of thing that you would do to bring attention to yourself.

KP: Did they participate in any boycott of German goods?

FS: I don't think so. The only group who I know of that were truly militant, and they were supported, was J.W.V., Jewish War Veterans. And they did have raids on a Nazi camp at Andover, New Jersey. And we knew people who were involved in those things, and we supported them. But they were the overt ones and probably my family just gave them some support. I don't know if they could give them financial support. Maybe they did. I'm not sure.

KP: How did your family feel about Zionism in the 1930s?

FS: It was too new to be well-known. It was too remote a concept. It just didn't seem real, probably. It was something nice to think about, but ... to ever believe that Israel could exist as it exists today ... is such a far-out concept that I don't think they could really think in those terms at all.

KP: Well, it sounds like your father had a very practical manner, that it must have seemed very dreamy-eyed to him, the whole thing?

FS: Well, I think so, but see, in the 1920s, an unfortunate thing happened. You're getting my opinions, now. These are not documented things. This is anecdotal. I think that a lot of Jewish families tried to become fully-integrated into American society. They wanted to join the country club. It was the beginning of the destruction of identity and uniqueness, and, I think, it was socially and ethnically a big mistake. But, nonetheless, it happened. My father was among those. He was a political and social gadfly, and I'm sure, he wanted to join the country club. I don't think my mother much cared, but my father was the type, politics and all that kind of stuff. You know, "Let me become part of the overall society, join lots of organizations," and things like that.

KP: So your father was a joiner?

FS: Yes, definitely. So I believe, in retrospect, it was a very bad thing to happen socially, but nonetheless, it did happen.

KP: How did your father feel about America's possible entry into war, particularly in 1939, 1940?

FS: They were always supportive of participation, helping England and so forth, yes.

KP: So in a sense his views ...

FS: Before we got involved in the war, you know, aid to Britain and so forth.

KP: How did he feel about the Willkie campaign in '40?

FS: I really can't answer that. I can't really remember. I know that I had thousands of Willkie buttons. I think he probably would have voted for Willkie. Willkie supported the concept of aid to England. My recollections are that he was supportive in that respect. I don't think he was anti-Roosevelt in that respect.

KP: Your father had not served in World War I, did he?

FS: No, he already was married. He married in 1911. I'm the youngest of my family. And he did volunteer, but because he was married, he was not accepted for service.

KP: Where were you when the news of Pearl Harbor came?

FS: I know exactly where I was. A bunch of teenagers were at a friend's house and listening to the radio and heard it. And I made one prophetic statement. I said, "I bet we'll all be in it before it's over." And we were. [laughter] I ... meant of the teenagers there, particularly the teenage boys who were there, that we would be involved, ... and, of course, all were.

KP: Of course, you were all young, very young still.

FS: Oh yes, yes, sure. 1941 I was fifteen.

KP: And you were still a Boy Scout, at fifteen?

FS: Probably. Maybe less and less active because of more and more high school things were coming in. But, nonetheless, I probably was a member and attended occasional meetings. I didn't go to camp anymore. What happened, ... this might be of interest. After the Lend-Lease thing got passed by the federal government, we had a lot of traffic going through Raritan Arsenal. Now, you know where Middlesex County College is today? That was a big arsenal, and there was a tremendous amount of hardware that was shipped out of there to Britain. And the kids would go to work, at three o'clock, we would get out of school. They cut our school by fifteen minutes. Instead of 3:15, it was three o'clock. So, we would get on busses and go out to the arsenal and work out there, assembling shipments, loading boxcars, and things of that nature. Boy, that was wonderful fun. Because we were underage, we were only allowed to work until ten o'clock at night. We weren't allowed to work till eleven because of New Jersey law. So, we worked from say, 3:30 or 4 till ten. And again, great fun. It gave us new exposure, and I say "us" because I really mean it. The kids from this area, we had no experience, particularly with black people, and there were a lot of them, from New York, who came in and worked at Raritan Arsenal. So, it was quite a new experience to us to meet these people.

KP: How long did you work at the Raritan Arsenal?

FS: I really couldn't tell you that. Maybe, a year and a half. That would be very difficult to say. Probably, let's say, from sometime in 1942 till mid '43.

KP: You mention that you met black Americans really, for the first time, when you worked with them. How did some of your conceptions of African Americans change?

FS: Well, they couldn't change because I had no conception to start with. ... The interface with them was virtually zero. There were, maybe, two or three black kids in some of my classes in school. And they were generally from pretty poor families. The very rough, colloquial English usage we probably laughed at and thought it was pretty funny that they spoke that way. But, other than that, there was not much interface at all. So, I had no preconceptions. They became, sort of amusing people, very amusing, because they would tell us stories. Again, you know, ... our very innocent kind of life that we lived here, and they would tell us things that were so different from our experience that we would be amused by the stories that they told us. [laughter]

KP: So where would they tell you these stories, over lunch?

FS: Oh, yeah. ... Even while we worked. You know, you're pushing a great big box along, and they tell you just some little insight. ... When I say story, it might be a one-minute story, you know, nothing more than that. Or, you're having a drink or something like that.

KP: So what did you learn? What did you learn that you did not realize was out there?

FS: Just that there was an all-together different society of life out there, that's all. I mean, I couldn't give you specifics now. No, it's just too far back. We're talking a long time. I want to interject ... next week my wife and I are going to Memphis, to a fiftieth anniversary of one of my air force buddies. And, I was best man at their wedding. So, fifty years, even since their wedding.

KP: What else do you remember about working at Raritan Arsenal? It must have been just a beehive of activity?

FS: Exactly true, tremendous amount of activity. I thought it was very wasteful. Even at that age, I could tell there was a tremendous amount of waste of effort taking place. So, in other words, you'd break open a big wooden box, take the things out and pack them in another wooden box. It seemed sort of foolish. A lot of truck parts, a lot of tank parts, a lot of mechanisms, things of that sort, not live ammunition. There was live ammunition there, but that was in a different location. And those bunkers are just covered up now. They're way down by the river, at the flats of the river. If you ever drive into Raritan Center, are you familiar with the area?

KP: Not with Raritan itself.

FS: If you turn in there and drive a mile or so down, you'll begin to see flat areas of the river, and there were just big, big, beehive type of enclosures that were loaded with ammunition. But, no, I didn't work there. But, lots and lots of truck parts. I was only impressed with the inefficiency. The stuff was beautifully packed in wax, in waxed papers and things, to keep it from rusting. And we'd open them up and put them in the shelf and then you withdraw an order and re-pack them in the same way. There was a lot of waste.

KP: How was the pay relative to other jobs? I know it is a while ago.

FS: I would suspect it was thirty cents, thirty-five cents an hour, or something like that. But, that was not bad for those days. My first regular job, after I graduated Rutgers, I got \$3,000 a year. And, I thought our objectives in those days, and I'm including a very astute accountant who today is a millionaire, terrific financial manager, we all had the same objective. If we could ever make \$10,000 a year, we would be on easy street. It would be magnificent, we would be millionaires. But, I got \$3,000 on my first job and I thought that was great. And the year before that it was \$2,500. They had just increased the basic wage for college graduates or, at least, technical engineers and chemists, and so forth. I suspect that you guys would've been making a thousand a year. [laughter] The technical people, we've always gotten paid somewhat better than the liberal arts and other graduates.

KP: What else, before leaving Raritan Arsenal? How many women worked at the arsenal? Do you have any recollection?

FS: Well, there were women working there, but it was mostly clerical work. We were moving big boxes that weighed ... 600 to 700 pounds. We had these tremendously long fork-trucks, you know. I'd have to reach all the way up here to reach to the handles, and then it would take two people to break it over. Once you got it balanced, you could move it, but it would take two of us. So, they didn't have women. They couldn't reach that high for one thing. Even at that age, I guess, a lot of us guys were fairly tall and we had loads of energy. [laughter] Lots and lots of energy. So, the women were only doing clerical work at that time. They were not moving hand trucks and loading boxcars, as they might today. They weren't doing it in this part of the country. In other parts of the country they were.

KP: Raritan Arsenal would also become a prisoner-of-war camp.

FS: No, no.

KP: You do not have any recollection of that?

FS: No. ... No, but I don't believe you're correct. Camp Kilmer?

KP: Okay, yes.

FS: Parts of Camp Kilmer, yes. ...

KP: Yes, I think someone maybe has told it to me wrong.

FS: POWs, I'll give you something there, particularly the non-German POWs. There weren't too many Germans, but loads of Italians because most Italians, even in the middle of the war, if they were in the Italian Army they loved the United States. You know, they all had a paisano here and a cousin and so forth. ... Their great objective in the world was to get out of Italy, get to the United States. ... They were lovely people to deal with. We never had any problems from any of them. They were very cooperative. They would do anything that you asked. I don't believe I had any contact with German prisoners that I can think of.

KP: Did you have contact with the Italian POWs

FS: Yes, well, they'd do a lot of menial stuff around, you know. Maybe they would be working in a mess hall preparing food or cleaning up and all. They were overjoyed to do that kind of thing. But it's particularly true of Italian prisoners. And, you didn't have to guard them or anything. It just wasn't necessary. They were happy as could be. ... [laughter] For many of them, it was the best thing that ever happened in the world.

KP: Camp Kilmer and, to a large extent, Raritan Arsenal built up very quickly and very dramatically.

FS: Well, yes, but Raritan Arsenal existed from World War I. Camp Kilmer didn't.

KP: Yeah, but Camp Kilmer just emerges overnight.

FS: Yeah, correct.

KP: What was the impact on Highland Park and New Brunswick?

FS: Well, ... it just brought thousands and thousands of people into town. And there were, I remember, there was an old hotel, also right where the Hyatt is now, called the Hotel Klein and the telephone company simply took it over and had to install all kinds of communications equipment in there because there were so many military people going through who wanted to call their families and so forth. So, that was one impact.

We had the impact then, of black people from the south coming in to work in our factories and work in all kinds of places, getting out of the farm, of ... very simple agriculture societies that they were in. The city changed, ultimately, dramatically. I don't know that these are prejudices or what, but, New Brunswick can, in certain areas, be rather dangerous at night, drug traffic and all kinds of things like that. In those days, when we were teenagers, anytime, day or night, we felt we were completely safe in this city. And the population was altogether different in those days. The schools were not too bad in New Brunswick. Today, New Brunswick physically looks pretty good, but the schools are really rock bottom, zero, blank, nothing. Most middle class families, who live in New Brunswick, send their kids to private school. Very few middle class families would send their kids to the public schools in New Brunswick. They're really pretty bad. But that all started with seeking workers in the World War II period.

KP: Was there any tension between this influx of black workers and other residents?

FS: No. There was in New York. There were some race riots in New York and that was, again, what some of the black guys at the arsenal told me about. And, I was working there when that happened, but they didn't bring it to work with them, and we thought it was sort of funny, but we were away from it. We were remote from it. You know, New York, Harlem and that area, were still forty miles away. So, it didn't mean much to us at all. Except these guys told us about things, "Yeah, I went into that store, and I took so and so," and we laughed. We thought it was pretty funny. Again, we were pretty young. We didn't understand a lot of what was going on socially.

KP: You had a lot of servicemen coming into the area, many of whom were getting ready to depart.

FS: Yes, well, that's what it was. Camp Kilmer was a port of embarkation.

KP: Yes. For a lot of soldiers, this is their last time in America. Did that cause any problems?

FS: No.

PS: Or benefits to New Brunswick?

FS: Benefits in terms of them spending money. Sure, the merchants, of course, enjoyed some considerable prosperity. But as far as, again, the people ... doing wild things and hazards, no. My wife danced at the USO all the time, all the time, and took busses out to Camp Kilmer. She loved to dance. She could dance all night. And, all the young girls did that. There was no trepidation, ... no fear of any horrible thing occurring to you.

KP: So your wife was active in the USO during the war?

FS: I mean she was then a teenager. But all of her teenage girlfriends did the same thing.

KP: That's what they did, they went to Camp Kilmer?

FS: ... Yeah. Well, they actually had busses that would take them out for dancing and socializing. Of course, take them home at eleven o'clock at night, too. I mean, this was a different age. They were all herded back onto the bus, at eleven or whatever time it was, and go back. There was no alcohol or anything served. Although we had 3.2 beer, it was pretty watery stuff.

KP: As a Boy Scout or in your high school, how did the war change your high school education? You mention working in Raritan Arsenal.

FS: Yeah.

KP: But did you, for example, did your Boy Scout group do any scrap drives or anything else?

FS: I think we did, but ... that's too far back for me to be very factual about that. I couldn't really say. The only impact I can recall is that the older boys in the senior class were starting to go into the military. So, the senior class deteriorated in male size. And as I said, I was very young, so the younger of us were the ones who were still there. The athletic teams in the universities, of course, went down to very little. We'd play LeHigh twice in a year because you couldn't go very far, nor could most of the schools get a team of any particular sport together. And the guys who were still here were either very young or else they were 4-Fs, they had some physical disability. Now, that didn't necessarily keep them from playing football or basketball, but still it was a disability of some sort which might have limited them in some respect. They certainly weren't good. On the other hand, Army and Navy were superb. [laughter]

KP: Why did you come to Rutgers? Had you thought about other schools?

FS: Well, again, remember ... I started here in 1943 and it was wartime. I could simply get on my bicycle and roll down the hill, didn't even have to pump, and roll right in. I simply took a high school transcript and showed it to Dean Metzger, and he said, "Sign here." ... It was that simple in those days. They did have a basic English qualification test. What is the right word for that? I can't remember.

KM: SATs?

FS: Well, it's something like that. ... You have to have basic qualification English. ... I did not even have to take that because he knew what school I came from and he knew that if you came from that school you spoke pretty good, proper, English. I had a reasonable command of the language, so I didn't have to take any of that. No zero zeros, or anything of that sort. You went right in although there were loads of military guys on campus though, in the military programs.

KP: The ASTP.

FS: ASTP. programs, yeah. Now, I had to do ROTC, though.

KP: Do you think you would have gone to another school if it hadn't been for the war? Did you have this vision that you would end up going to Rutgers?

FS: Well, I have always felt a close association with Rutgers in terms of football. I go back to watching Rutgers football far back, 1935. So, football was always a big thing for the kids, and Rutgers had a free stand for the kids.

KP: So, one of your memories of growing up is going to Rutgers football games?

FS: Absolutely, yes.

FS: I read in the article, that is in your folder, that even now it takes you back when you go to a Rutgers game.

FS: Yes. I'm very close to the whole thing, the letter winners' association, Scarlet R, and ... anything related to football. I still participate.

KM: Do they still have, there was an article on the "Soup Group," is that still going on today?

FS: Oh yeah, ... that's my group. An unusual phenomenon has happened. We used to have as many as 100 at our football Saturday parties. But the Soup Group was my group. I didn't make the soup, another lady did, Eleanor French. And, it was written up in the newspapers and all, publicized. We used to have 100 people or so every Saturday, home games Saturday. But now, so many of them have retired and have left the area that now we're down to fifteen or twenty people. We don't get any more than that. But we still do it.

KP: You gather every home game?

FS: Oh, absolutely. ... It's a big social occasion. The height of my social year is football. I mean, we're already making reservations now for New Orleans and Miami. I'm retired, I can do that. We make our reservations sometimes a year in advance for hotels. That is because, like, Syracuse, very difficult to get a room. We like to go to Skaneteles. Are you familiar with that? It's at the north end of one of the Finger Lakes near Syracuse, a lovely little hotel. We like to go

there. Sherwood Inn, twenty-two rooms, but if you don't do it a year in advance, you don't get into Sherwood Inn. [laughter] But we still try.

KP: Since you went to the football games in the 1930s, do you remember the famous Princeton verses Rutgers game in 1938, where Rutgers won?

FS: Well, I certainly remember it. Many people think that was the first game in the stadium in 1938 and it was not. The first game was Hampden-Sydney, the week before, and we kids went to the Hampden-Sydney game. But, because ... Rutgers-Princeton was such a big event, they didn't have free seats for us. Well, we didn't have any money, so, no, I couldn't go to that game. I remember it, yes, sure. But, almost every other game had free seats up on the brow of the hill, which would be the southwest end ... of the west parking lot. Of course, that brow on the hill was cut away now. I think there's a road runs down there now. But we still park in the same area, that's our sort of reserved space, southwest corner.

KP: You came to Rutgers in 1943. What were some of your initial impressions? One question is, you still lived at home then?

FS: Yes. So, again, it was no big change. And it was just an extension of high school, perhaps a little bit less hand holding. Many of the instructors were not excellent at that time. There were a few that were really great, but there were many who were not. And, a little bit difficult to follow what they were talking about and they didn't render too much help to the students. But, ... I don't want to exaggerate that out of proportion. They were graduate assistants, and Rutgers had to take who they could get.

KP: Did you attribute some of this to the war?

FS: Absolutely, because unless they had some physical disability, they were in the military. So, Rutgers could only hire who they could get too, and get a lot of guys out of retirement. There were some pretty old ones. They weren't too bad, but, I would say, there were a number of younger graduate assistants who really didn't know how to teach.

KP: Certain things never change.

FS: Yes, I guess, that might be true.

KP: You mentioned, before we started the interview, you initially met Dean Metzger, and he was the one who admitted you. It almost sounds like you were amused by Dean Metzger.

FS: Well, I think we were more scared of him than amused. Later, I maybe became amused, but we were scared. ... Also, I mentioned, we had to go to chapel three times a week, around noon. And he certainly preached. He was Jonathan Edwards all over again. He was preaching hell, fire, and brimstone. And we had all the dour, old presidents of the university and distinguished professors glaring down at us from the portraits. And there were sixty or seventy big portraits up

there and there wasn't a smile among them. I mean, the Dutch Reformed Church has never been a place of joy. ... It's a pretty rigorous kind of thing. [laughter] John Calvin all the way.

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

FS: It was nothing unusual. In other words, I knew about it. ... Maybe I'm the kind of person that accepts things very easily. I've never been too resistant to changes of any sort.

KP: Because, although it was nondenominational, it was definitely Christian, especially from what people said.

FS: It would be hard for me to tell in retrospect. I think he ... kept it very ecumenical, I would say, in that respect. I can't fault him on that. And, well, I knew his son a little bit better. His son was much more liberal, much more liberal person, than old Fraser.

KP: You were on campus during the war and a number of people have said that there were very few people on campus. The campus had a very deserted feel to it.

FS: No, don't believe that's true at all because the ASTM., there were loads of them, marching all around the place. The military programs had lots of people in here. Our classes of non-military people were relatively small, but the university was very small, you know. Maybe, there were few nonmilitary graduates.

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FS: It was a very different institution.

KM: Your education was disrupted shortly after your freshman year. What was it like knowing that? You knew that it was going to be disrupted. You knew that you were not eighteen yet. Was it hard to concentrate on school work knowing that it was going to be for the short term?

FS: No, they really poured it to us, ... they concentrated the timing. ... You didn't have much time to think, because you were going to class all day, ... five and a half days a week, in order to get the advanced programs, to get people to have as much education as possible before they went in the military. So there wasn't time to think or worry about it. I do remember, though, that when I told Dean Metzger that I had enlisted and was going, he was rather upset by that. He thought that that wasn't the thing to do, that I should stay in the university. Now, whether that was to ensure that his paycheck was going to be paid every month, I don't know, [laughter] although I don't attribute any bad motives to him. I think he just really meant, "Hey, you need a nucleus of trained people." Nonetheless, ... even those couple of terms that I had, I was a fairly decent science student, which was very beneficial in the air force because I tested very high on all technical tests. And that got me into these good Air Force schools.

KM: You said it was on the trimesters at that point?

FS: ... Three terms a year. I think so.

KP: When did you enter, in the summer or fall, if you remember?

FS: I think after I graduated high school I took the couple months off and entered in the fall.

KP: ASTP. had separate classes. Did you have any contact with any of the ASTP. people?

FS: I would say relatively little, although there was nothing to prohibit it. There were only the exceptional ASTP. student that would be in a civilian class. It would have to be for some particular reason that they wanted to train this person in a particular thing. Suppose, you know, they grabbed onto him and wanted to train him in Greek? They might put him in a Classics class or something like that, rather than grabbing all the people for that kind of thing. It did occur, but it was the exception.

KP: You decided to enlist. What prompted your decision to enlist?

FS: ... I didn't want to go in the mud of the infantry. [laughter] I knew, I'd get drafted, so ... why wait around and get drafted? Choose a good branch of the service.

KP: Why not the infantry?

FS: Well, mud, dirt, sloshing through. Training was miserable. You know, basic training is not fun.

KP: How did you know not to choose the infantry? What led to your decision?

FS: I can't give you any specifics there. You know, to say common knowledge, that's a pretty poor answer, but I don't know.

KP: Had you watched World War I movies at all growing up?

FS: Oh, sure, certainly.

KP: Do you think that had any role in it?

FS: I don't know. I really can't give you anything definitive there. I can't attribute it to anything except that I knew it was muddy and dirty and sloshy. In the air force, even if you got killed, it was nice and clean. [laughter]

KP: Had you thought of the navy at all?

FS: Yes, yeah, but the Air Force just was a better opportunity for me. Air Corps, I keep saying Air Force.

KP: Yes, most people refer to it the "Air Force."

FS: Yeah, but it was later that the name changed.

KP: Had you had a long-standing interest in aviation at all?

FS: Oh, yeah, sure. It was a fascinating thing. Sure, sure. I don't know if you know where Middlesex Mall is. That was Hadley Field at that time and all the kids would go out there on Sunday and watch the guys fly the old bi-planes and things. That was fascinating business. Well, we made model airplanes and all. That was, again, the age of innocence. What did boys do? We made model airplanes, set them on fire and flew them off the bridge. ... That was pretty risqué stuff.

KP: You mention that you were very innocent. Had you dated much in high school or in college?

FS: Well, ... it was more a matter of parties, where there were some girls there, yes. Girls would invite you to parties. The girls were much more socially advanced, as even today, than boys. But, if it didn't smell from gasoline most of us boys in those days didn't much care about it. [laughter]
But if it smelled from gasoline that was all right, a car or an airplane or something like that. And I think that was fairly general.

KP: You enlisted in the air force. Where did you initially report for duty?

FS: Well, they sent us notices and wound up right here at the railroad station, New Brunswick, and went on a train to Fort Dix. Even people that I knew were there. I mean, this was, nothing strange about it. Guys who I know were in my high school class were right there on the same train with me, even though I didn't know that some of them would be there. And we were only in Fort Dix for a week or so as our reception center. And that was our only probable experience with the kind of things that were ground forces, infantry, pick up the cigarettes butts and things like that. Once we got out of there and into the Air Corps, it was just much different.

KP: Where were you sent after Fort Dix?

FS: We went right to Keesler Field for a basic which wasn't either very rigorous or very long. I don't remember exactly how long it was, but it wasn't too bad. ... The most fascinating thing was, we were on a train for five days from here to Mississippi. You had sort of boxcars that had bunks in them and cast iron stove. And, a mess car where you'd go in with a tray and you'd get the tray filled. And the steam locomotives burning coal, lots of soot and things would blow into the train. You opened the window if you needed some air. And, eventually, we wound up in Mississippi. I mean, now, that was a pretty far distance. I had never been that far, but none of the kids there had. I shouldn't say none, very, very few of them had ever been that far in their lives. There was, particularly, one that I recall, who was born in France, and his family got him out in 1939 or so. They moved to the U.S. He had dual citizenship. He's the only one that I can think of, though, that had widely traveled in the world.

KP: What did and your peers think of this trip and of going to Mississippi? It must have seemed very different.

FS: I suspect so, but again, even if I hadn't been there, I was familiar with it because I have family and relatives in South Carolina, and my mother and father related a lot of the folklore of South Carolina to me.

KP: Had you ever been to the South before?

FS: No, I don't think so. That is to say, no farther than Washington DC But, ... I didn't see things that I did not expect. I pretty well knew what to expect. It was not unusual. Some people might have been shocked and surprised. ... It was *Gone with the Wind*. I remember one guy's father came down. He was a prominent attorney from New Jersey and, after a few months, he came down to see his son. And he took us out to dinner. We went to a beautiful hotel in Biloxi or Gulfport. You had the old, black waiter dressed up in a tuxedo and very subservient. "Yessa, sir," and all that kind of thing. But I expected it. Now, maybe some other people didn't, but I was pretty well-prepared for it.

KM: I also read that after Keesler Field, you came home, then, for a couple weeks, and then you went to Courtland Field.

FS: I don't remember exactly when I came home, but that was fun. I was already on flying duty at that time. And you'd simply sign on as a crewman and convince some officers that they really ought to take us up to Newark, which they did. [laughter]

KM: So, your attitude had not change much?

FS: No.

KM: No, you were still ready to go and anticipating things?

FS: Oh, yeah. Well, remember, eighteen years old, lots of energy and nothing can hurt you. Nothing could hurt you when you're eighteen. It was all fun.

KP: You mentioned to us in the preamble that your experiences were very much like Neil Simon's movie, *Biloxi Blues*.

FS: Yes, virtually identical.

KP: Although you mention that you really didn't have that terrible of a sergeant.

FS: No, that's true, but ... what I'm saying is that there are lots of parallels, and while the degree might change one way or another, it was, nonetheless, pretty close. But, let me tell you then a little more about Keesler. Eventually they built barracks, so we didn't have the tents that you see

in *Biloxi Blues*. That was just at the very exact period. I think Neil Simon was probably there nine months to a year ahead of me, guessing from some of the things that he had in there. Basic training was relatively easy, but ... we did have super athletes and football, college football, players or maybe pros who ... are phys. ed. instructors, and they were pretty tough. But they whipped us into shape. This is oyster country down there, at Biloxi. Still is today, oysters and shrimp. And all of the streets within the field, and even outside, were made with oyster shell. Well, of course, they'd mix it with asphalt outside for highways, but, within the complex, our running tracks and all were simply ground-up oyster shell. And they would sure stink after the rain because there was still protein rotting away in them. It's a very hot, humid climate, and, you know, we would have to run a mile or so, and everybody had heat rash. And that's one thing Neil Simon missed, I think. He didn't say anything about heat rash, but, boy, you'd arch your back and all kinds of stuff to try to relieve the itch. These phys. ed. instructors were tough. They were all either pro football players or something like that. They would put us through the paces. ... We really whipped into shape pretty fast, climbing over walls, and all kinds of stuff like that, that we'd have to do. None of it was bad, but it was rigorous. They didn't show any sympathy to you. The basic training. Among the very few things I can recall, ... we went to a bivouac for two or three days. In the infantry, they'd be out there for weeks, living in the mud. We went for two or three days. And the big shooting range out there, the Air Corps guys only had defensive weapons. ... I never handled a regular Garand rifle or a Springfield, other than here at Rutgers. In ROTC we had Springfields, but we never fired them; we just handled them. But out there, we did have defensive weapons, carbines and sidearms, and some of these tin can-type submachine guns, real short barrels stuff, .45s. I suppose the modern version would be the Uzi or something like that. But we were on firing ranges and a pig would come up, wild pigs are in Mississippi, they'd come over the top, and we would shoot the wild pigs. Blast them to bits. It was terrible! But, we didn't have the sense of what's right and wrong at the age of eighteen. And, actually, if the pig was not damaged too badly, they'd take him down to the officers club for a Saturday night and barbecue him. ... I wasn't any good with a .45 pistol, I'll tell you that. Man-size targets is 1,000-inch range, and I could barely hit a man-size target. On the other hand, with the carbines and rifle-type things, I'm good. And I'm still pretty good with those, but with short-barreled stuff, I can't hit anything. [laughter] But, let's see, that was about the most rigorous thing of the basic, was all of three days in a bivouac thing, in a pup tent.

The rest of the time we were in barracks. The worst thing about the barracks, bed-bugs. They are terrible. They are, absolutely, terrible things. And they would live in the wood. In fact, you could bang on the walls and they'd come out and look at you. And also, they were in the coil springs of the cots, regular steel cots. But we would have to take a piece of paper and light it and burn them out. That was the only way to get rid of them. And then, every now and then, ... they'd come in with DDT mixed with kerosene. That's terrible to spray kerosene on the wooden walls because it absorbed, and the barracks could have been a torch. But other than that, the barracks were okay. They were clean, good showers, hot water, ... all the nice stuff.

Food was very good and plentiful. And we had a mess officer that must have weighed 300 pounds, a lady. She was just like a tank. And one day I asked her, "Why don't we have lamb?" because in my family we ate lamb, ... I liked it. She said, "Oh, we trade that off to the infantry; a lot of people don't like lamb." [laughter]

KP: Your mess officer, she was a WAC?

FS: Yeah, I believe she was a first lieutenant. I don't remember that exactly, but she was an officer.

KP: She was an officer?

FS: Yes. She was a particularly ugly person, I mean, physically. She was nice enough. KP was messy, especially if you got garbage detail. Other than that, it wasn't too bad. Serving lines and all were okay. But it was a long day. You'd start at, say, five in the morning and keep on until about eight at night.

KP: And what would your basic training schedule include? You mentioned that you only bivouacked for three days. What else did you do?

FS: Just the firing range and hiking out there was, maybe, ten miles. Oh, we also did have one, like these guys that were just killed, you remember the rangers who were just killed, wading through the swamp? Yeah, we had a sunken airplane in a swamp, and they would teach us evacuation procedures. Now, it wasn't cold when I did it, so it was okay. ... There were big spiders hanging around looking at you. [laughter] That was one of the very few messy things that we ever did, four miles inland from the gulf. It was pretty swampy.

KP: What else would you do during basic? What was an average day like?

FS: You know, that's a difficult one for me to remember. I remember much more our technical schools because when we got out of basic, I went to A&E Mechanic School, (Airplane and Engine Mechanic School). An excellent school. Now we were Aviation Cadets. We were in to be taught as pilots or navigators or bombardiers or something like that. The war was going pretty well, already, by this time, and they slowed down all these programs. And apparently they had been very successful in recruiting, so there were plenty Aviation Cadets older than us. And, they didn't want eighteen or nineteen-year-olds going overseas. So, even though a group of us got bored and did go up and officially volunteer to get out and go to aerial gunnery school or something, they wouldn't accept us because they simply had a policy that if you were under twenty-years-old, ... you didn't go overseas. So anyway, I went to the A&E Mechanic School, which was also at Keesler. An excellent technical school. We went seven days a week to classes, but, again, because of the energy level at that age, that didn't bother us at all. And we would change a shift every week. The schools ran twenty-four hours a day. They wanted to be equitable to everyone, so, day shift, then advanced to the afternoon shift, and so forth. But, that's the way it went. And that school was probably about twenty weeks, maybe even a little longer, but an excellent school. The instructors there were excellent guys. Boy, they really were the aces of the airplane mechanics and engine mechanics and really knew how to teach. Our technical manuals were excellent. I still have a lot of them at home today. They are very, very, good books.

KP: When you said that your instructors at mechanic school were very good, had they had practical field experience?

FS: I don't know that. All I can say is that they were good. We were very much impressed by the quality of these guys and the quality of the equipment that we had to work on. I'm talking pre-jet engines. Jet engines were something we barely heard of, "The Germans are developing an engine that's very fast." That was something you just heard about. We worked mostly on these big, radial engines, where the cylinders are all around. We didn't do much with liquid-cooled engines. These were big, radial, air-cooled engines that we worked on. However, we did have some touch with liquid-cooled engines, but we just didn't deal with them very much. But, anyway, those were all quality schools, excellent. It did run twenty-four hours a day.

When we got finished with A&E Mechanics School, they had all nice, formal graduations and things like that. The Colonel or the General would come out and make a speech, and you'd all parade and things like that. Big parties, of course, and again, the Neil Simon thing, everybody went out and got roaring drunk, part of the coming-of-age kind of thing. They wouldn't let us out, unless we took two sulfathiazole pills because there was a lot of venereal diseases around the area. These things were like horse pills. And you got up to the gate and you had to swallow these two things in front of the guard. He'd give you a little cup of water. I think maybe this stuff worked, but I don't know. Penicillin, remember, was just invented in 1938 and was mostly dedicated to the combat people because they needed it a lot more than we did. There wasn't a big production of penicillin. It was in its infancy, antibiotics of that type. It was more the sulfathiazole and the sulfa drugs, that kind of thing.

After the graduation, there was no place for us in flight training school. So we went to Courtland, Alabama. And when I say, we, it means groups of people who had always been together. Oh, the funny thing, see, we're all with initials S and T because we were grouped alphabetically. And we all had the same age, within, plus or minus, one month. So my friends names are all, Schultz, I'm Simon, Traber, and Thomas. Don Thomas is the one we're going to the fiftieth anniversary. So, it's a funny thing how you get grouped that way. And yet these friendships have lasted fifty years.

KP: So, you made a number of friends there and, for one, you were a best man.

FS: Yeah, well, four of us remained particularly close. One unfortunately died, so three of us remain. And the three of us will be at this anniversary in Memphis. One is coming in from California. I just saw him recently. And the other one lives in Memphis.

We went to Courtland, Alabama, which was very, very rural. There were donkey carts in the adjacent villages, I have to call them that because they weren't towns at all. And that was up near the TVA area, Muscle Shoals. But it was all strictly farming country and very rural. ... That was a co-pilot training school, and ... we guys, who had graduated A&E School, were flight engineers in this training school. And, of course, we felt like real big shots. We were really something. Now, the amazing thing is this, then you got an eighteen-year-old guy in charge of an airplane that in those days was worth three million dollars, or something like that. By today's standards it

would be fifty million. We took these responsibilities very seriously. It was very serious, you know. You kept your airplane running. The planes and the school ran twenty-four hours a day, and for each airplane there would be three flight engineers and one crew chief. The crew chief is an older guy, he's a sergeant with a lot of experience. And they did make us Pfc.s., in addition to being A.C. We were A.C./Pfc., so we had two ranks. Because we were on flying duty, we got paid all of eight dollars a month. So that was fifty-four plus fifty percent flight pay, so we thought we were paid pretty well, liberally. It was the kind of place that you did your work and the rest of the time you were on your own. Nobody paid much attention to you.

... Kessler was all nicely painted, wooden, two-story barracks, like you see out here in Camp Kilmer, if you can imagine those well-painted and all. But Kessler was and is well-painted and kept in nice condition. Courtland was quite the opposite. They were one-story, sort of tar-paper covered shacks ... with iron stoves in them to supply the heat. But nonetheless, ... it was still comfortable. It was not a problem. The only thing I can remember specifically is that there were two decks of iron-pipe bunks. And, one day, I was working in the lower bunk and I stood up and knocked myself out and was put off flying duty for several weeks. I gave myself a concussion by doing it. It was a little messy for a while, but they just took me off flying duty, in which case, you did maintenance on the ground.

KP: So your group was doing maintenance at the same time you were being instructed?

FS: No. We were no longer, at this stage, being instructed. We were the instructors. The co-pilots, first of all, they were the younger graduates, and many of them were warrant officers because you had to be twenty-one-years-old to get a commission. So ... a lot of them were twenty-years-old. And, we always felt that, if you were a co-pilot instead ... of a pilot, well, that means you're at the bottom of the class, and you didn't know a hell of a lot. And the flying instructors were mostly experienced guys, back from overseas, who had flown many missions. And they told us to harass the co-pilot students because you want to try to distract them. If you're training a guy to fly an airplane, you must give him distractions. And one of them, we had a little, hand-hydraulic pump for emergency use, when everything else fails, but the handle came out. We would rap them on the shoulder, tap them lightly on the back of the head, and things like that. I don't mean to say we wanted to knock them out, but we would do things to distract them and watch them very closely. You're faced with hundreds of switches, just as you've seen today in modern aircraft, but still, it's just a tremendous amount of switches and devices that are in front of you. And, we had little confidence that these guys really knew what did what. So we would watch them quite closely, particularly when maneuvering, landing or take-off.

KP: So, you would be on board watching them?

FS: Oh, we're flying and watching. And ... I have my records at home. We would fly as much as 200 hours a month. Now, that's a lot of flying, a lot of flying. The weather was nice, and you'd do your eight hours a day. It really adds up. ... Let me tell you the fun parts. ... We'd watch them closely, landings and take-offs. That's called transition training. The more fun was across country in which we would watch the fuel supply and a few things like that. But when they're in straight, level flight, they can't get into too much trouble. And we had a ledge about seven inches

wide, go to sleep. And, when you're eighteen-years-old, you can sleep on an aluminum ledge that's seven inches wide. It doesn't bother you at all. So, just sleep, and they would tell us when they were getting into a situation where they're coming to do a landing pattern or something like that. We would always hope that on a cross-country something would go wrong, and you could land in a very desirable place, and you'd have to repair your aircraft. Denver was one of the great locations in those days. ... Dallas and Fort Worth were also very preferred places, and, if certain things happened, ... if a fuel tank started leaking, you're talking about a week on the ground to get it replaced. So we would think that was a real pleasure. So that's among the dirty tricks, not that we destroyed airplanes, I don't mean to say that, but, I mean, you sort of hoped that something would go wrong. [laughter]

KP: Where were some of the places you ended up landing?

FS: Well, the ones I mentioned. We'd go to Denver, Dallas, Fort Worth, Newark. I really can't remember some of the others. I want to give you another dirty trick, though. And, this is a dirty trick. The one I told you about, hoping something goes wrong, that's not too much of a dirty trick. But dirty trick: we're supposed to do high-altitude flying, and, in those days, remember, this is non-pressurized aircraft. So you're wearing a mask and breathing oxygen. And, you get quite a rash on your face after a few hours of that. I mean, it was unpleasant. So the dirty trick is that the flight engineer, me, on behalf of the rest of the crew, would dump oxygen. We'd fly at a lower altitude, and the guys got their hours in, but it wasn't altitude training. That's what we were supposed to be doing. So they knew that you'd have to be using a certain amount of oxygen if you're up there. So we would simply open a valve and dump some oxygen.

KP: So you would serve as flight engineer.

FS: Yes.

KP: And was the expectation after the training was over, this cycle of training, that you would be deployed overseas?

FS: No, no, we would go back into flight training, into pilot training, which happened. That did happen. But, let me see, there was one other thing about that school that I wanted to say. There were accidents. It seemed like ... every Sunday somebody would crash, a number of guys killed. And, again, once the co-pilots start flying solo, without their highly experienced instructor, it's a lot trickier thing because these guys just weren't that experienced. They had come out of twin engine advanced and now they're into a big four engine aircraft. So we did watch them very closely and felt this great responsibility.

One of the few hazards that I had ever experienced was siphoning of gasoline. ... We were using gasoline, very, very aromatic gasoline. Boy, was that great for sniffing. You'd be up on top of the wing, filling the tanks with this big hose and the fumes would be coming up. It wasn't cat-cracked gasoline, like you have today that smells very chemical. In those days, it was distilled gasoline. It smelled beautiful. It was, I guess, the equivalent of what happened several years later with glue sniffing. And you really could get dizzy and fall off a wing if you didn't watch

out. But, I certainly never breathed that much. But it was a beautiful smelling gasoline. And, ... everything on these aircraft, in those days, was safety-wired. You had very strong steel wire and, when something was in position, you had to wire it so that it wouldn't turn off. But the gasoline caps had to come very flush with the wing so they wouldn't create aerodynamic disturbance there.

But, I think that another guy had filled up the tanks, and it was my shift then. And, so I came on and I inspected the plane, but never noticed that one of these caps was up about an eighth of an inch or so. And, of course, you know, the thing that creates lift in an aircraft is that you have lower pressure on top of the wing. Well, you're also gonna siphon all that gasoline out, and the gasoline comes right back along the fuselage of the aircraft, and into these open waist gunnery windows, and it all came into the interior of the plane. So that was one of the very few hazards that I ever had. We had to turn off all electricals and run on all sorts of emergency stuff, make an emergency landing.

KP: So that was your close call.

FS: ... I had no problem with it, though, and we knew immediately what it was. You could see the gasoline. You see a slight, blue cloud coming out of the top of the wing. I didn't have other emergent things. We had nose wheels on those aircraft, that's almost an amusing thing. The nose wheels were notorious for failing and collapsing when you hit ground. And, you know, the nose would go down and make quite a mess. So we had large steel pins, very hardened steel, perhaps three quarters of an inch in diameter, and they would manually put them in and lock the nose wheel so it couldn't collapse. But, you're hanging out over space to do that. The nose wheel is already down, and that means all those doors and all are open. You know, you're hanging on like this, and inserting a bolt that had a big, long, red streamer on it. Again, at the age of eighteen, you thought that was fun. And going through bomb bay doors with the bomb bays open, if it was a hot day, and you were at a very low altitude, you'd want a lot of fresh air blowing through. We just opened the bomb bay doors ...

KP: So you just opened the bomb bay doors.

FS: ... And walk on the cat walk, that wide. ... There were bomb racks; you could fall between them. And, if we had flight jackets on, we had those big, sheepskin jackets that are still here and there in the army-navy stores, and they would all tear, that's how little space there was; they would catch on the bomb racks. So, there wasn't a lot of space in these aircraft, and yet, that was a big aircraft for its day. It weighed about eighteen tons. Today, the 747 weighs what, 120 tons or something like that? These were miniature compared with today's large aircraft.

KP: It sounds like you found the experience of flying as thrilling as you imagined it. Is that accurate?

FS: Yes, I still do. In my business, later, I have worked in many places in the world, and I never lost the fun of traveling, moving around, and getting on the airplanes, and all, looking, seeing the world, seeing the country. I was lucky to have such a good occupation, later, that fit right in.

KP: You wanted to go into pilot training, that was your goal?

FS: Oh, yeah. Well, I can give you the next step. ... When there were openings in pilot training, we shipped out to Maxwell Field. This was all Eastern Flying Training Command, all of these fields. Maxwell was a big headquarters and, of course, that made it much more formal and all. And, of course, then we're back to A.C. We're back to Aviation Cadets, not Pfc.s and a regular job working every day. And, ... the formalities of a gentlemen and an officer still existed in those days, so your cadets were treated much more like the present-day West Point and Annapolis. We had waiters, black waiters, because we were in Alabama and that's the way society was then. We had waiters who would serve us and things like that in the mess. And your rooms were pretty nice and you had to keep them nice and clean and all that. But, the worst thing we ever got caught for was gambling, playing cards, and dice.

KP: One of the things that people have said is this. It's interesting because in Courtland you give the impression that it was rather informal for the military.

FS: Very, oh, that's another thing, I should have said that that place was so badly run nobody knew where anyone was. Very poorly run. Again, we were pretty responsible so we sort of showed up where we were wanted. But, I was put originally on P.L.M., production line maintenance. Well, if there's anything in the world that's boring, it's changing spark plugs. There's eighteen of them in each engine and boring! I didn't like that at all. So my buddies were in an adjacent squadron that was flying as flight engineers. And, that's what I wanted to do, too. I simply went over and saw the line sergeant, and he said, "Sure come over." And that was the end of it. Well, what happened is that they lost me completely. I never got any extra duty. I never got KP or any of these kinds of things that were less pleasant. And it was a great racket. And, eventually, they pulled a muster, that means everyone must show up. I only went over to the old squadron on pay day, ... signed the pay book. They pulled a muster to find out where everyone was. It was very poorly run.

I do want to give you one other thing. I have to go back to Keesler now. Some of these thing are out of order; I was also a prison guard. And that was a very interesting experience. I was an inside guard, that means I was unarmed. And, just to make sure that there wasn't a riot in there, and I don't know what I would have done about it if there was. And to wake up the guys for their duty in the morning because they all had responsibilities, usually cooking, road work, and things of that sort, but, ... under armed guard. Then they would leave the prison ... and dig holes or whatever, you know, do some landscaping or whatever had to be done in terms of maintenance. I never had to do any of that. But, those guards had four to six prisoners and they carried a shotgun.

KP: Were they all white, the prisoners?

FS: I would say the vast majority were. This is Air Corps and whether there were prejudices existing in the Air Corps or whether it was the fact that a lot of blacks simply couldn't qualify due to their education. We had pretty good testing, we really did. We had pretty rigorous testing. It's hard for me, in retrospect, to tell. I'm sure that there were prejudices. And the black guys at Tuskegee, there's been a lot written about them. I never ran in to them, but they certainly did

have plenty of prejudices against these black officers who were pilots. But they were all located over at Tuskegee Institute. When I say all, I mean, the great majority. The black guys who we ran into were doing fairly menial jobs. But, the funny thing about being the jail guard, ... I would sleep on the floor, because I was a night guard. Not supposed to sleep, but I slept on the floor. And the prisoners are all sleeping on the cots and beds. [laughter]

... The thing that I learned is how psychotic prisoners are. I would have to wake them up in the morning. Very quickly you learn to wake them up by jiggling their toes, not their hands or arms, because these guys woke up swinging. And you could get sent right across the barracks with a sock. And they didn't mean to hit you or anything. It's just that these were psychotic guys. They all had mental problems and couldn't control themselves in any way. So you would jiggle their toes or tap them on the bottom of the foot to wake them up. And even then, watch out for their foot, ... the trajectory of the foot. So I did learn that. We ate super-duper there because these, a lot of these guys had nothing to do, but cook all day and prepare meals for you. So ... that was pretty good. It was an interesting experience. I won't say that I wasn't a little apprehensive when I first was made a jail guard, though. That only lasted, maybe, for four weeks or something like that.

KP: What were they in for, these various prisoners?

FS: Oh, well, these would all be relatively minor offenses. Most of it would be fighting, taking a swing at an officer where they really didn't damage him. If they damaged him, then that would be much more serious. But, it was all that type of thing. In other words, ... there's no murder or rape or that kind of thing. They would have been in a different place. They would be sent to a much more violent place. But, even these guys were violent. My opinion, when I left there, was that they were all psychotic. They were all nuts and ... had personality problems. Once they were awake and they stopped swinging, then they were perfectly nice to me. ... They had no animosity toward me at all.

KP: You said earlier, that Maxwell was a much more formal place, particularly because you were in aviation training.

FS: Yes. Oh, also, now we're having swimming pools, tennis courts, etc., and, as I said, people serving us at meals.

KP: So it was a much nicer base, Maxwell?

FS: It was great. Well, the informality of Courtland was fun, too, because nobody knew where you were, and nobody cared.

KP: Was there much saluting in Courtland? It sounds like there wasn't.

FS: Not much, and we had a very good rapport with these experienced officers who came back. They actually trusted the young flight engineers more than they did their co-pilot students.

KP: That's interesting because you hadn't flown yet. You had not been a pilot and had no pilot training, but they were trusting you to evaluate them.

FS: That's true, yeah. Well, we had flown these aircraft, but not take off and landing. ... That's part of the training. It's like driving a truck. These are not touchy aircraft.

KP: When you said you had flown these aircraft, in what capacity? You had flown them once it was in the air?

FS: Yes, yes. ... The senior instructor would say, "Okay, I want you to sit here for a while," because they wanted us to have at least some emergency experience. If an emergency, a true emergency occurred, ... I believe any one of us could land the aircraft. It might be bouncy and bumpy, but we could have done it. We knew all the procedures. We knew the whole checklist. As a matter-of-fact, we read the checklist. ... That was the flight engineer's job, to read the checklist for the pilot or co-pilot, whoever was in charge.

KP: A lot of people have said that, even though they were an engineer, or bombardier-navigator, that they had this flight. Pilots would do this. They would teach them how to fly, just in case there was an emergency. But was that part of regulation?

FS: I don't know that.

KP: Yes, but the trained pilots wanted you to do this.

FS: It was not a part listed as a curriculum part in our books or anything like that, no.

KP: But it was done.

FS: It was done. It was a very practical thing to do.

KP: What did these experienced pilots tell you about? Did they ever talk about their experiences and what was important and what was not?

FS: Not much, only that they had had a number of missions and some of them were pretty hairy and hazardous. But, they didn't talk much about that. They tended, though, of course, to be much older than we. I mean, ... some of them, were almost thirty, you know, ancient. [laughter] So, maybe, they didn't have a social rapport with us particularly. We were still eighteen-nineteen years old.

KP: As an aviation cadet, how long did you remain as an aviation cadet? How long did your training last?

FS: We went all through the theory of flight, all the classroom stuff. We never got into actual flying training because November ... '45 was what, V-E Day or V-J Day, I get them mixed up.

KP: V-J is August.

FS: Well, anyway, the war was winding down and plenty of money was being spent on us guys. So, ultimately, we were just put aside and they said, "Wait here for a discharge." At that time there was a point system in effect, and I'm sure you heard about that. But, we, of course, didn't have many points and were not discharged on that basis. So we got discharged, "At the convenience of the government." And my discharge, I think I've probably got a copy of it in my pocket, in a little plastic thing, says I, "will be acceptable for further service if presented by the selective service board." [laughter] So I'm waiting, any day now. They're gonna be in real trouble if they're going to pick me! [laughter]

KP: So you were, in a sense, given almost a provisional discharge?

FS: Well, it just says you were discharged without having the point system in effect. You were discharged, exactly what it says, really, it's a pretty good description, "At the convenience of the government."

KP: Were you glad to get out or would you have preferred to stay in a little bit longer?

FS: Well, the war was winding down. There were very, very few of our people who stayed in. They did have that option that they would be guaranteed to continue on into pilot training or bombardier or navigator, whichever they wanted, if they stayed in.

FS: You did not want to do that, though?

FS: No, the commitment was, I think three years, at least. No, I wanted to get back to school. If I had been a graduate at that time ... of Rutgers, I might have stayed in, but ...

KP: But you wanted to go back to college?

FS: Yeah, ... the military life in peacetime becomes pretty soft and, ... you sure lose all your steam. You know, ... the main concern is the dance at the officer's club Saturday night. It has very little to do with military matters, Pearl Harbor being the supreme example.

KP: At the bases you were stationed at in the South, were there any black military personnel? You mentioned the waiters at Maxwell Field.

FS: Yes, ... but ... few. ... There were none in our classes, that I can recall, at all.

KP: What were their jobs? Did they work mainly as waiters and cooks?

FS: Yeah, menial ... stuff. They could have been a truck driver or a warehouse, storekeeper, that kind of thing. But, we never saw, I don't believe I ever saw any black officers.

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

KP: This continues an interview with Mr. Franklin S. Simon on April 5, 1995 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey with Kurt Piehler and ...

KM: Kelly Martin.

KP: And you were just saying that African American troops were mainly in service occupations.

FS: That is correct, yes, absolutely. I really can't remember, ... ever seeing a black officer, that is to say, a black officer in our installations. There were in other places. We saw them on the street, maybe. But, and in cities, but ... I never saw them in our Air Corps training units that I was involved with.

KP: You had some experience at Raritan Arsenal ...

FS: Yes.

KP: ... Working with black people from New York. What struck you about the South and the black communities you saw in the South?

FS: Well, remember, I have to also go back to a comment that I was fairly familiar with it, even though I hadn't seen it. My mother and father told me all about visiting their relatives in South Carolina. And those folks, they were from that era when black people were, in their estimation, a pretty low variety of people and they harbored all the notions and prejudices of the age. So while my parents may not have had all those prejudices, they certainly told me about how their relatives reacted to the people and kept them as very menial servants and all. They had a hotel and a general store in a very remote part of the coast of South Carolina. And my father would go down for hunting and things like that, and have a black guy guiding him or toting his gun, or whatever. [laughter] That kind of stuff. So they were always portrayed in very menial things, and subservient, and probably somewhat abused. By the way, though, the white people in the area were abused, also. Because these rural places were lumber towns and the lumber mills owned almost all the territory. And you didn't even get paid. You got paid in script. You went to the company store that had very inflated prices. So that's one of the reasons, I suspect, that the relatives made successful businesses is that when somebody could generate a little cash, they sold things at lower prices. And these company stores, the people were very much captive in these rural areas, very captive. And that applies to both black and white people.

KP: And did you sense that in Alabama, too, that these were ...

FS: Well, perhaps, but I didn't have that much contact with black people there, either. Only to the extent that I saw things like donkey carts, two-wheeled donkey carts, ... you know, very small holder, maybe even a tenant farmer was taking some of his vegetables to market, things of that nature. I mean, it was like going back to 1870 or something like that. That, I hadn't seen before, and that was something new and different. In the towns, I remember that in Decatur, Alabama there were black women who just had enormous hand development because they worked in the

brick works. And they actually handled the bricks and their hands got very callused. But, also, very, very strong and muscular hands because they would actually handle bricks and stack bricks up. So that's one of the very few recollections of that type.

KP: You came back to New Brunswick, went to Highland Park, and you came back to school on the GI Bill.

FS: Oh, yes. Everything was paid for. It was great. All tuition, books, and all paid for. And they paid us seventy-five bucks a month. And, I remember, I bought a little car and, I guess, my gasoline bill was seventy-five dollars every month. I got the check and paid it for gasoline and things. ... I'm exaggerating a bit, but I'm saying most of it was spent just cruising around and things of that nature. And, in the summer, I did take off, in the summers, and cruised around. The state of New Jersey paid twenty dollars a week unemployment. So, you know, that was a fair amount of money for me in those days. That wasn't bad at all. It was good living. So, we were well taken care of by the government for that period of time.

Coming back to Rutgers, Rutgers then became a very different institution, very, very large. Many temporary facilities were in use. The gym floor was a cafeteria. Later, Winants main floor became a cafeteria. Or maybe I've got those in reverse order, but, in any event, everything was used to its ultimate capacity. Classes tended to be rather large. When I started in 1943, classes were relatively small. So in those respects it was different. And, of course, hundreds or thousands of veterans taking advantage of the GI Bill made a very big difference in our culture. An enormous difference. The guys whose aspiration never would have been to go to college, and I don't want to mention names or anything, but a lot of my friends today, and a lot of our football players, just didn't have aspirations. ... They lived in communities that didn't go in that direction, South River and Sayreville, for instance. They just were not known to be academically-inclined communities. Those guys came here to Rutgers and ... most of them have been very, very successful in life.

KP: With the GI Bill, you did not have to come back to Rutgers.

FS: No.

KP: Did you want to go to Rutgers, to come back to Rutgers or had you thought of going elsewhere?

FS: No, I really didn't think of going elsewhere. It was very, very convenient and, of course, then I could live at home and that seventy-five bucks a month took me a much further distance. So, ... that was probably a big motivating factor, was that some of the money was available. And then the friends who you hadn't seen for three or four years, they were there and renewed old acquaintances.

KP: And you remained an engineer?

FS: That's correct. Oh, I want to mention, also, that, remember, I lived in this more stable society, ... it's not the transient society of today. I've always lived here. When I was working ... at J&J, people would come into the office, and you started out the conversation, "Where you from?" It's a very typical kind of conversation to introduce people. "I'm from right here." "You were born right here?" "Yeah, see, over there." I could point out there and point to R.W.J. Hospital, which was then Middlesex Hospital. "I was born in Middlesex Hospital." So, that's another reason for staying in the home territory. I wasn't afraid of going to other places, that was the furthest thing. It was just that it was a very comfortable situation and, analytically, I could go much further with the few bucks that I had. [laughter] Have more fun.

KP: Had the level of teaching gone up after the war? Did you notice any difference?

FS: No, we were still in a transitional stage. It took several years for that to even out. I had good ones; I had those who were mediocre. I had some very good ones, but there were plenty of mediocre guys. Not so much in engineering. I do remember in physics we had a couple of very mediocre people. Surprisingly, you think that the Physics Department, they'd all be brainy. Maybe these guys were very brainy, but they couldn't convey. ... Engineers, inherently, probably, are more practical people and could convey things. But, we also had the brainy guys, Jeremiah Slade being one. I don't know if you ever heard of him, but, he was a nationally-known mathematician. He was way above and beyond us, and he knew that, and told us that. He said, "You probably won't understand most of this, but we want to expose you to it anyway." So there were some eminent guys, and there were some who were not so good.

KP: One of the things that people who went into engineering at this time said was that the curriculum got a lot tougher around 1948. The third year, all of a sudden, there was a fairly high wash-out rate.

FS: Yes. As a matter-of-fact, I even wanted to opt out one time and get into the Department of Education, but they convinced me that I should stay in engineering. But, there was one particular professor who I just couldn't get along with at all. ... He died a year or two ago, ... Charles Grafly Dougherty. And all he wanted to do to prove to the students was how smart he was. He was a smart guy. But, that doesn't mean he could convey anything to me or he wouldn't have the patience to explain things. We had exemplary students who could absorb all this. I was not an exemplary student. I was an average student. As I said, though, I did, ultimately, become a good engineer. A good, practical engineer.

KP: You were also the football manager.

FS: Yes, yes.

KP: And given your love of Rutgers football, which is a long-standing one, that must have been enormous fun.

FS: Oh, yes, it was. Unfortunately, I spent too much time on the football field, not enough doing homework. That was always a problem.

KP: What were your responsibilities as manager?

FS: Well, to see that the equipment was all there, at all the games. And, in those days, we would do things like going out and buying oranges. They didn't have Gatorade, so we'd buy oranges. And see to it everybody got on the bus and everybody had a room at the hotel. Of course, the athletic department did the contracts. We didn't do contracts with hotels. But when we got in there, we wanted to see that the roster was all there and everybody was assigned. On the field, if somebody's shoulder pads broke or something, we had to help them get a new one. The only time I was on television, the Polo Grounds was where the baseball Giants played in New York, years and years ago. It was not a good baseball stadium at all, but it was a good football stadium because it was rectangular. And we were missing some piece of equipment, I don't remember what it was, and ... the TV camera watched me run the whole length of the field into the locker room and all the way back with whatever piece of equipment it was. I don't remember what it was. It was my five minutes of fame, not fifteen. [laughter]

KM: I was surprised when I saw in the yearbook that the year you graduated the football schedule was only six games. Was that normal?

FS: No. I think there's something wrong there. Maybe six home games.

KM: Oh, six home games, okay.

FS: Because that's the so called "Golden Age" of Rutgers football ... 1948, '47,'48, '49. We were something then. Frank Burns was our quarterback. We played against Joe Paterno when he was quarterback at Brown. I just got all my football programs together, of about forty years standing, and I'm giving them to a guy who has quite a Rutgers ... what's a good word, collection. I don't want all this junk around anymore, but Joe Paterno's picture's in there as quarterback for Brown. And to another very prominent alumnus, Ralph Voorhees, he and his brother contributed the art museum. He asked me for a program one day; he didn't tell me why. It was a Harvard game, 1947. He was a ... football player and he played against Robert Kennedy in that one. So I gave it to him. But I am, still active with the various football associations. I still love it. As I said, it's the height of our social year.

KP: Did you ever wish you could play football?

FS: Oh, yeah. Even then I wasn't big enough. I'm not nearly big or heavy enough.

KP: But you would have loved it if you could.

FS: Oh, I would have loved it. In those days, we didn't have quite as many guys on scholarships. So, if they had to attend class or lab in the afternoon, they attended class or lab. It wasn't arranged that a tutor would be taking care of them. So, if people weren't there at practice, I would fill in, in the particular position. I knew the plays, of course. I knew the whole play book and that was fun. Now, they ... always guaranteed that they wouldn't hit me hard. [laughter]

They always gave me the position of a guy that wasn't gonna get hit, you know. You just run out here, you're flanking out, nobody's gonna hit you. So that was great fun.

KP: There were a lot of returning GIs, I mean, returning GIs dominated the school. But there were also traditional undergraduates who had started at eighteen. What was the relationship between those two groups?

FS: They were looked on as kids, but I was in between because I was young, and most of the returning GIs were, say, two, three years older than I was. I don't know if you've heard of Ernie Gardner, ... there's a memorial, football award in his name. Ernie was a colonel in the military. He and his brother, Roy, were both officers. But Ernie's the older and he went back on the football field at that age and was a great football player. And, as a matter-of-fact, here's a funny one. Red Blake was the coach at Army and Red Blake was a particularly nasty guy. He was very unpleasant. And we would scrimmage with Army, pre-season scrimmage. And, you know, you're not really supposed to mess guys up in a scrimmage. Hit them, but don't go crush them, don't try to break their bones. Well, that meant nothing to Red Blake. And Army guys, of course, were in training all year round, so they were in perfect physical condition in August. And they hit awfully hard and they messed up one of our guys. I don't know if you ever heard of either Charley DeLiberti. He became a physician practicing down in Princeton. Very intelligent guy. He was one of the guys who was ... never in the military. And Ernie Gardner sort of picked this guy up off of Charley. He'd broken Charley's leg there in the scrimmage. And the guy gave Ernie some fast lip. Ernie was still an officer in the reserves. He said, "Call me, Colonel, sir." The guy, being in the military discipline, was a little bit taken back, that he better watch his step. You know, he was really insulting Colonel Gardner. That was just a funny insight of something that did happen that's relative to the military. But most of the guys were older than me because I was young to start with. So I was in between these two groups. Somebody like DeLiberti was probably two years younger than me. The other guys were, two, three, four, and even up to eight years older than me.

KP: Did anyone ever talk about their war experiences then? About what had happened to them?

FS: Not much. There was a little bit of, "What did you do?" and they were very brief things. "Yeah, I was in the navy; I was on so-and-so ship." It didn't go much beyond that. We didn't tell a lot of war stories. The war stories were saved for the girlfriends. We thought we would be very impressionable, you know, "Oh, boy, we're big shots." But, again, remember I'm still only twenty-years-old now. And ... if I'm returned from the service, I'm pretty important. You know, tell the girls the war stories and, maybe, they were embellished, maybe, they weren't.

KM: At what point did you meet your wife and how did that happen?

FS: A friend of mine had met her at a party. She was rather noisy and entertaining everybody at the party. And they knew that I liked that, so they introduced me to her. She was ... from New Brunswick and I had never met her before, and living all of, say, four miles away. Her father worked for Rutgers. He was a maintenance supervisor at the Ag College. And we went together for a couple a years before we married, which also was sort of the thing that was done in those

days. I got married the day before graduation because, again, this conservative thing from my mother, you know, you don't get married till you graduate. That's a lot of baloney. If I were married, I probably would have concentrated a lot better on my homework, work, and things like that. [laughter]

KP: It sounds like you had a very good time being back at Rutgers.

FS: Oh, sure. Oh, and as part of the football manager thing was training table, so I ate here all the time and then after the games on Saturday nights. I was going with my wife and invited her for dinner. And occasionally invited her father. But, ... you know, we were allowed a certain number of guests. And, also, we got football tickets and that also financed us quite a bit. We would go outside, and that's another job of the managers, you were not supposed to sell your own tickets, or to sell tickets for the other guys on the team who were dressing and couldn't go outside of the stadium, but I could. So we'd sell tickets depending upon the desirability of the ticket for that particular game.

KP: You mention that your favorite professor was Anthony Del Maestro.

FS: Yes. He died at a rather young age, unfortunately. He was a nice guy and competent.

KP: What field did he teach?

FS: ... He taught us surveying, but he was a professor of civil engineering, I believe.

KP: And you just remember him as being very good, very nice or a combination of both?

FS: Both. He was a very good instructor, and he was a nice guy. Charley Bacha might be another one. He was electrical engineering, very nice guy and, also, a very good instructor.

KP: By not living on campus did you ever feel that you were missing anything?

FS: Again, having lived in the community for that many years, I had lots of friends. That's sort of an unusual social thing nowadays. I still have the same friends that I had sixty years ago. ... There's not too many people who can say that today. We're too transient. But, ... my friends are of long duration and not because of me personally, just because of the day and age in which it happened and the circumstances in which it happened. So I've had the same friends. Some of them go sixty years, a lot of them go fifty years.

KM: Were a lot of the football players in fraternities or basically did the football take up their social life?

FS: No, ... there were fewer of them in fraternities. A lot of the fraternities tried to recruit the guys, but a lot of them were local guys from South River, and Sayreville, and New Brunswick, and they didn't see any particular need for it. So there weren't that many. And also, my being football manager was unusual in not being a fraternity member because the fraternities sponsored

certain people, nominated certain people, as football and other managers in other types of campus activities like that. So, when I volunteered, as such, because of my love for the game, it was a little bit harder for me to get appointed. If I had a fraternity or a fraternity association backing me up, it would have been easier. But it did work out. ... I guess, I was persistent.

KP: So this was a sought after position, the post of football manager?

FS: Yes. ... The inter-fraternity association definitely wanted the football manager to be a member of the association. It was considered a prestigious thing.

KP: How many on the football squad were veteran and how many were not?

FS: Oh, I would say eighty percent were veterans, seventy-five-eighty-five percent, certainly in that range, because I remember DeLiberti as the exception, not being a veteran.

KP: So the range of age was probably quite broad.

FS: Well, remember, males grow until we're twenty-four-years-old. It's different for women. They're not going to get more bone structure beyond, say, eighteen or nineteen. But the guys continue to grow, so, naturally, they're bigger and tougher. And they'd had good physical training in the military. That physical training in the military was rigorous, let me tell you. Those guys put us through our paces.

KP: What type of engineer did you envision becoming when you were in college?

FS: I probably didn't hardly even know what engineering meant. That's unfortunate that we know so little about occupations and I think our kids know even less now. ... It's not like your father was the shoemaker and he worked downstairs and you lived upstairs, and you knew all about shoemaking. It's a different world now. I don't know, it probably sounded romantic or something. Although, in terms of mechanical devices and all that, I was always interested in that kind of thing. And, as I said, if it smelled from gasoline, I loved it. But engineering doesn't have all that much to do with smelling from gasoline, ... but we probably think, or I did at that age, think it did. And then, having gone through these good technical schools in the military, I said, "Gee, I really do like some of this stuff. This is pretty good." But I would have been successful in some other sciences, particularly biology.

KP: How did you get your first job? Is there a story there?

FS: Well, yeah! In 1949 nobody wanted engineers very much.

KP: Which is a shift because in 1945 they could not wait to get them.

FS: Right, but in '49 nobody much cared about engineers, so I graduated and did a lot of bumping around. ... The New Jersey Turnpike was being planned at that time and DeLewe and Cathers was a big traffic engineering company out of Chicago, so I counted cars to do all the

traffic surveys. I mean, you've got to go to four years of college to do traffic surveys? And, after that, I got a job in a plant that made ladies' compacts and similar types of fancy metal goods, military buttons and that kind of stuff. But I viewed it as rather temporary. I certainly didn't want to stay in that kind of a thing. In 1950, I got a offer from Johns Manville, and that was the \$3,000 a year. And the previous year I had talked to them and it was \$2,500. But, boy, I got that job and we really celebrated. I thought that was pretty wonderful. ...

The company was a 1933 management company. But, in terms of technology, it was excellent. It was a terrific training school for engineering. You really started learning good, practical engineering there. And I stayed there for sixteen years, in project engineering project management. My lungs are full of asbestos to prove it, although no malignancies or anything, but my breathing capacity is somewhat diminished.

KP: So you worked with asbestos products?

FS: Yeah, I worked in the mills where we actually separated asbestos from the ore. I worked mostly in Canada, California, and I also worked in Europe.

KP: So you would go on extended trips?

FS: Yes, I don't now how good an idea it was. My kids were young then. ... The longest I was ever away was about four months. But I don't think it was too good, in retrospect. It was not a good thing to be away from young kids that long. But, that's water under the bridge. Now, I know; I didn't know it then. My kids were all fine. They never got into too much trouble or anything, and they're all successful in the business world. So, I don't mean to say that any disastrous things happened, but it probably would have been better if I were around a little more. It would be leave Monday morning and come back Friday afternoon. Jet aircraft still were not in use at that time. To go from here to California would be eight or ten hours on a Lockheed Constellation or a DC-6 or 7. Eventually, though, the jets came and then we did the same thing; go on Monday morning and not come back till Friday night. For Europe, come back Friday night a couple of weeks later.

KP: What prompted you to leave Johns Manville?

FS: The 1933s management. It was definitely; they did not consider their employees very much. I have always lived here in this community, so where would anybody want to work? You wanted to go to work for J&J. Why not? ...

KP: So, J&J always was there as a good potential employer.

FS: Well, I knew people there, and I went up for the interviews, and they were very happy to have me. But I want to back up to one thing about the Korean War. I don't know if you guys are interviewing Korean War people, but this is sort of an amusing anecdote. I mean, it has nothing to do with the war very directly at all. But where nobody wanted engineers in 1949 and barely wanted me when I got a job in 1950, in 1952, they wanted every engineer that they could find,

anyplace. So they hired lots and lots of people. And a guy who looked completely different from me, I was fairly dark, I had dark hair and tall and fairly slender, and this other guy was wide and blonde and just a completely different build. We eventually wound up in an office that had previously been a janitor's closet, not a closet, but a storeroom. And the two of us had desks in there. They converted it into an office. It still had no outside windows or anything. And because there were so many engineers hired at that time, we did nothing. We sat there and read magazines all day, technical magazines, hopefully, most of them. We really did very little. And the girls, the mail girls and clerical people would say, "What are you guys doing? How do you get away with all this?" And so we convinced them that we were illegitimate sons of Tommy Manville. Now, here's me, the tall, dark, slender and the other guy, blonde and wide and real husky, heavy build, and we were brothers, or half brothers? [laughter] But it was a funny, funny thing. We got away with that for quite a while, ... using that story. It was just an amusing story, but the funny thing is how many people believed it when the physical evidence was so different from that. But, anyway, it was an excellent engineering training, and I did work in many places in the world, but mines are not in the nicest places in the world.

KP: You mention, maybe this might even clarify it, you said that they had a really archaic management structure. Compare that with, say, your experiences at J&J, the two different styles.

FS: Night and day. I'll give you an example of it. I was working at Waukegan for JM, and a friend of mine was working at a JM plant, a tape plant down in Chicago. And he had a big sewer installation that had to be done over a weekend. I said, "Gee, I'll come down and help you." You know, stand around, at least, to see the guys are doing their job, because he was working like ... twenty hours a day or something. Well, I put it in my expense account for going down there on the weekend. And, because of the South Shore Railroad, because we couldn't rent a car. The South Shore Railroad was a dollar and a half, or so, each way and a ride on the L or trolley car in Chicago. I don't remember exactly how I got down there, to South Side, and maybe I put in a buck for lunch or something. Well, they challenged this kind of an expense account. They thought this was very important, looking at all these pennies.

Another one, I worked out No Agua, New Mexico, a mining job, and you'll never find that on a map. I mean, there were about four houses. ... But I lived in Antonito, Colorado, about twenty miles away. Had to have a car then, no question about it. The Saturday night entertainment, by the way, was to go to the launderette and watch the cowboys who came into town, actually sheepherders most of them, and watch the fight. It was just like these old movies. They would choose the biggest guy in town, usually some young football player, and make him a deputy cop for the night. And he would take these drunks and throw them out of the saloon. They had the same old half doors, swinging doors, and you see the guys come out and fight. Once they got out in the street nobody paid much attention to them. Very funny. But anyway I had an ... American Indian lady who did my laundry, and she couldn't read or write, so the receipt, I wrote out the receipt for her. I gave her maybe a dollar or something like that. And ... she put an X ... and then I marked it next to it "Tomasita, her mark." And they wouldn't approve that expense account for a dollar. I mean, this is crazy, to waste time ... on fifteen cent or a dollar items. It's ridiculous. J&J was just the opposite, put tremendous amount of reliance in the integrity of the individual. And, I would say, most J&J employees had been pre-examined very thoroughly, for integrity.

And once you're there, though, you've got it. If anyone questioned an expense account, it was for some substantial reason. You know, "Why did you put in \$343 for this dinner?" "Well, I invited twenty supervisors or people from the job, and I felt that I had to treat them to a dinner, and they had done a good job." "Fine." There might be some question of that type, but that's all.

KP: But not for nickel and dime things?

FS: No, none of this nickel and dime stuff. And the employee benefits. ... I left JM after working sixteen years and my lungs full of asbestos, which, of course I didn't know at that time. And I had put \$4,000 into the retirement fund, my own money. I got one-eighth of one percent interest on that when I left.

KP: In a booming economy.

FS: Yeah, that's all I ever got from them. At J&J, you're treated royally. The employee benefits are wonderful, the compensation is great. You guys working for universities, or students, you just wouldn't believe what it's like at a company like that. It's just a wonderful place. We still go back. ... There's a gym under George Street. Do you know that? You can't see it; it's under that grass. But we go in. My wife goes in; she has the admission. We go to the company store. I had a desk, an office, there until just very recently. They had to use it, put somebody in it. But I go in, ... it's a traveling department, so I've got a desk and a telephone to use. If I ask the secretary to do something for me, she'll do it. All kinds of benefits that continue. My supplemental medical is all paid for by the company; it's grandfathered. The younger guys don't get that. But I get many, many benefits. I'm living very nicely now. ... I have no financial problems, I'll tell you that.

KP: Johns Manville has had real serious legal problems because of their asbestos problem. Did you think the company at the top was aware of the risk of asbestos?

FS: Oh, I have read all of the cases. I believe the evidence, I'm talking evidence now, not anecdotal stuff or not books, not books written ... for public consumption, but I've read them, too. But the evidence is very substantial that they knew.

KP: I almost get the impression you are not surprised, either, given your experiences with the company?

FS: I'm not surprised. It was an excellent, excellent technical company. Their management was definitely from the 1930s.

KP: They were on the top of technology, but...

FS: Yes.

KP: Since you worked in mines and were in the mill, what was their relationship with the line employee? How did they treat them?

FS: They were not given a lot of consideration. I mean, they were paid every week, and, if there was no ... work, you didn't work, and you didn't get paid. ... It was a simple, straight-forward kind of an equation.

KP: Was there any union activity at Johns Manville?

FS: Oh, yes, sure.

KP: And how adversarial or how cooperative was the relationship between union and management then?

FS: It was arms length. It was not what I'd call cooperative. ... I don't think they ever asked the union for an idea. That's a hell of a good way of negotiating, to say, "What ideas do you guys have? What do you think?" I don't think they ever did that there. They would simply dictate and say, "This is what we're going to do." There were strikes while I was there.

KP: Because you were involved in mining, you mentioned several exotic places.

FS: Well, I did more traveling for J&J. I worked in western Europe and all throughout the United States and Canada for JM, including Newfoundland. But with J&J I worked just about all over the world, except Africa and South America. I didn't do those. We had guys who specialized and they spoke fluent Spanish and Portuguese. They would tend to take care of South America. Africa, nobody wants to go. I'm talking about Central Africa. ... We just had a manager resign; he was shot in Africa. He came within a fraction of an inch of his life because he was grazed across the back of the neck, and, you know, another half inch would have been the spinal column. And they just wanted to steal the car, that's all. They had nothing, no animosity against him personally or individually. But I enjoyed very much the eastern rim of China and Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, ... that's fun. Western Europe I always loved, still do.

KP: What were your responsibilities for J&J?

FS: As project management, but when I say project management, I'm not talking about production, but ... building the facility, the building and installing the machinery, getting it all ready to run. And then, usually, I'd turn it over to someone else. "Okay, it all turns; now you've got to do the fine tuning," because I'm not a product-oriented person.

KP: You mentioned how you learned to become a good engineer, in the sense that you practiced it. Where did you really learn it? Was it Johns Manville or J&J?

FS: I would say that it was JM. I learned it there. I ... gained confidence, probably. That's what we're saying. I gained confidence. And I, perhaps, didn't really realize that I knew how to use all this math and theoretical stuff that was thrown at us in school. ... There's not much practical. In those days, the engineering curriculum did not include a lot of practical work. If I were teaching today, I would put in a lot more practical examples of what we really do in the real world.

KP: You found out you had a very good theoretical base, but the actual applying it was not brought out.

FS: Sometimes you even wondered what it was all about. Why is this important? You just didn't know how to apply it.

KP: Did you ever tell that to the Engineering Department?

FS: No, I don't think I knew. I don't think I was smart enough to know the difference. The older you get, the more long range view you get, the more insight you get into things. You're gonna do the same thing, I guarantee you. You're gonna say, "Gee, now I know why they did it," or, "Now, I know, why that was of any importance." Long-range view is pretty good stuff, in that respect. Trouble is, we have to get old to get it.

KP: I have interviewed several people who went to Rutgers and then worked for J&J. They often said it's a very nice place to work, that you're appreciated, and certainly people appreciate the company. The other thing they mention is there was a lot of integrity at J&J.

FS: Yeah, that's what I said.

KP: So it's not simply public relations.

FS: I said, "Individual responsibility," but maybe I could have used the word integrity, but the two go hand-in-hand. You can't have integrity without being individually responsible.

KP: And, for example, one was a real sincere emphasis on quality.

FS: Well, I would say that always existed among the technical people. I've always been amazed at the current emphasis on quality. Hell, we always did it. I don't view that as something new and different. Maybe in other disciplines it is a little different.

KP: So the quality issue was always there?

FS: Absolutely. Yes, I don't view it as anything new at all. To me, it's a lot of hype, nonsense. Not nonsense. Quality isn't nonsense, but I mean, ... you know, what's new about that? We always, always, went for quality.

KM: Can I change the subject?

KP: Yes. I had noticed earlier that your wife graduated from Rutgers in 1990?

FS: Yes, yes. ... She was slow. [laughter]

KM: Did she go part-time throughout the years?

FS: Yes. I mentioned her father was ... an employee and head of maintenance out at the College of Agriculture; buildings maintenance, you know, painting and putting glass in the buildings and that kind of stuff, keeping the doorknobs on. And all of his children could have gone at no cost. My wife was the only one of her family who took advantage of it. She went for, maybe, four years or so to night school, University College. And then, while our kids were growing up, she quit, although, she continued to work. She always worked at least part-time. And, once all the kids flew the nest, she had the opportunity to go back. Now, of course, she had to pay for it. But it wasn't all that much. So she went back and would take, maybe, two courses a semester. Eventually she got the credits and graduated.

KM: That's great.

KP: You mentioned that she had worked as a legal secretary. For how long did she work?

FS: Always, forty years.

KP: Part-time or full-time, when your kids were growing up?

FS: Both.

KP: Both.

FS: She worked sometimes part-time, sometimes full-time, depending on the needs of the family, the needs of the kids. Financially it was nice to have a second income, too. We've always traveled around the world, we never sat home very much, so we had wherewithal ... to do things.

KP: You served on the Board of Education in North Brunswick. How did that come about?

FS: That came about in the days when integration was a real problem to deal with. My kids went to New Brunswick High School, and, by the way, the one thing that I really have against Rutgers is that they would never admit any of my kids. My kids went to an inner-city high school; it was really bad. They didn't learn much, academically. They learned survival, which is proved by the fact that they're all doing well in the business world. I mean, you're not going to put anything over on them or threaten them very much. They've been through all that when they were in high school. But, they didn't learn a lot of chemistry, and math, and things like that. I guess, my daughter was too old to shift schools. My older son went to Rutgers Prep, only for one semester, but he was quite a gadfly and socialite and got kicked out. So he went back to New Brunswick High School. And my younger son, maybe, had the worst experience. He went to four different high schools, ... each of his high school years. None of them were admitted to Rutgers. And they all were admitted to other good schools. ... I shouldn't say all to good schools. ... My daughter went to Bridgeport, which doesn't even exist today. Or it does exist, but it's a Sun Moon school, now. And my older son went to Westchester, which was Westchester State at that time, but now it's Westchester University. And, actually, in retrospect, he went to the

simplest school and got the best education of all of them and the best college experience. And the youngest son went to the University of Maryland and was accepted by several state institutions in other states, but not Rutgers. The second year they sent us a letter that said, "We'll take your son." I said, "The hell with you!" ...

KM: Oh, after?

FS: ... Yeah, they'll take him after he finished his freshman year. He finished his freshman year, and he's in College Park at the main campus and doing well. So, he has his friends and his social life there; he doesn't want to change. So I've always harbored somewhat of a grudge against Rutgers for that. Because they all had such very difficult high school experiences and while, now I'm gonna be prejudicial, while the minorities and blacks are given consideration for that, my kids weren't given any consideration for it at all. They had a very tough high school experience in an inner-city high school, so they all know how to duck ketchup bottles and ... they know survival. But they did not learn the academics and you're not tested on ducking ketchup bottles on the SATs. However, they all qualified on their SATs also. My younger son went to Rutgers Prep for a year, too. But, ... he didn't like it at all, begged to get out. It wasn't for him. They are all different.

So, I can have my prejudices, too. I guess everybody's entitled to a few. But I think they were mistreated by Rutgers. And now they say, "We want alumni's children." It's in all the alumni journals and university publications. They wouldn't hear of it in that time.

KP: So being an alumnus did not give your kids any advantage?

FS: Nothing whatsoever. It almost appeared to be a disadvantage at that time.

KP: Your sons, were they old enough to serve in Vietnam, or it sounds like they just missed this?

FS: No, they didn't miss it. I always wanted all them to go into the military, by the way.

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

FS: I would have liked each of my children to go into the military. I think it's a tremendous experience in terms of maturity and showing responsibility. I favor the programs that are talked about by some of our congressmen. That is, say, two years of universal service, and I don't care whether it's military or working for the fire department in an inner city or a teacher's aide in the inner city, or working in a hospital. People could have their choice and, possibly, even be given credits for taking the worst assignments, a reduction of time. But, ... I believe in it thoroughly, one hundred percent. I really believe in it because I think at the present time our kids don't have an anchor or a base or there is no sense of national purpose, or at least very little, other than the few dedicated people. But, in the wide perspective, I don't think there's a sense of national purpose. My children don't seem to have it. ... Even to the extent of their professional organizations, they don't even seem associated with them, let alone civic organizations. They

just don't seem to think that this is of any importance. You know, you take care of your own house and your own life, and you don't pay much attention to others. And it certainly is nothing that I taught them. I taught them just the opposite, but the world in which they live says, "Mind your own business and take care of your family and don't worry about anybody else." Don't worry about altruistic things and ...

KP: It sounds like you're a little disappointed of the times?

FS: I'm disappointed in that, yes, definitely yes. You asked, "Why did I run for the Board of Education?" Because I felt a responsibility, that was one of the reasons. Oh, I didn't really amplify that, though. You asked about that, and I said that it was a period in which we had a lot of problems. New Brunswick High School, first of all, was on split-sessions. So my kids only went half-a-day. So that limited their hours of exposure to the teachers. And many of the teachers were getting beat down. They just didn't care anymore, and it was just too difficult to cope with. So they didn't really put out all, and I can't altogether blame them, I guess. Discipline in the school was really down to zero. So, at that time, North Brunswick was a big enough community, and, of course, it is separate, politically, from New Brunswick. And we ran schools up through ninth grade, and we wanted to build a high school. But we were a sending-district to New Brunswick, and the State Department of Education did not want us to leave because North Brunswick and Milltown represented the only white middle class injection into New Brunswick High School. We went through the courts in a long battle. There were some people in the New Brunswick Board of Education, black members, who said, "Hey, go!" "We'll run our schools without you." They would have done better without us because they could have addressed the particular problems of that community. But, they were trying to be all things to all people. But, while I was on the Board we went as far as to say to New Brunswick, "We'll build a new high school for you. You bring your students up here." They wouldn't hear of that either. We said, "We'll regionalize with New Brunswick." They wouldn't hear of that either, because that Board wanted control. They would not give up control. So when it became very obvious that they would not give up control, we went even further. We said, "Okay, we'll build a school. We'll run our district, but we'll guarantee you that we'll take about 150 minority students into our school." "You'll have to pay tuition, of course, but we'll take them and introduce them into this midstream ... of social development and academic development." And we said, "We didn't care if you take the kid from the bottom of the pile or the top. We weren't gonna restrict you on that." They just wouldn't hear of it. They wouldn't hear of losing control.

KP: So you really think it was an issue of New Brunswick wanting to maintain political control?

FS: Sure. I mean, why resist regionalization if we offered it? And we offered to build the school. Well, what we did is, we took a big chance. We went ahead and issued bonds and built the school without having permission from the state to use the building at all. Because all of these things were tied up in negotiations and in court. Well, it never got to court, but it was in administrative courts at the state level in the Department of Education. Eventually, the state gave in and said to North Brunswick, "Hey, you've presented a very good case. Go ahead, build your own school." No strings were tied to it at all, so New Brunswick lost everything. They lost the ability to regionalize in which they could have a completely integrated school population. We

weren't bound to take some of their students, although we did repeat the offer, even after the decision came that we were completely independent and could occupy our high school. They wouldn't accept that because, well, probably because they had to pay tuition. Money is not readily available in New Brunswick. And, yeah, we have a pretty good school system today in North Brunswick. Plenty of minority students, by the way. But, New Brunswick, of course, is about ninety percent minority. I think it's seventy-five percent black and then you have Hispanic, Indian, and others whom I hardly even regard as minorities.

KP: I guess, on a related topic, because it deals with New Brunswick, is why did J&J remain so loyal to New Brunswick? Do you have any thoughts on that, having worked for J&J?

FS: Just simple dedication to the city, probably because some of our oldest executives, John Heldrich, (University College, '50) and dating back even to General Johnson, saying, "Yeah, we have an obligation." Very altruistic. Squibb moved out. Squibb's at Lawrenceville. J&J could have moved out, too.

KP: Oh, yes, J&J could have easily moved.

FS: Sure, could have moved to Lawrenceville or Princeton. The Johnson Foundation is down there, at the Princeton area. Physically, New Brunswick is not too bad looking today. And many of these other buildings, which you might not know, were only able to be built because J&J occupies them. Otherwise, there wouldn't have been a rental income. Nobody could have gotten mortgages for them. But once you've got J&J's name on a lease, they will get the funding and they could build them. So they've done that and ... it's certainly been a big help. Some of our black executives are very active in community affairs. I had a boss once, Bobby Roberts, a black guy from a Houston ghetto, raised there, real tough guy, hell of a good guy. And he was very effective in talking to kids over in New Brunswick High School. Once a month or so, go over and talk to a class, because he spoke their vernacular, he was tough, and they respected him. He drove up in a maroon Mark 7 Lincoln. I mean, that's very important to these kids. Wore flashy clothes. Very, very important to them. He made an impression. Some of our black executives are, you know, ... maybe, too much a part of the white middle class now, and they lost the contact. ... J&J has plenty of black and other minority executives.

KP: In fact, you said your boss at one point was a black executive.

FS: Yes. Oh, I've had more than one black boss.

KP: Really? So that there were a number of executives. It sounds like there's a real effort at J&J.

FS: These guys were all qualified though. Bobby Robert was not highly technical qualified, but he was a good administrator.

KP: And these were in the Engineering Department?

FS: Yes. But, he handled it right. And as I said, he spoke a very odd accent and vernacular. He would introduce me, he'd say, "Frank, heah, he my right arm," because I was his technical man, but he took care of the administration.

KP: Is there anything we forgot to ask?

FS: Well, I think, the main thrust being the military things. But, you know, I really want to emphasize what I said at the end, that I believe in universal service and it doesn't have to be military, but universal service to your country. It could be medical, it could be fire department, police department, school aides. When I say police department, I mean aides. And, I think it's the right way to go.

KP: Two questions I forgot. One question, what did you think of the Vietnam War? Your kids were not draft age.

FS: No, they were not. And, in retrospect, I realize how bad and wrong it was, that it was all a trumped-up thing with politicians. I mean, the Gulf of Tonkin thing.

KP: Gulf of Tonkin.

FS: It was all a set-up deal. And that General Westmoreland was the worst liar that there ever was in the world. Lyndon Johnson fell for all of it, but maybe Lyndon Johnson knew, too. But he was in on that naval set up, I'm sure. In retrospect, terrible, but I don't remember what I thought at the time. I really can't say how I viewed it at the time.

KP: And, I guess, this is going back, and I meant to ask it earlier, but you mentioned that your uncle was regular army?

FS: No, that's my brother-in-law, my sister's husband.

KP: Your sister's husband was regular army. Could you just maybe reflect a little about this, because you said that you got to learn a lot about the army from your brother-in-law.

FS: ... Yeah, well, it's an interesting kind of situation in that he was from Newark, from a poor family. And, in the 1930s, they had the CCC, which is sort of like some of the service I'm referring to, Civilian Conservation Corp. I don't know if you've ever run into that. Anyway, they would take these inner-city guys, who had no jobs or anything, and they would do a lot of work in the National Parks and things like that, simple construction and things of that nature. And he was in that, and that was operated by military people. And he was, I guess, very impressed with that. And then he went to Rutgers Pharmacy and got involved in the ROTC there and went all through it. It was a cavalry unit, a horse cavalry, at that time. And, he was an excellent horseman. Eventually, it became a mechanized cavalry during wartime, but he was really good with the horses. And, he was a highly respected officer, discharged with a rank of Colonel. He did see a lot of battles and tough stuff through Italy and northern Europe.

KP: And he stayed in the military after the war?

FS: No. Of course, he was married and had children. And he was a pharmacist, anyway, so he had a professional situation. He went back into pharmacy and he was a reserve officer for many years, and then inactive reserve. He died and he's buried in Arlington Cemetery.

KP: If there's something we did not ask, please feel free to add it.

FS: You've covered it.

KP: Well, thank you very much, it's been very enjoyable.

FS: Oh, just another thing that may be of some interest. This is anecdotal stuff. This is very quick now.

KP: Take your time.

FS: ... We have a cousin who was the highest ranked Jewish chaplain in the Navy. He was an admiral, rank of a rear admiral. ... He's deceased now, too. But he's the only one that ever achieved the rank of Rear Admiral in the Navy.

KP: Actually, on a related point, which your comment just prompted, did you ever go to services when you were in the military?

FS: On rare occasions.

KP: Just for the high holy days?

FS: Yeah, that kind of thing. Oh, that's another one I have to tell you, though. Dan Thomas was great in the English language. His father was an English teacher and ... you wouldn't believe this, I mean this is gonna sound ridiculous. He came armed with poetry books, and I don't mean to say this is an odd guy. He's a good tough guy. But, he came with poetry books and, boy, he would show me stuff, and I became just fascinated with some of this stuff. This is really when we first met, I guess, in basic. He had some really great stuff, and we still fool around with it every now and then. But, anyway, it's all fun. It's all been a lot of fun. And, actually, I don't know how many other people are telling you real terrible, deprivations in the military and terrible experiences, but I just didn't have that.

KP: We have had the full range of experiences.

FS: Yeah. Well, I wasn't sure that you would have any like this, that's the reason why I wanted to give my experience.

KP: We're actually encouraging people who have had experiences like yours to come in because we want to get a full range. And many people have had your kind of experiences.

FS: Yeah. Did you get Bob Salvin? He's one of my classmates. He was in the navy. He did do some overseas.

KP: He hasn't replied yet, but if you know him, you should urge him to let us know. If you know of any of your classmates, please tell them, because we have written to everyone in the class of 1949.

FS: I'll undoubtedly think of some. I don't know why he didn't reply to you. He's retired also from J&J.

KP: Well, thank you, again.

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

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