

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM CARL HEYER

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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and

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MOUNT HOLLY, NEW JERSEY

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Mr. William Carl Heyer RC '25 asked that the following preamble appear before his transcript:

"As one reads this transcript of an oral history given by Carl Heyer RC '25 on the memories of his life and activities before, during, and after World War II, the reader should bear in mind that this is all from the current recollections on an alumnus at 92 years of age. The reader must keep in mind that the memory is not as sharp or coordinated as it would have been in an earlier period of life. Therefore the reader must understand that flashes of past incidents are injected into general that of the then activity under consideration. With this background of the current development of this report let us begin the review of Carl Heyer RC '25 interview."

Interviewer's Note:

From the beginning, my students and I have been impressed with Mr. Carl Heyer's vigor, love of Mount Holly, New Jersey and Rutgers University, his fascination with nature and his modesty. On several occasions, we have been privileged to visit him at his home. Each time, he has given us tours of different parts of Mount Holly and neighboring communities. During one visit, he lead us on a walk up the highest point of Mount Holly. All my student assistants vie for opportunities to visit him and enjoy his company.

Most people do not speak in standard written English, and my interviewing technique often encourages individuals to digress. No written transcript can fully capture the flow of a conversation, but can only approximate it. It is my hope that this interview will inspire Mr. Heyer to write a memoir about his life and career with a special emphasis on Mount Holly, Rutgers, and World War II. We are grateful that he shared his remarkable life story with Rutgers Oral History Archives of World War II.

G. Kurt Piehler
September 12, 1996

Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with Mr. William Carl Heyer on November 28, 1995 at Mount Holly, New Jersey with ...

Kathleen Jones: Kathleen Jones.

KP: ... and Kurt Piehler I guess I'd like to begin by ... asking a few questions about your parents, beginning with your father. Your father was born in New York City.

William Carl Heyer: That's right.

KP: And how did he come to Mount Holly?

WCH: Oh, he came to Mount Holly through Philadelphia. He came to Mount Holly because his brother, who was four or five years older than he, had started a business in manufacturing small personal leather products such as billfolds in Mount Holly, and then he asked my father, who was

then a pipe man, a pipe setter or something like that. It was a metallic work, and he asked him to come down and work with him. And I was born in Philadelphia, but I came down to Mount Holly when I-- I was brought down I should say-- when I was about six months old. And I've been here ever since except for wars years, and college and the rest of them.

KP: Your father worked as a brass pipe fitter and ... foreman. Where did he work?

WCH: I don't know. I really don't know. I never asked, and he never spoke about it.

KP: You've lived in Mount Holly a long time. What are some of the changes that you've seen, ... the contrast between today ... and growing up ...?

WCH: Oh yeah there are a lot of changes. ... At that time Mount Holly was-- well it was ... confined. [It was a] very small, limited town about a mile and a quarter square. It was just about that. And ... everything was within it. ... After the war was over then it expanded like a firecracker. Now we say Mount Holly, but it's really not the municipal part. ... It's just the geographical part. So, that's Mount Holly. Mount Holly was the county seat of Burlington County, and it's the largest county in the state of New Jersey for area.

KP: You went to the Mount Holly school system.

WCH: Yeah.

KP: ... How well did it prepare you for Rutgers?

WCH: Well I ... think the school system did a fine job, but I didn't because I was the oldest of three children, and there was about two years between the three of us. The first was my brother, who was two years younger than I, and my sister, who was two years younger than him. So, that's our family setup, and as far as schools go, they were, I thought, very good. And if your interested in schools, I'd be glad to take you down to the one I had my second year in. It's a one room schoolhouse. It was built somewhere around 1700. A little bit more than that. It was about that time, but I'll be glad to show you. I'd like to take you around Mount Holly, drive you around ...

KP: Yeah.

WCH: ... and let you see a little of it. I've done it with--have you ever talked with anybody that's ever been down here to see me?

KP: No, no.

WCH: Neither of you? ... Well, everybody has been down here except President [Francis] Lawrence, and he-- of course his daughter ... lives about three miles from here. One of his daughters. So, that's that. But I've had many, many Rutgers people down here. ... Well, I was just-- ... Thursday, Thanksgiving Day, I was at Ryoko's [Ryoko Toyama], if you know her ...

KP: Oh yes, yes.

WCH: Well she had me out to her home for Thanksgiving dinner since I live alone. My wife died about four years ago. And ... the one son that I have is out in Arizona, Sun City. And his two boys are scattered too. ... What else was it that you asked me ...?

KP: Did you know you were going to college when you were going through high school?

WCH: Not my first two years. I was told by my parents I had to take the commercial course because they had no money. ... We lived well, but they didn't have [any] ... extra money for anything. In other words, we never owned a car. My family never had a car. We never did a lot of things, but we did a lot of things too. But ... they were less than a dollar, not dollar conscious.

KP: Did they own their house? Or did they rent?

WCH: They rented when ... I was young, and ... when I was about ten years old they bought a house, and we lived in that house until I was through college. That was in Mount Holly, though.

KP: You changed from commercial courses to college ... preparatory [courses].

WCH: Yeah.

KP: How did that come about? What sparked that change? What lead to that change?

WCH: Well, ... at the end of my sophomore year I scratched my head, and I said, "In two years I got to get out in this cold, cruel world. Not for me." I said, "I'm going to find something [else]." ... I figured that what I'd be doing would be working on a farm or something like that. And I knew that ...

KP: Yeah, sophomore year you said you were scratching your head...

WCH: Yeah,... I figured that I wanted to go to college. I had a cousin who was two years older than I-- no, about a year and a half older-- and he was in college. He was two years ahead of me in school. ... When I saw him go ... I thought ... this is the way I'd like to go. So, what happened was that my aunt-- my uncle had died, my father's brother had died-- and my aunt had tried to take over the reins in the ... small manufacturing [plant.] And she tried to take over the reins, and she had a car. And she took my mother and myself up to Rutgers. I didn't even-- Rutgers was a word I didn't even hear at that time, you know. ... We went in to see-- ... my aunt had made an appointment, and we drove up and went in to see Louie Bevier. He was a doctor, Ph.D. And he had a big beard, and as I recall pretty scraggly. And he sat down and talked to us, and we didn't have (any?). "Well," he says, "You'll have to take prep courses." ... And then I forget. ... We came up with it, and then he says, well I was short two or three courses. ... Even making all the courses I could, compatible courses, I still needed three more. ... So I scrounged in high school and got those lined up. I studied in the summertime and between my junior and senior year [I]

worked off that and got high school credit for that. Then I had another course that I took-- I forget how-- and then the third course, I came in under, that I was going to take that extra in college and pay it off like, you know work it off. But that was the way I got in. I got in under the covers.

KP: How were you able to pay for college?

WCH: Well that was one hell of a job. ... My father and mother were very thrifty, and they brought me up that way too. ... I had always saved any money I made. ... My first job, my first income producing thing, was I sang in the choir in the church at age six. ... We got five cents a service, ... two services a Sunday. So I got 10 cents a Sunday. So if I didn't get fined for raising hell or doing something else, well I came home with about 40 or 50 cents. And I put that away, and I kept doing that, and I had enough for the first-- a little bit more than enough for the first semester, everything. And my dad said, well he had some money that he was squirreling away for something-- I don't know what-- about a hundred dollars. And we put that toward ... my second semester's tuition and fees because I lived in Winants, and we ate in Winants. We had quite a dinning hall there. So everything was right there in that little cubical of the campus, which wasn't much bigger than that anyway.

KP: You have ... gone through your first year, but what about ... the other three years?

WCH: Well, ... I wouldn't want to go through sophomore year again. I mean it was too rough. I mean I was--- instead of eating, I didn't go to the dorm, mess hall because I knew I could save up more money that way. And I was really pushing for money, and I often ran a little short on what maybe I should have had, you know, to eat. And ... I had things in my room that I would eat, and then I would try to eat maybe one nice meal a day.

KP: ... How would you make money while you were in college? What were some of the jobs?

WCH: Oh, you'll never get through with this one. I did everything. I got a job at the Alumni House which is torn down now. The Alumni House was between the Chapel and the Sky Barn, and it's a parking lot now. I'm sorry they cut that down. That was originally-- it was ... always my understanding that that was the first house that was built ... for the president of the university. Of course, it was a college then, and ... of course it had grown since that time to a point where they had a ... president's house off-campus. And this one was a little on the old-fashioned side, and ... the professors that didn't have their wives with them-- either they weren't there, or they didn't have wives-- usually lived there. And there were about six or seven that lived there would have a room, and I would get a job helping them clean their room, you know, or straighten things up or do things of that nature. That was just one little thing. And then in that building also in the basement-- no it wasn't, it was the first floor-- the first floor was quite high off the ground. You had to climb up quite a set of steps to get to the porch ..., and on the first floor was the first Alumni House, the first Alumni Office. At least the first that I know of, and it was permanent, and I worked there. And then I worked in the Alumni ... print shop, and we used to run the mimeograph, multigraphs, and ... do everything for any of the college printing that needed to be done with the conventional type. ... For Sunday service we had a very nice little program that we

had to set. Everything was individual. We picked it out, the individual letters, you know, before you mount it. ... I used to work in there. Then I got a job downtown and at noon-- but that was, I guess, about junior year when I picked that job up. I worked in the beanery as we call it. It was the one arm lunch room, and ... that was an education in itself. Another fellow student and I worked there. He served tables, and I washed the dishes. But anyway ... what we got for that was one meal. So, with one meal like that and then the others that I had the skimpies were enough to keep me in good physical shape, you know, but sophomore year was really the rough year because I hadn't ... been able to do too well in scholastic work because I didn't have a lot of the background. I had all commercial courses the first two years in high school. The fellows that had -- ... well we had chemistry the first year, and I didn't know anything about chemistry. And I thought the other fellows didn't, but I found out that they did. Most all of them, almost all, most of them had had chemistry in high school. So, I mean it was a hard subject for me to get through, and I flunked it, and I had to make a make-up and the prof was, he was, I think, he was fairly new to teaching. I don't know, it just felt that way, and ... when I went up to him ... at the end of the year before exam time, I asked him ... how he thought I ought to study for [it], whether it ... would be like this or this, you know. And he says, "Well Heyer," he says, "You just forget it all." He says, "You're not going to pass this course." And I thought that's a hell of a situation for a prof to tell a freshman student. (laughter) Anyway, I didn't, so I ... studied it during the summertime, and I think I passed it off in the Fall. But-- then I had another course-- no, the other course was a hangover that I didn't have enough for credits. But then after I got all that squared away, junior year was pretty good, and the last half of junior year was fine. I mean, I was riding in glory. I had enough jobs, you know, I made enough money, and I was a cut above the freshman year because I was getting a little bit more money. I got 35 cents an hour when I was-- of course when you're paid by the hour, but I didn't get much by the hour. I did most of my own work. ... I cleaned In my junior year, I guess, I cleaned house once a week for two ... different profs that lived over in Highland Park, and I would go in there, and I had the afternoon off, you know. I mean no classes in the afternoon, so I was able to give that time. I think one was a Saturday ... and the other was in mid-week, but that's-- ... and I made, I guess, I was making 40 cents an hour then. So, I got 40 cents an hour. (laughter) Big Deal!

KP: You were very active despite the amount of work you had to do to keep in college. You were very active in college. I had read in the yearbook and in other clippings that you, for example, were a Targum reporter, you were a member of the Liberal Club, you were part of the YMCA Deputation Club, and you were assistant football manager for two years.

WCH: Yeah. That's right. I think that some of those didn't take too much time though. I mean ... out of a month maybe one ... day or one night or one afternoon or something like that, but ... I got into those things. But I got into them, and I really didn't do justice to them as I felt should have been, but that's all the time I had. So, that's what I did. My studies I felt came first, and I tried to do that.

KP: Well I have I guess a few questions. One was the Liberal Club, what did you do in the Liberal Arts Club?

WCH: Oh, I don't remember now. I don't [remember] that at all. Liberal Arts-- see anybody that was what we called Liberal Arts, which was, I don't what you'd call it now, but anyway that was a catchall I guess. A fellow that ... couldn't do certain things, but didn't want-- or if they just wanted a "Joe College" life, why they'd ... be in that group.

KP: The YMCA Deputation Club, what ...

WCH: Well, ... I only did that one year. I think that was my junior year. We had a-- I can't even remember his name, but he was a very nice fellow who was supposed to be the YMCA representative in college. I don't know whether he had another job or not. ... But we-- I went out with him several-- usually weekends but sometimes nights and not very often. I mean this wasn't-- ... and we'd go to a group meeting of young folks. It could be a high school class of boys or it could be-- it was mostly boys that we worked with, you know YMCA or Boy Scouts or some group, you know what I mean. And we really just put on a-- not a show but I mean we would review certain things in college or we reviewed certain things in football or something like that. Now I don't know whether that-- ... that was about what we did, and there were not many of us. When I went out, I just went out with this YMCA fellow, with him. I mean it wasn't a whole group. He and I put this on. ... It was sort of a publicity type thing for the YMCA I would say. You know, I mean ... as I look back on it.

KP: It sounds like you were growing up very active in the Y. Did you belong to the Y growing up?

WCH: Well yeah, but I was all Boy Scout. I liked the Boy Scouting better. My cousin, who as I said was about a year and a fraction older than I, he was always YMCA. YMCA were the people who were dressed up, and the Boy Scouts were the ones that were out charging around the woods and getting dirty and building fires and stuff like that.

KP: So, you were a Boy Scout when you were growing up in Mount Holly?

WCH: Yeah, and I did a lot of Boy [Scouting.] I had a Boy Scout troop for about seven years when I-- after I got back to Mount Holly after college. I ran it pretty much myself, you know, and we did a lot of good work, and we had a lot of fun too with these kids.

KP: Why did you have to give it up ...?

WCH: Well, my wife wanted me to give it up. She thought I was putting too much time in it. And I guess I was. After our son was born she says, "I think you should take that time and put it on, give it all to our son." That was when he got to be about three years old or something like that So that's the reason. I really didn't give it up. I just got out of it. I turned this troop over to another fellow, but it didn't last too long after that.

KP: So, the troop isn't in existence today?

WCH: Oh no, no. They don't exist. I guess maybe two years after, three years, but we had certain objectives that were community type. The one thing I remember particularly, at Christmas time we always gave baskets, and we'd get half bushel baskets, you know, the conventional basket, and we'd always have it full. And we'd have it full for one whole meal, you know, be it chicken or turkey, and it would be all cranberry sauce and potatoes and some kind of cake and coffee. You know, but a regular-- and we did-- I look at what they do now, and I laugh at it because we would turn out ... eight or 10 baskets ourselves, all by ourselves. And what we did, I had a-- well it was my wife's brother-in-law who ran a Bond bakery, and they had fruitcakes. They baked fruitcakes. We'd get the fruitcakes, and then we'd sell them, and the money we made from that is what we used to buy the ingredients for our Christmas baskets. But we really put out a lot on that, and we used to go scouting. ... At least once and usually twice a year we'd do a big trek. We'd either walk, or we'd take a canoe or canoes. We'd have to borrow canoes from different people. At that time canoeing was quite the thing here along Rancocas Creek. ... It's a lot of fun. ... You learn a lot of nature, and what's in the environment in this area.

KP: It sounds like you really enjoyed your Boy Scouting ...?

WCH: Oh, I enjoyed life all the time, but I must say that some of it was a little rough like my sophomore year. Oh, I tell you-- because I had financial problems, and I had ... study, you know, classes ... had to fit in with my working. You sit there real calm, you know. If you want to tell me what the heck ...

KJ: What would you say your fondest memory of your years at Rutgers was?

WCH: Oh Lord, all four of them.

KJ: All four of them?

WCH: Yeah, each one had its own big moment. Of course, the first year was trying to get studies, was getting in the Of course you, I don't know how it is now, but I mean you leave high school where you're told what you have to do and everything, and you go to the next school. At college they don't tell you ... they just ... [say], " ... In the next class we'll take chapter six of the chemistry," you know, and when you go in there you're supposed to know what it's all about, and then you really get the fine points from your lecture, and then you go into the lab, and you'd finish your lab work up. My sophomore year, I think it was sophomore year, maybe junior year, we had physics, and we-- it's hard for me to really place that whole thing, but ... we were in New Jersey Hall. Do you know where New Jersey Hall is? O.K. We had our class down in the basement. It's half out and half in, you know, into the ground, and I had been working with a fellow Brubaker, about like that-- I can see him right now, and we were working on these experiments and doing certain things, cutting up stuff. Anyway, he just gave up, and I had to do all the work. Theoretically it was supposed to be half and half, and I think that prof really passed me because he saw I really had to work my tail off to get things done. ... I don't think I got a-- I got a "C". If I got a "C," I was considered good.

KP: ... Kathleen and I have read a lot of the old Targums. Students have to actually read a whole semester's worth of Targums and write an essay on it. ... There was a big tradition of what was called the "Gentlemen's C"-- of people who really didn't do very much work. Did you know any of your classmates who were in that sort of ...?

WCH: Oh yeah, I knew it. Well I wouldn't say that I never heard that expression.

KP: ... That expression ...

WCH: No, here's what-- I just got out a lot of papers. I thought maybe that you were going to ask me ... more about after Rutgers, but anyway-- you were asking me about? What was your question?

KP: Well there were some students who did not take their studies as seriously as you did.

WCH: Oh yeah. Well that's right. I just checked it out, and I had there in my old records-- it showed that we graduated, our whole class, you know, our whole class was a 148, and we started with 312. So about 50 percent didn't graduate with us, and that doesn't mean that they didn't go on somewhere else or [do] something else, but I mean that's the way the figures show. So, we went in with 312, and we graduated with a 148. And I thought, wondered how it was, and I checked not last year's though, but several times Rutgers incoming class and graduating class. ... And they all ran so similar, and I mean about 50 percent would be the graduating class. Now I don't know why but-- and so I used to think when I'd go-- see our son went to Rutgers, and so I mean I saw a little ... more of Rutgers in those four years than I had before and after. And I saw what he had to study and things, and I said, "My golly, I could never go through Rutgers again" I looked in his class. It was about the same. I mean it was about 50 percent, you know. All those who you only knew that, you know, some of the fellows ... had to take ... an extra year to get their full credits. Maybe they flunked them, or they changed their majors or something like that. ... And you would have some of the fellows-- we had fellows that were from World War I that came in our class. And most of those, I only knew, I think I knew three of them, but those three all quit after about a year or two years.

KP: Really? Why do you think they quit?

WCH: Well, I think that they had-- they had been-- most of them had been overseas in France, and they had seen life outside that, and to come back to college ... was pretty dull. And then the other thing, the advantage they had was that I believe their tuition was paid. Although the fellow that I sort of chummed with that was from World War I, he said that he never got his tuition paid, but I think he did in college. I mean, he just-- you know I think at that time. And that was one ... problem I had that my-- I maybe a little, my ... early years from high school, I'm probably a little bit too far back. I think ... things are squashed a little bit more into my senior year in high school, you know what I mean? But anyway I wasn't-- we gave ... I mean, I guess the federal government ... was the one that gave two scholarships a year to each county. It was allocated. And the fellow that came from our Mount Holly, he had gotten his way back, and he had planned on going, so he had a good background for college, you know what I mean. And I hadn't, and so

when ... it came up the point I was ready for, he had taken that scholarship, and the other scholarship was given to a-- he was more literary, my buddy from Mount Holly, and the other fellow from Burlington was more athletic, and he was on the football team the first year. ... And the second year, I don't know, I ... never knew him, never kept track of him. He was in some fraternity But anyway he unbeknownst to me, he didn't come back in his junior year. So, they had that open, and I worked in the registrar's office on occasions when they were pushed for something, you know, and I would come back early, two or three days early before classes started, and I would work in there, and then I would taper off as classes started because they didn't need me. It was only just for that. But anyway-- ... [what] was I talking about ...?

KP: Oh, that's fine. No, we enjoyed the story. I guess you had mentioned that Dean [David] Fales was your favorite professor. You have fond memories of him ...

WCH: ... Dean--... he was a bachelor, and he was a D.D., Doctor of Divinity, and I think at times he had had a church, and let's see-- what the heck is his name-- ... it's not ---- well anyway. I'll get it for you some time later ...

KP: You joined a fraternity. When did you join?

WCH: Well I-- what happened there, ... there were a bunch of us that were about the same as I was. We ... had to make ends meet working pretty much. And we lived in Winants. Most of them lived originally in Winants, and they got together and figured they could get ... together as a club I guess you'd call it and save money on room rent. You know, and so-- and the building is still there. It's the one that's in back of-- it's on George Street, and it's right in back of the library museum. It's a square, and it has like a little, like widow's walk up top It was empty, and we rented it, and that was my junior year. But ... I couldn't even afford that, so I joined it, but I never stayed there or lived there, and that was-- see ... as I said I came back early, and I would get-- I would pick my room. ... Well after my freshman year, my three years after that I lived in one room. It was the biggest room. It was the biggest by about six inches, and it was ... in the cheap range. And it was a \$1.87 and a half a week it cost me for that room, and what we got was the room, and it was heated, and it had light, and ... we only had gas lights then. We didn't have any electricity. And we had maid service. ...At that time everything was Magyar if you know what Magyar is.

They were incoming, you know. I guess everything coming through Ellis Island was Magyar. Anyway they were all Czech, and they were ... very nice, homebody women, all women, and they would come in, and they'd work, so-called clean our room and make our beds. And then they would tell if anything went wrong. I mean anything that wasn't right they'd tell I don't know who, but then they-- whoever it was was getting in trouble.

KP: A lot of the images of the 1920s-- I mean one of the images of college students ... and of young people was it was Prohibition, but there was a lot of speakeasies and a lot of sort of illicit drinking. Did you ...

WCH: I mean there were speakeasies. We had one fellow in college whose father ran a speakeasy. It wasn't very easy It was spoken about very often. It was Tony (Zoller?), and he was on Easton Avenue almost if you went right out the center of Winants and jumped across College Avenue, and that's about where he was. I went in there once. I wanted to see what it was all about. It was nothing more than a beer joint, but it was locked, and you couldn't get in, and you knocked on the door and then they have a little window or something. They'd look and say ... And you'd tell them who you were. ... I'm from Rutgers, the Class of '25. You'd go in there ... and there'd be about six or eight in there, but it was only a beer joint. And I worked for a fellow who was a bootlegger. He's the fellow that ran the lunchroom where we ate down on Albany Street, which was down-- you can't recognize it now if it is there. I mean, I've looked and looked, ...but he was a regular. He and his father-in-law ran the place, and then they had a little fellow who was a jockey by profession that I guess just was in there So I'd get enough to eat, you know, but he worked in there. But that was an interesting place, and as I said ... after we had been in there a while and understood the place, ... this friend of mine who had been in World War I-- he and I sort of pal together because he didn't have much money, and he had to earn money all the time, and we'd tell each other what was happening. He worked in the registrar's office most of the time, ... and he'd tell me what's going on there. And I worked outside, and I would tell him what was happening. I mean we just chatted. We ... didn't particularly, you know make news or anything other than to see the difference, but it was really interesting. But this fellow ... had this lunchroom about a year after we were out of college, Gene Miller, who was my friend-- we worked together. He said, "Did you see about Joe?" Joe, ... I forget his last name, but anyway ... they just about saved him. He was out ... running rum. And boats would come up outside ... the ten mile limit or whatever it was, and they'd anchor at a certain place. And then these fellows in the speed boats would come up and load up, and then they'd tear out, and they'd have much more speed than the Coast Guard, so they could always outrun them But anyway he had this news of heavy seas, and his boat hit a wave and went down in the wave and went under, and he was out in the water for something like twelve hours or something. They were just about able to survive even. So, I mean I never-- so I mean that's what we had. That's Rutgers in our day ...

KP: What about dating, dating women in the COOP. Did you date women from Douglass? ...

WCH: Yeah, yeah, well of course I couldn't do that at all my freshman or sophomore year. I never even looked at them (laughter). But when after my junior year, after I got my feet on the ground, and then I got this scholarship-- did I tell you I got that scholarship that was?

KP: Yeah.

WCH: Well anyway after I got that scholarship, I was riding high wide and handsome because I had more money than-- you know it was a hundred dollars a semester. That's \$200. That was an awful lot of money. So, I did date after that. My first date was a Halloween party, and they had it at (laughs)-- they had it at the Episcopal Church-- I was Episcopalian out on George Street, which is out near the COOP. Do you know it? And I went there. Oh, a friend of mine, he said ...[he] was going to this party, and he says, "I got-- my girlfriend is coming." He says, "Don't you want to go?" I mean, I said, "I don't have any girlfriend. I don't, no I don't want to go." And he

says, "Oh my girlfriend has got a nice roommate. She is-- you'd like that." So, I said okay. So, he made the date for me, and I met my blind date out there. And I just had a letter from her two weeks ago (laughter). She didn't marry me (laughter). She married a fellow who was from-- I think he was from Yale. ...Anyway she had four children, I think, and we had corresponded for a while, but anyway I had a situation. I found out where she was. I went to the COOP and got her address ... about six years ago or something like that and gave her a call So, I mean we [talk] ... about once or twice a year, and I went out to see her a couple of times. She's living down outside of Washington. But she says she's not in good shape. ... She has to use ... a walker. And if she goes out ..., she has to get a wheelchair. But anyway, that's the background. Now you've got the dating in. What else do you want? (laughter)

KP: When you entered college what ... career did you think you would end up in?

WCH: I had no idea! I was just getting in.

KP: You really didn't have, you had no sense ...

WCH: No, I did. I planned on and my parents said when you take the commercial course. Well ... that was about what I had to do. It wasn't really a commercial course-- ... I really, what I wanted to do, I wanted to get into natural science, and my mother had ... one time come out. She didn't often ... go out ..., but she did a lot of thinking, and she said to me, "Carl," she said, "You ought to take Agriculture." But she didn't call it that. She called it whatever it was because she knew I liked outside, the outdoors. When I was a kid I used to go trapping for animal[s], you know, fur skins, and I used to go hunting with a gun, and I liked all outdoors. But then ... she said, "Well, if you don't do that why don't you go into the ministry?" And I said, "Oh no, I'm not good enough for that." But I did-- I mean ... as I said I was a choir boy, and I was at Sunday school and ... a lot of things in her mind and in my mind too pointed that way. Then ... she said, "Why don't ... [you] go into forestry" because I liked ..., and I said, "... That's out all ... by itself," and I said, "I don't see an advancement." That was the big thing. I could see getting to be a forester, and you'd be a forester all the rest of your life, but I wanted something that was going to climb, you know. So, I turned that down, and the ministry, I said, "I didn't think I was good enough." But I mean I did, I used to do certain things when I was in the choir, and at one time I liked to read the Bible. And ... every morning before school-- that was when I was going to school-- I would read a little of in the [New] Testament book, and she saw me. ... But I turned down both of her suggestions. (laughs)

KP: So, in a sense you really, you knew you wanted ... some career, but you didn't quite know what direction?

WCH: Yeah.

KP: How did you get your first job? How did that come about?

WCH: Oh, that ... I sort of fell ... on. The YMCA secretary here in Mount Holly was-- you know, I had volunteered. He wanted me to go into the Y, and he had it all set up here that I was

coming down and be his assistant. ... So he took me over to see two others on the Board, I guess it was Board of Directors of the YMCA, and either they didn't have the money, or they didn't think that I was just right, but anyway, they turned me down. I don't know why. So, my Y's secretary got me ... an appointment at Newark, New Jersey YMCA, and I was up there two years, I was a dormitory secretary as they called it. ... You had a dorm, I had charge of seeing it was fitted, I mean, and the people were there and the fellows that came in were the right type, you know. ... I forget, we ... must have had close to a 100 in that dorm. It was two or three floors, nearly two fellows to a room like in college would be. But I was there two years then I came down back here and came back to the plant, the factory where my father was. And I came back under, I mean, under-- it was ... a pressure deal. Well I liked it, but I worked there as a kid. I worked there before my uncle died, and when my aunt took over, she wouldn't let me work in there anymore because I was under age.

KP: This was the Weaver Manufacturing Company?

WCH: Yeah that's right. You've got some notes there, haven't you?

KP: Yeah, your survey and a few notes from the yearbook and ... some other clippings and such. What did you do at the factory? What were your responsibilities?

WCH: Well, ... it was my responsibility to run the joint. My aunt, she was there. ...I mean she would come in for a couple hours in the morning or something like that to take care of the financial ends and things.

KP: How big was it? How many people did it employ?

WCH: Well we didn't have too many at that time, but the big thing then, you see, the Depression came along, and ... I'll pat myself on the back, and I held the business together because it wasn't a ... business that had to be, you know.

KP: What did you make?

WCH: Well, ... when I was, when I first got there, ... well when I was a kid and worked there, they were making all kinds of leather novelties. (.....?) And we made everything. We made men's belts, and we made watch fobs for all watches and nobody ever had a wrist watch then, you know. You had a watch fob or a watch chain. We made leather watch chains about four different styles, ... and watch fobs, we had all kinds of watch fobs, arrowheads for them, and the YMCA insignia, and ... some cities ...

-----End of Side One, Tape One-----

KP: You were saying that you made all these different kinds of watches when you were working in the factory when you were growing up

WCH: Well, watches-- one of the big things that they had before I came in ... there was they made, we called them cup straps, and you'd take a regular pocket watch, a small pocket watch. They were (Ingersoll's?) the pocket watch. And then ... we'd make a leather strap, and it was made into a cup that was formed, and you could just slip the watch underneath and in it. And they ... had made a lot of those for World War I and after, you know, for servicemen, and then after that the watch people started to make cases so that you could ... put a strap on it ... And Keystone Watch Case Company was over in Riverside, and ... I used to go over there and work with them on different styles of ... wrist attachments. And ... then of course, when that sort of petered out because the metal change came in and that went out, so ... we had to look at other things. And finally ... I started to get in. I said I had three different ... areas of contacts. One was the retail store, and ... we'd take the watch fobs and leather watch chains or whatever and sell them in a retail store, usually a jewelry store. And of course as we advanced, we had the straps and stuff in the jewelry store, but also we would sell those in different other stores too maybe like a hardware store or something else. And then as we developed from that ... I got into the wholesale, and then I started to say-- well we were in wholesale too for the same watch fobs and chains, and then we made specialties. If I would go in to see somebody, .. I would say, "Well, I can do that in leather, or I could do a better job or leather would do a better job." I'd just, you know, suggest it. And then ... the whole thing was very fortunate in that a fellow came along, a Frenchman, and he came when my aunt still was there. And she got him, she brought him in, and he was a real technician in leather works. He had gone through a school in France. I mean that was a whole school, and he'd gone all the way through it or whatever, however they ... did go. And he was very clever and very good, and he was very cooperative. So, if it hadn't been for him, I don't know where I would have been because he filled in the void as the other things were going out, and I didn't have the expertise to fill in that void fast enough.

KP: You mentioned you held this business together during the Depression.

WCH: Yeah.

KP: How did you manage to do that, and how tough was it?

WCH: Well, I wasn't aware that it was tough, and I wasn't aware ... really of the Depression. I was so damn busy. ... It just didn't occur to me. Except I knew that I was having a heck of a job getting orders. But I had-- as I said this fellow came in, and he was able to develop and design things that were needed, and most of his design was for-- Well, I would bring in-- well I said, "Can you do this?" And he'd say, "Yeah," and then he'd do it. And I made cases, well do you know La Cross people up in Newark, (Sneffell Brothers?), well they made all kinds of manicure. Do you know La Cross ...?

KJ: No.

WCH: Well that was, it was quite well known at that time, and they were, I guess, manufacturers of metal, like scissors and whatever you'd have, knitting needles and things of that nature. And they also had-- but their biggest product was ... nail files, ... lipsticks and eyebrows. Everything of that type. Mostly ... for females. And I got with them. I don't know how I got started with

them, and I started. He said, "Well why don't you make ... a case for them?" And so ... we made different cases. You know, we'd have the instruments. We'd have maybe the places for the bottles of cuticle stuff and, they had scissors, and they had foot nail files and tweezers and that kind of metal, and then they had the ... bottle type stuff. So, I started making cases for them, and we ... had a nice little [thing] going. And then you know the Wiss Company: Sheers, Scissors? Well, they were in Newark, not too far away, and I went in to see them. And I got in with them real well because they didn't have anything like that, and I made cases for them, you know what I mean, for instruments. I'll bring down a case that I've got upstairs ...

KP: So you really diversified. You tried to diversify to stay ...

WCH: Yeah. Then I got a break, I don't know how I got with this guy, maybe he got me. He was ... a German Jewish fellow. And I don't know whether, I think he came over as a baby. I mean I think he was born over in Germany and came here. But anyway, somehow we got together-- oh I know, one of my outlets I ran into was-- after this fellow had been here with me a while, this mechanic, I got into the gift shops, gift stores, and there ... was a gift show. It was twice a year, once or twice a year. And we made up a lot of gift items in leather ... with those kinds of things, and we got into that, and that's how I got with him. And he was-- his big ... business was importing clocks, travel clocks. So, we made all kinds of containers. You know how a travel clock will open like ... an oyster, you know. We made all kinds of those, and then the zippers came in, and we were able to adapt zippers early. And we made zipper traveling clock cases, and ... put a lot of the zippers in on our manicure cases. And so, I mean that really gave us a big impetus, was the zippers.

KP: It sort of happened after the war, but why did you leave the manufacturing company to go into insurance?

WCH: Well I didn't leave. Uncle Sam came in and said, "You've been in a reserve, and ... we want you now." So, they grabbed me, and I went off to war. And I left it in a-- and the people did a good job. They kept it together. But when I came back, it was just a skeleton. You know what I mean? See ... I was doing all the outside work, ... going for material, ... buying what I need[ed] to use and raw material, and then I was also out doing the selling.

KP: And there was no one to replace you?

WCH: No. Well, I mean there was ... my office girl. She was smart, but she wasn't-- and she was always at ends with this guy. She didn't like him, you know. And of course they were in the plant while I was there, and then they were like here, you know.

KP: Fighting with each other ...

WCH: Yeah, well mentally, I mean they didn't really get ...

KP: Yeah, but they were very ...

WCH: Well, they didn't cooperate as much as they could, and that was a big thing when I came back. They didn't have ... really a going product, you know, that you could go and sell anywhere. She did a lot of good work, but she ... didn't understand ... costs. So that she often was selling things pretty well below, you know, what really it actually came out to be. Of course, it would be the material and labor, she could see that, but the overhead wasn't I guess she saw it, but she didn't know how to cope with it, you know. So that was-- and then I was in there trying to build that place up because everything-- well I was away about ... five and a half, six years in the service, and most all of it was overseas. So, I mean they couldn't call me or get in contact with me ... in any way and ask, "What would you do here?" "What can we do here?" And I couldn't talk to them and see what the heck was going on either. You know, we wrote letters, ... but that isn't like being where you are and get the feel of things. So, it took me ... well about five years trying to build the thing up because we lost all ... of the big accounts like manicure cases and travel clock cases all those big accounts that really kept a good shop going. And there was just ... piddling stuff, but they were doing a good job, and I came in, but it took me about five years. And then along came this Korea upset. And-- ... well, I knew that they were taking some, but ... on that we were just picked out piece meal. I can't tell you how that happened. But they said, "...You're going to go for Korea." And I said, "I'm not going." ... What I said, the words I said were, "When you get a good ... war going, I'll be glad to go, but I don't want to go with this brush fire." That was my feeling. But that came along. They said, "That's just too bad. That's what you're saying." ... So, then I went. Then I knew that I-- ... you had to go for two years. They had to keep you for two years, and you had to be in, ... no matter what, you know I mean that was just as I understood it. So, I figured two years I could let things slide. I just told them at the factory to see what they could do, and then when ... I was not here, I said, "Well, the best plan is just to close it up." My cousin, who is a year older than I, his mother when she died left really the dollars and cents of the business to him, so I mean I didn't ... have an ownership in it. But of course, well I mean I wasn't making enough money. I was always building up, and I didn't make enough money to really pay much in the way of dividends. And of course, they wanted that, but ... he was very cooperative. I mean he saw the picture. So, I mean while I was overseas in Korea, he sold the building.

KP: So, it sounds like, like ... the war really interrupted your business career.

WCH: It did, yes.

KP: That you might very well have continued to build ... the company up ...

WCH: Well look, I was 55 years old when I got out of the military. ...I tried to get back into civilian work. I went to a number of plants concerns that made leather products, you know, billfolds and key cases, primarily, some ... case cases but not-- and nobody wanted to talk to me. "Well, you know, they might like you, but we don't have a place for you," you know. Well, you know ... Buxton ..., the people that make billfolds and key cases, I thought maybe I could get in there because they were big, and they were very inventive in their design things. But, I mean, after I got out, I could see-- I mean they had all their top slots, age 50 or over filled, and they didn't ... want to push anybody aside for me. They didn't know me either.

KP: So, in many ways you went into insurance because you were looking ...?

WCH: Well, insurance-- I always had an idea I'd like insurance. I just had it in the back of [my head], and I tried. When I got out of the airforce, I was in Wisconsin when they released me, when I got out of the service. And my wife liked it out there, and our son was just about to graduate from high school. But anyway, he was sort of on his own. I mean, he didn't hold us down. So, we stayed out in Wisconsin, and I worked there. I did several things. Oh, I got tied up with real estate. Well, before I got tied up with them too much-- I was in only about ... three months, and I hadn't sold anything. I was just learning. I had to take exams and everything else to get a license. ... About that time-- I saw how it wasn't so easy selling, and I didn't know whether I wanted to tie myself. I knew if I did that I was tying myself down to an area because you build up a clientele, and you build up a field, you know, and if you moved somewhere else you were going to have to start from the bottom again even though you knew the ropes. At that time, the world was concerned about Russia building up, you know, and ... where did I get? I got into-- ...Oh then ... I found through the service that there were these different departments that were either rebuilding, you know, and there was only-- ... there was one fellow that was in charge. They were all ex-servicemen. And they were ... making a survey of certain areas, and ... the area I had been assigned was around Madison, Wisconsin which was my home at that time, and the surveys were to see where we could put in bomb shelters. The war was over, but they were-- Russia they felt was ...

KP: When was this? Was this in the 1950s, the surveying for bomb shelters?

WCH: Yeah about that, a little bit more than that maybe '60 ...

KP: '60, in the early '60s ...

WCH: About the early '60s because I got out in '55. That's when I was 55, not the year '55. So, that was the way the ball bounced there. So, I got in there, but ... it was a project, and when the project was through you'd have to go and look for another job somewhere, you know. And I had two projects like that that I was in, and that one was around Madison and the other one came out to be around Milwaukee. I had a lot of work to do in Milwaukee. So that when that finished, and that was out. So, then I was looking for something to do, and I ran into this real estate, and I always thought ... I would like that.

KP: But you ended up selling insurance?

WCH: No, then I wasn't selling insurance. ... I got into insurance after that. And then again I was on the ground floor, and I had to build, study, and pass exams, and get licenses and get along.

KP: How did you make the move back to Mount Holly from Wisconsin because you mentioned you did this civil defense project and then you tried real estate there. When did you come back?

WCH: Well, you see my mother was still living, and she was close to 90, and my aunt, I guess, she was still living too. Anyway, my mother was getting-- oh that was it, my mother was not feeble. As a matter of fact she was running around like a two year old, but my sister had ... contracted ... cancer, cancer of the bones. And she was here, and she was the mainstay of my mother. She and my mother lived together. So, when she got cancer and my wife and I were talking about it, she said, "Well, she's going to-- I don't know how many years your sister will have to live, but then your mother will be all alone, so I guess we're going to have to go back." So, we came back to Mount Holly and re-established ourselves here. Then I had started Life-Insurance over there, but I hadn't sold much And then I had to start here. I had to get a New Jersey State license here and go through that. It was sort of a transition.

KP: And you were ... basically doing a third career. I mean, if you considered the Army a ... second career. You were really given a third career.

WCH: Yeah. That's right. That's right, exactly.

KP: Going back some years, you were in high school when the First World War took place.

WCH: Yeah, yeah.

KP: What do you remember about the First World War specifically and how it effected Mount Holly?

WCH: ... Well Fort Dix was developed in that time, you know, and ... my cousin and I used to-- he had had infantile paralysis so his right arm was just limp. There was no movement in it at all. It just laid there. And he couldn't do a lot of things with other boys, so he and I did a lot together. And we..., I remember a lot of times riding out to where Fort Dix was being constructed.

KP: So, you saw the Fort ...

WCH: Well, it started out with tents. There were all tents, and we watched it. And the roads were pathetic. They were just dirt roads, so they built-- the first concrete roads I saw were from Fort Dix into another town ... Pemberton.

KP: So you remember when the roads outside of town were all dirt highways, dirt roads?

WCH: Well, ... I guess a lot of them were, but ...what they were were usually ... gravel.

KP: Gravel.

WCH: And gravel would come up in the rail cars from around down the South around the shore. I don't know, I know we had gravel banks all around here, but ... I remember when the White Horse Pike was all gravel, and we were on our bikes, you know. And the Packard was a big car. Anyway, we made ... a number of forays on our bicycles on weekends and stuff, but we made one

big one for two weeks and rode from here down to Barnegat and around there, and then we went down to Atlantic City and passed there. I remember going passed, it was a real rich-- rich people had set it up. It had to be a golf course and a big mansion of a place, you know, where they would have dinners and parties and all. And we were going by on our bikes when we all of our camping gear, our tents, clothes, and food and everything. And this guy was, ... came out, and he was all dressed up, and he had a big chain with a watch on it, ... and our going by just brought out, you know, brought out the little boy in him, you know. And he stopped us, and he wanted to know all about it, and he was ... quite interested. But anyway, we went down there, and we got down to Atlantic City, and then my aunt and her mother were staying with somebody for the summer for a period of time in Ocean City, and we went down there and stayed a couple of days with them and went swimming in the ocean and living life up. Then we came back up the White Horse Pike and came back home.

KP: During World War I, did you as a Boy Scout or in high school participate in any scrap drives, or in any bond drives, or anything?

WCH: Yeah, ... I've got-- I don't know where they are, I took pictures at that time. I always took pictures when I was a little kid. You know, I had a little brownie box camera we called it. And-- ... yeah I was at what they called Victory Metal Drive, and we sold war bonds, and they wanted ... to collect was it ... aluminum?

KP: Yeah.

WCH: So, anybody that had aluminum pots were to bring them in. ... It was a spirited thing It didn't mean that much I guess in the end, but then they had a big drive-- airplane propellers were made out of black walnut, and there were no black walnut forests in the east. I don't know whether there were any in the west or not. But then we went out, and we had to canvass all around the country and to pick out black walnut trees, and they had to be at least, I don't know, was it twelve inches or eighteen inches in circumference. And ... then we turned in reports on that. We did a lot of war type things.

KP: Your father was of German descent. How did he feel about World War I and the coming of ...

WCH: He was, ... he never even thought about being a German because he was of German descent. ... My grandparents all had died. My father's father and mother-- ... no ... my father's father, my mother's father and mother had died before I was born. So, it was my grandmother, grandmother Heyer who lived with us in Mount Holly until she died. And, she died when I was about four years old. So, I mean, but my parents had always said I could talk much better German than I could English. When she died, of course, I wound up with no one talking German, so I lost all of it. But yeah, she-- well that's all I can say. There isn't much more. She took care of me when the rest of the family was doing other things.

KP: Kathleen?

KJ: When you got called to service for World War II, what kind of thoughts were going through your head before you left?

WCH: Well, that's where, from home?

KJ: From home.

KP: You were fairly old when you enlisted?

WCH: Yeah, well I didn't enlist. They had me on ... a roster, and they sent orders. I was in the active reserve.

KP: In the 1940s? I mean you were part of the peacetime draft of the 1940s because you joined in July of 1941.

WCH: Well, that's when I went on active duty, but I had ...

KP: ... You were called up from the reserves from ...

WCH: Yeah, but I was active in the reserves all along.

KP: So, you stayed active after graduating?

WCH: Oh yeah. Well, after I came back from Newark YMCA-- I didn't while I was in Newark-- but when I came back to my original home area. And I was on the roster down here. So, I mean while I was on the army roster here ... I was active. We would ... have, training classes ... in Camden, mostly in Camden, and we would review different new military techniques and ... then in the summer you'd have two weeks of summer training camp.

KP: So, you stayed part of the Army Reserve?

WCH: Yes.

KP: ... As part of the reserves did you ever ... mobilize for any ... natural disasters or for any labor strikes or did you mainly just gather for training?

WCH: That's right, yeah. And then we did our ... two weeks in the summertime. Of course, there again, we got paid. We got paid. You know how much a colonel got paid? I was looking it up. At that time, a full colonel, it was 540 dollars a month, a month. And a buck private, I think it was listed as 30 dollars, but they had a temporary sign off, and I think they were getting 20 dollars a month. Of course, they got food and board and everything.

KP: You were called up for active duty in July of 1941 and what was your first assignment?

WCH: Well, I was originally ... called up in 1940 over a year before that, but I mean, I could see that we were going to-- [I was] pretty sure we were getting into it. So, from that time on at my factory, I was always thinking of that. Every move I made was I'll be called up in, I figured, about a year. But it so happened that they called me up almost one of the first ones. My orders were to go to Puerto Rico. That was my assignment. And I went up to ... Governor's Island which was our-- I don't remember just ... how the headquarters was, but anyway I went up and the regular army officer that was assigned to us who more or less kept things together, you know, I mean he was always on the permit. He was a younger fellow. Well, anyway, he-- I went up, and he was in the office. I didn't even know that he had been called there. And I talked with him, and he said, "Oh, ... if you don't want to go now ... I'll get you reassigned." He said, "I've got a lot of fellows that would love to go down there." I said, "Well that's fine. You just take me off the list," and he did. And I said, "Well when could ... I expect that ... [you'll] have used up all this backlog?" And he said, "Well, I guess, ... about six to ten months, something like that. And I said, "Well, that's fine. You know after ten months I'd be glad." I told him what I was doing, and he appreciated it, you know. So I was relieved of that. And it came 10 months, and I wasn't called and mostly all the other fellows were called. Then finally I got my orders the first of July, about the first of July or maybe June, and my orders said that I was to report to Tallahassee, Florida, the Air Corps assignment there. So, I went down with the understanding, my understanding that I was ... all infantry. I was always infantry. All my training and everything was infantry, ... all infantry. And I figured I was going down there, that I'd be in charge of base defense perimeter ..., you know, put your men all out wherever it might be and see if the enemy didn't get in the base to bust the base up. And I got out there, and I was out there about two days, when the guy says, "When are you going to join the Air Force?" I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well you're in the Air Force now, pal." "I'm not in the Air Force," and I found out that they did this. Automatically you were in the Air Force. But what they did was they took all of our cadre, officer cadre, and put piecemeal, pulled in one at a time and put it in with an Air Corps because the Air Corps then, an Air Corps unit-- but they would do all ... everything except the flying part of the operations. And we always had, as I remember, P.I.O.S., PIOS. P was for personnel which was, and I was for intelligence and O was for operations and S was for supply and maintenance and material. So, they took and put us in all except the operational areas, you know what I mean? So, you'd find a friend of yours ... has a space in A3, you know, and you'd be in some other place, ... and another one would be somewhere else and another. But then they would bring in-- because they had very few flying personnel at that time. There weren't very many. They had to have them for the ... unit itself and then for the sub units, ... the different flights because they all had to be flying, of course. ...

KP: So, what were your responsibilities? What type of duties did you have on a given day as an infantry-trained-officer in an Air Force unit?

WCH: Well, ... we had no connections with the officers in the Air Force. I mean they were over here in this group. ... I mean we knew them, but we didn't have activities with them except that I was in charge of aircraft maintenance as well. I had all material, anything, a chair, or a desk, or a gun or anything, a truck. And we, our CO was a West Pointer, and he graduated the same year I graduated from Rutgers, 1925, but of course he had all West Point background training. As soon

as the war broke out-- Bing! He was, he went right up to full colonel right away, you know what I mean? And I stayed a captain, but anyway does that answer your question there?

KP: In other words, you were in charge of maintenance ... and supplies, facilities. Were there any other duties that you had?

WCH: Well, you'd get all kinds of duties. I mean, you would be officer of the day. You'd be in charge of something else. And we always had a little ... ditty. We'd say, "Well, I'm officer of the day in addition to my other duties." You were always given something else in addition to your other duties. You're never relieved from the original basic duties.

KP: You stayed with the 53rd Fighter Group for the entire war?

WCH: No, no, no, no. No, I was with them-- we went ... to Panama. The war started on December 7, and I was coming out-- I was just back from church. We didn't, I mean we didn't do any activities on Sunday at that time, up to that time. And I was just back from church when one of the fellows-- we were living at Fort-- no, we were in Tallahassee, and a fellow came in and said, "Did you hear the news?" Oh, no, I don't think he came in like that. He said, "Hey, ... [Japan] just bombed Pearl Harbor!" ... And of course, we all stayed glued to the radio. We didn't have TVs. And we heard ... in the afternoon that President Roosevelt had declared war on Japan, so we knew that that was it. That was D-day as we called it. D-Day ...

KP: How shocked were you about the attack on Pearl Harbor?

WCH: Well, I don't think I was too shocked. I mean it changed things quite a bit, but ... they had our General (Barnes?)-- now if he's still living-- he was, I guess, I don't think he had gotten his colonel at that time, but anyway, colonel, yeah-- he said-- no, he was going up to Washington quite a bit, flying up in his little fighter plane before ..., and he did afterwards too. But we immediately started and Monday we were starting to pack for overseas. Just like that. And I'm sure that he had been up there enough, and they had the whole design, and he knew just what it was, and when the war started he just put it on top of us. So, we-- of course, we weren't the only ones. I mean they had-- in a couple of days, they ran a big train into our place, and it was all flat cars, and we had to put all of our equipment on flat cars, our trucks and our jeeps and any-- and our prop-dollies, and our generating units and all things of that nature that were part of your group equipment. We had TLE, tech orders. I forget what the word stands for, but they meant that was all our-- we had a regular, ... I don't know whether we had it before or not, but it was-- yes, we did. We had it before, and it was what you were supposed to have. And even though we didn't have it all, we checked off when things would come in, you know. So, we went from there, and ... we left there about the 20th of December before Christmas, and we ... went up to-- oh what's the seaport there? Charleston.

KP: Charleston.

WCH: They went to Charleston. In Charleston-- have you got notes on some of that?

KP: You had written that you boarded a ship on Christmas Day, 1941.

WCH: That's right.

KP: And you ...

WCH: Got to Panama ... in five days. We got there for New Year's Day. We landed New Year's Day. And our equipment that was on those flatcars that I told you about, that went-- we didn't know where the hell it was going. But we knew it was supposed to follow us, but that went all the way up to New York and had gone on a boat up in New York. And it was just a few days ... following us down which we didn't know at the time. But anyway, we were on a little old tug that had been ... ditched because it was too old. It wasn't any good, you know. And they had-- they had gotten ... it up figuring that things were getting ... pretty hot now that something had happened. And they had just repaired it, you know, and cleaned it up so it would run. And we got on there. We were on there, and we had a contingent of fellows that were scheduled to work on the Panama Canal, new locks. They were putting in new locks at that time, and they were working on them. They had been working on them for a year or so, but we had about a hundred other fellows ..., civilians, engineers, (-----?) or whatever they would be running a bulldozer or something with us, and we were ... in pretty tight quarters on the boat, and we got down there, and we were down there about four or five days, when we got word that all our equipment had been sunk by a German sub coming through the same waters we'd come through, right in between Florida and Cuba ... it's just a gap, a regular runway where everybody goes. All the ships have to go, you know, between Florida and Puerto Rico, something like in that area. "Boy," I said, "Well I was happy that ... they were sunk and not us."

KP: Oh yeah.

WCH: We never, we never had even-- it would have been terrible because we ...

KP: Were you worried at all about the U-boats when you were going down to Panama, especially ...?

WCH: No, we didn't. I ... wasn't aware of them. You know I mean, ... you'd hear a few weeks before that maybe ... a ship had been sunk going over to England with some ... munitions or some supplies, war supplies. But it didn't, no I never thought of them down that far.

KJ: So, when you were leaving, were you confident? Did you have ... a confident feeling that you'd be coming back ...?

WCH: No, ... you didn't know. I mean, you were ... going one way. That was all. You only had a one-way ticket. (laughs)

KJ: What kind of feelings did you have? Did that drum up any feelings inside?

WCH: I don't recall that it did. Because you had all these fellows that you've known and ... [they] were all friends of yours, and you weren't alone. It wasn't like going alone.

KJ: How about when you were on the ship? Did you have any ... amusing anecdotes that happened? Maybe something out of the ordinary?

WCH: Well, we were just crammed in there. It was-- it took us just about a week.

KJ: Right.

WCH: It was interesting going through the canal. I'd never seen a canal, and I thought I'd like to go through that sometime.

KP: ... Had you ever been out of the United States before World War II? Had you ever traveled to Europe or even to Canada?

WCH: No, no. Well, I've been to Canada a number of times ...

KP: Yes.

WCH: But I was trying to think of them, and you asked that question. I don't think that I was.

KP: You were in Panama for ...

WCH: One full year.

KP: One full year. What were your impressions of Panama?

WCH: I enjoyed it very much. I always-- whenever I had a chance, I'd always get out and see what's going on around. I wanted to see things. I wanted to see people. ... When I was down there, we didn't have our planes yet. Planes were being manufactured. They didn't even have them manufactured. We had been using all kinds of stuff in training in Tallahassee until the war started which was only four or five months, you know. So we had ... old fighter planes, and there was just a conglomerate mess because I mean there were so many P-35s, which were the big ones, and one, I think, P-40s ..., and there were AT6s, which were trainers, and we were using those and what else I mean that's what it consisted of. And our pilots were just running the dickens out of them to get time in because they got extra pay, you know, ... as a pilot, but they had to have four hours flying time, and they had a heck of a job ... getting those four hours in, or they'd lose it. And of course, that was a nice piece of gravy on top. So, they were after that. But we didn't ... have any planes, and ... we knew that they were ordered because the pilots had been sent out to pick them up when they were ready to bring them to us. And when they sent-- ... the pilots had to-- what was the deal, or no, it wasn't a deal. The planes would be finished, but the propellers weren't ready. So, they would put a propeller on this plane that came off the line without a propeller and fly it over to where the propellers were being made and take the propeller off. They didn't-- I mean the mechanics-- and they'd bring the propeller back, so they could take

another plane and get it out ... of the way of the plane manufacturer because he didn't have enough place[s] to push them, you know? I mean that was the way it was going, and we'd hear this, and we never knew when they were coming down, and then when they got the plane, and they ... let the propeller stay on it, then there'd be two or three of them would come fly down through the states and down through the Central Americas and fly ... all the way into Panama. See when we left-- ... when we left the states-- we never knew where we were going to stop. We didn't know we were going to stop at Panama. We thought ... that we'd be going to the South Pacific because that's where all the action was, you know. I mean, the Japanese had bombed Hawaii, and of course I didn't even know how far Hawaii was from Japan or anything. But, I mean, then you'd hear about Tinian and this Iwo Jima and this other, you know. Each one of them you'd hear on the radio or in the newspaper And what we ... were ...

-----End of Side Two, Tape One-----

KP: This continues an interview with Mr. William Carl Heyer on November 28, 1995 in Mount Holly, New Jersey with Kurt Piehler and ...

KJ: Kathleen Jones.

KP: You were saying about the fear of Japanese attack on Panama ...

WCH: Well, while we were waiting for the planes to come, I was assigned-- I was base commander. We had four squadrons: headquarters squadron, 13th, 14th, and 15th squadrons. And we were assigned areas out 20 miles away, 30 miles away, ... I don't remember just how many miles it was, but they were just a grass strip, you know, and where the cows and horses had been grazing, and we were in there, and we had tents and I was at Charme, which was the farthest one out it. It was the 15th squadron, and we didn't have any planes as you know, ... and we didn't have enough pilots. So, we were-- I was in charge of the base, so I used to go out and scout around the country to see what it was like And they, the Panamanians had what they call Cantinas, which is like a 7-11 store, only of course, I mean pretty much nothing like that. And they always sold ... beer there. I mean, that was a big thing. But anyway, I tried to go in there and see what's going on ..., and I found out that one fellow-- I talked a little Spanish. I had two years of Spanish in college. But I thought it was fun to try my Spanish on them, and I found out that-- this one fellow said-- I guess, I don't think he ever moved out of his cantina or the village, you know. And he said to me, he says ... he had soldiers there before. And I say, "Oh, so were they Americans?" "No, no, no." "Were they Panamanian?" "No, no." I say, "Were they ... [Japanese]?" He said, "Si, si, si señor." Germans or Japanese And I said, "Ooh", and I could feel my hair ... stand right up on end because I thought, oh boy if they're that way, and they come in with a sub and a couple hundred fellows they could just wipe us out because we didn't have-- we never, we had-- I don't remember rifles at all. We had .45s, you know. In the Air Force you-- I'm telling you, I really was scared that day. So, I went back, and I figured what ... would I do ... to protect ourselves and to protect the government property. So, they had just built-- we were the farthest one out, so they gave us, had given, had taken that as precedent ... for whatever else they were going to build first. You know what I mean? And they ... were just clapboard type

buildings In fact, I don't remember exactly how they were, but they were, I think, two floors. But they went out to a peak, you know, just a barn like structure. And ... so I had to get everybody, ... each building. I had to take one of their glass gallon jugs, that food came in, ... you know, vinegar or whatever and fill it full of gasoline and tie a rope around it and nail it up in the top of the peak that was facing where our headquarters was. Well, the idea, we had tracer bullets, and we did have some rifles that's right, but I don't remember, not many of them, but I ... gave all the fellows, I assigned fellows to take care of-- this was their ball that they were supposed to fire at, and I was thinking that the tracer would ignite it. I don't think it really would, but I thought at the time it would. But anyway, so I had that all set up and then after we got that all set up, we were about oh two or three, ... maybe four, three to four weeks before planes started to come in. ... And ... I think ... Japan probably had that in mind because ... I'm sure-- well, the subs had been in there-- ... they were able to, they weren't just sitting on their duffs or what not. They were in there-- well they were going in because there was the cantina, that this fellow knew them, and they used to come in and drink beer at the cantina. ... So, they knew that they were around, and I think that they must had, just did the same thing I did, only in reverse. That they were going to land and if they didn't do that, just to bomb the canal and knock the locks out because that would have really screwed things up. If they'd ever, you wouldn't believe the number of ships that were going through that canal. I mean, I've often wondered how the Good Lord gave them enough water to fill the locks, you know. Actually, we had a rainy season, but wooh! Because it takes an awful lot of water to float one ship through. Those locks are big, high, and it took a lot of water to fill them. And they take every ship except a little ... small boats, maybe a tugboat or something like that, we'd get two or three.

KP: ... You mentioned you liked nature quite a bit. I mean you were in Panama, and it's a very different climate and very different animals and plants. What did you think of that?

WCH: Well, I'll tell you there were two things that impressed me. One was iguana. Do you know what an iguana is? They eat iguanas. ... Because there was all this military ... activity and everything-- everybody was working, you know. And I've seen several times when a guy would be coming home at night-- I'm talking about Panamanian-- he'd have an iguana by the tail over his shoulder. Now, whether he killed it or not I don't know, but I'd seen some of them eaten. And the meat as I recall was about like ... white chicken meat, you know. And they said it tasted a lot like chicken. What else did you ask? ...

KP: There was something else that ...

WCH: Oh, yeah, the other thing was I never heard of a papaya. I mean I-- we didn't have fruit like that come up here, you know. ... And I don't know if people knew [of it]. But anyway, as I said I'd go out and scout around and see what the country was like. And ... here were these papaya-- do you know what a papaya tree looks like? And I found out what they were, and then I asked a little kid, a native kid if he'd go-- no, that was another time. But anyway, I had him, yeah, this kid ... picked four or five of the papaya. Then I understood. I found out that you were supposed to let them ripen, and I did. And I loved them. I would bring home-- I'd always have two or three in the kitchen in the freezer. ... It wasn't a freezer what we had. It was ice, what did

we call it? ... Refrigerator, you know. And I'd have them, and nobody ever liked them, and I said that's great. I didn't have to worry about anybody stealing them or anything, and I loved papaya.

KP: And so, ... this was something you never had before?

WCH: Never even knew of. I've got one right now in the fridge.

KP: When you got back after the war, when were you able to buy them again? I mean you ...

WCH: Oh, I don't know. I don't know.

KP: You don't remember, but ... you came home and there were no more [papayas].

WCH: Yeah, well, I don't get them very often. Once a year maybe I'll try to get them. They're always in the commissary, the military commissary now, so ... you can get them.

KP: Yes. You would be detached from your unit, or would you follow your unit, the ... Air Force squadron you were with in Panama?

WCH: Well, it needs a little explanation ...

KP: Well ...

WCH: Our unit ... came back in one year. But we came back without any equipment, everything was left down there.

KP: In Panama?

WCH: In Panama. The planes, the trucks, the prop-dollies, the generators, everything was left in Panama. But we came back on a little boat all by ourselves. But ... we did have a-- we did ... come back in a convoy, I'd forgotten that. We came back. We went into Guantanamo Bay which is in Cuba, and we were there riding at anchor for about three days while there were all boats coming in. You'd see boats everywhere: little ones, big ones, every kind. And ... they made up a convoy then, and ... then we went-- we came right up the east coast, but we had ... had navy boats that ... had depth charges on them, ... and they came along with us. Every once in a while they'd get a little flurry up, and you'd see them go out, and they'd drop some depth charges and phew, ... you know. We'd gone up the east coast and ... came into New York. No, we came into Hoboken and then from Hoboken, we got on a train and went down to Tallahassee, Florida. So, from then on we then started training pilots that came out of-- that had graduated from flying school, and then we brought them into tactics, different tactics and how to handle different things you know Where in the heck-- we went down to Fort Myers and Fort Myers, I mean, that was where we finally got ourselves all together again because they had to bring in new planes, but they didn't bring in new planes. They brought in old beat up planes. Most of them were from schools. But I was there for a year.

KP: And then ... your unit would be sent to ...

WCH: No, that unit never moved out again. It did its duty the first year. It then was used to train new pilots.

KP: Really, so it never went overseas again to ...

WCH: No, when a year was up-- I'm trying to get my continuity right ...

KP: Because it mentioned that you left for the CBI on C47 airplane that arrived in Delhi on January 5, 1944.

WCH: Yeah that's right, ... and I was stationed in CBI then for two years.

KP: And which unit did you serve with at CBI, do you remember?

WCH: I was with a headquarters.

KP: Headquarters ...

WCH: Yeah, well it was divided into areas. It was-- and it kept changing all the time because the war was going on and different things were needed, you know, and you never I was in what we call "western sector," and I was in with the transports. I was brought back-- I mean I left fighter and came in with combat-- not combat, cargo that was separate, but I came back in ... the transportation. In other words, plant large planes, moving equipment, and personnel and supplies, ... understand?

KP: Yeah ... and where were you based out of? You said you moved a lot, but what were some of the cities that you were headquartered with? Do you remember any of them?

WCH: Yeah, the first place that I was after I had gone over there-- I was with what's called western sector which lost its identity in about four months, five months because then it was transferred into something else, bigger sections or I don't remember all of the maneuvers.

KP: Were you based in India or were you based in Burma?

WCH: I was based in India. And that was in ... Calcutta ... in the western sector, and what we were to do was the same thing we had been doing before, was to see that supplies got in, the supplies were taken care of, and when supplies were needed we were to find out how we could get them into that area. Do you understand? But in headquarters we just got all the information together and then disseminated it to where it should go, and they were to take care of the other parts.

KP: The CBI was a very difficult theater because I mean it's so expansive with very limited resources.

WCH: And it was the last ... thing on the agenda. Everybody got it before we did.

KP: Yeah that's ...

WCH: And if it was ... even supposed to come to us! (laughs) A plane would land at someplace in Africa or in Italy, well, no Italy wasn't taken then. Well, Africa or Egypt or somewhere. Some people, well they'd go in and just say, "Well we need that. We'll take it." You know. And, of course, ... all it was was the pilot and co-pilot and an ... engineering G.I. that took care of the ... plane, and they couldn't do much about it. So, a plane would often come over and everything we needed would be stolen off of it, (laughs) and we would get the skeleton.

KP: Which made it a real problem in terms of planning?

WCH: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah ...

KP: What did you think of India?

WCH: Oh, I'm telling you, it was terrible that's all. Everybody-- there was no cleanliness at all, ... and there was-- I never understood and you never could tell, but I mean there were factions of people, ... religious factions, and technical factions, and you know what I mean. There was no cohesion to anything. Mahatma Gandhi was over there at the time. I had a chance to see him, but I turned it down because I wanted to see another area. I didn't get to see him. Anyway ...

KP: And you regret not seeing Gandhi, in retrospect?

WCH: No. I don't think so, no. ... I sat down and wondered whether, but what. It would have been just seeing him, you know, that's all. Well, I went down ... to a burning ghat to see how they did that. I mean this is the way, see that's one ... type-- they would burn their corpses, and if you were poor and didn't have enough money to pay for the wood that did the burning you left the ... corpse there, and then they would-- I never saw that, but they said they threw those in the Ganges River. Well, you know, but the people that had the money, they used scented wood that was not only like camphor wood, ... and different things like that, and they would burn it until there was nothing left, you know. And I stayed through a whole burning ceremony. It took about three hours, three or four hours where they brought the body in, put it on the pyre that had been already built and then how they came in and lighted it, the mourners, and the old man had a torch, and he lit it all around ..., and they stayed and they watched it be consumed, and it was after it was consumed-- as I was told this and I guess it's true, they fumbled through the ashes an awful lot, you know what I mean? Because ... they were looking for a ring or something, you know. I couldn't understand because they were talking Hindi, and ... I didn't understand it. But I understand that the umbilical chord doesn't burn or I mean it probably would burn, but they want that. And they take it, and they coat it with a clay and make a ball out of it because it's ... maybe so big by itself, and then they take it down to the Ganges River and pray for it and push it overboard, and that's the spirit going out. I mean this is what I understood, you know what I

mean? So, I mean, ... I don't know whether that's exactly the time, but that's the type of situation I would like to see and do, you know, and probably ...

KP: You got out quite a bit it sounds like in India. Once again you went out and explored things around ...

WCH: Well, yeah, you had a certain job. I mean, some days you'd be on duty for three or four days at a time, and you wouldn't have any time at all, and then when-- but I always, when I got off, I mean, I made myself scarce so that somebody wouldn't say, "Hey, we got some ... two and a half ton trucks to push off," and you know.

KP: Did you ever get sick in India or at any time in the Army? ... Especially in both Panama and India? The sanitary conditions aren't as good and ...

WCH: Well, ... yeah. I was in the hospital once and that was later. That was in Japan after-- that was at Korea because I was ... sent back to Japan, and I don't remember now exactly how that developed. It was ... somewhere in my bones and joints that I had-- it just-- I froze as I recall. I can't remember exactly. But anyway, I had been over in Korea for about close to a year, and I went to a medic there, and he said, "I'd like to send you to Tachikawa." That was where the main hospital was, and I went over there, and I was there for, I guess, about ten days. I was there for about three days, and they were shooting me with all kinds of stuff, and I didn't think that those medics knew ... too much of what they were doing. I wasn't too happy. You know what I mean? ... They were supposed to be MDs, ... but they were in the service and Anyway, I got about-- the recuperating time I was supposed to have, I made good use of. I got up into Japan to a, ... like a summer place. Do you have to go? ...

KP: No, no, no, no. I'm just ...

WCH: But it was, oh what was it called? It was a lake, not a big lake, but no[t] little, but it was right in the mountains. And the mountains were on all sides except this one side was where it went down from the high area down, and it was just ... a nice little place. And I felt a little bit better after maybe a couple days there. So I was moseying around, you know. And here I found a-- I had seen a sailboat or two out on this lake. The lake was probably about three quarters of a mile, a mile and a half the other way. Anyway, I saw this sailboat, so I thought I'd go down and see what ... a Japanese sailboat looked like. And it looked very much like we have here And I found out I could rent one, so boy I rented one, and I got on that old sailboat, and I went sphew! And it was interesting because ... another boat was sailing at the time, and the wind currents were so different. And I'd be oh maybe a 150 yards away from him, and I'd be going like, "Hey," you know. And his sail would--you know anything about sailing? No, well his sail was (lufing?). There ... was no wind. It was just laying there flopping. [I thought], what the heck goes on here? I said, "Where'd I get all this puff?" ... And then all of a sudden I'd be there and like this, you know, and I wouldn't find it. ... It was the way the air, the winds came down out of these mountains, you know. And they would be sheer though, so this would be going like this and over here it would be just calm, and then I'd look over at him, and he'd be going like it, or he'd be calm, and I'd be going. It was interesting. I mean, that's the kind of stuff.

KP: It sounds like you very much enjoyed going overseas?

WCH: Oh ... yeah.

KP: That you enjoyed, you made the most of it ...

WCH: Well, I made the most of it while I could while I was there. I mean I always felt I'd gone over in China. I was in China with a cargo, a plane with a cargo, and we had some trouble with the engine. I don't know what it was. I didn't know enough about engines really to ... really get into it. Well, anyway ... I stayed right with the plane because I felt as though that was my responsibility. I didn't go out ... to eat. Usually you went over and got a light lunch or something, and this guy came up to me, and we were unloading the plane, and he was crying, a G.I., and he was crying. He wanted to go back. He was so-- everything was so bad. ... He was so bad and everything. And I said to him, "I can't do anything like that for you." I said, "You have to go through your commanding officer." And he says, "I know," but he says, "You're going back, and I'll go back with you." I guess he would've, but I mean it was pitiful. He just made himself worse. He didn't try. I mean that's-- now if I ... did that, went into say the officer's club or whatever they had-- they always had some little place where you could ... sit down and rest. Well, I mean I could have been just as uncomfortable and wanted to go home. I had a wife and a little son about so big and-- but ...

KP: But, I get the impression that you knew of guys who, for example, officers who just spent their off time in the officer's club ...

WCH: Yeah, oh yeah ...

KP: ... and G.I.'s who just sat around basically and drank and ...

WCH: Yeah, yeah. Well they could get into ... a town. They'd go in town, you know, and pick up a girl and go phew-phew, you know. There were all kinds, you know. And it was funny, you'd find out things that you didn't know. I mean a fellow that you knew, and then ... [he'd] get on leave or something for a couple of days or be down in town to pick up, do something, you know.

KP: You would be surprised that, for example, married men would be sleeping around when they shouldn't be and ...

WCH: Well, there wasn't much sleeping around in India because they were too damned dirty. (laughs) Well, I guess there was, but I mean, I was never too much aware of it.

KP: But in say, Panama? ...

WCH: Well, Panama was a little different, a little different. I picked-- I didn't pick up a girl, but ... I got acquainted through one of the officers with a native down there. She couldn't speak any

English, and I was interested in trying my Spanish on her, you know? And I took her to a-- it wasn't a club. Well, it was like a club maybe, outdoors because it's pretty warm down there. She was very nice. She worked in the department store. That's where the fellow that knew her introduced me, and ... so I said, "Well, let's go to this cantina," which was in Panama City. We went, and she brought her aunt with her. That was custom, so that you were strictly on the up and up, you know what I mean? And I mean-- so, you had all different kinds of people You know, it's just-- you could pick almost the same type that you knew in that area here in the states and put them over there, and they acted just like natives, and they were just about the same.

KP: Did you have any contact with, particularly in India, with any Allied troops, any British troops, British units or any ...

WCH: ... No, we didn't.

KP: You didn't really cooperate with them on any missions?

WCH: ... We didn't. But I'm sure they did down when they were fighting down in Burma but ... no. The British, though, their psychology is so different than ours. You know I mean as far as combat goes.

KP: What did you notice was different about the British way of carrying out ...

WCH: Well, ... I never got too familiar because I was never in a place too long, but I got-- when the Japanese were still pushing up, they were still pushing us. And we were coming back. Now, I say us, I mean the Allied forces because we-- in transport we had ... no combat facilities. All we had were the sidearms, and we'd shoot an individual, you know what I mean? But the British were there in the peripheral areas, but you didn't see too much of them. And I was, one time I was, I guess, in a rest area or something-- it was in Assam, in the big areas, but I got to talking with this British soldier, and ... we ... had reports of the Japanese pushing up. In fact some of our fellows, I think they were seeing double, but anyway, they said that they saw Japanese scouts coming in. Which could well be, you know which would come ahead and go back and tell them where the weak parts were where they could attack. But, anyway I said, "Well, what are you going to do about it?" Because the British were supposed to have India and the area, you know have control of it as best they could. And he said, "Ah, we won't do anything." He says, "Let them come up." And I said, "Well that's not very good for us" "Well," he says, "You can move your planes." And I said, "Well, what's your theory? How long are you going to keep them?" "We'll get them. They'll come way up here, and we'll thin their lines out, and we'll just massacre them." (laughter) Boy, I couldn't buy that at all. But anyway, the British, they weren't (...?), but they just didn't seem to have the push.

KP: It sounds like you really wanted to get this war over with to go home?

WCH: Well, that's right, yeah, sure. But in the mean time I was going to take advantage of anything that was interesting to me.

KP: You mentioned that you learned Spanish. Did you try to learn any of the Indian languages, Hindi or...

WCH: ... Well, you knew a few. You always wanted to know, "Where's the toilet?" That's the first thing, and ... anywhere I was that's the first thing I ... wanted to find out. You know and you'd find out. ... If you had to go, you'd go up to ... a native and say, ... "Binji,"-- oh, I forget what it was over in India now. I should remember. ... But anyway. As I went everywhere, ... I ... [found] out. So that was ... Well, we're getting ... late. We're way late. You haven't gotten anything out of me yet. (laughs) I haven't said anything!

KJ: Your file said that you had never been injured or anything like that. Was there ever a time when you came close or ...

WCH: Oh, no. Oh, I see what you mean, combat. You're talking about combat. I don't know. The only thing that I remember that would be anything like that would be when we were bombed. I mean, I wasn't shooting anybody.

KJ: Right.

WCH: Of course, ... I didn't have a gun, I only had a sidearm. ...

KJ: You were bombed where?

WCH: Well, we were in India. [There were] several places where they'd be bombing a field. ... They'd often get in-- you'd be in a place and ... they would put up their warning. We had-- isn't that funny ---- I think it was [a] three ball alert, and they had-- ... it would be like the base command post would have a flagpole, and they had big round orange balls, and if they had warning that ... there were Japanese planes in the air north of here, let's say 150 miles, they'd send one ball up. That means ... be ready to take cover. Then if ... the planes were coming closer, I mean now they were instead of 100 miles they were 50 miles, and they'd put up a ... two ball alert And then if the planes were in sight then they'd run a three ball alert. A three ball alert meant that you went into your foxhole ... or whatever shelter you were close to... Sometimes you'd get a couple, some bombs dropped, sometimes you wouldn't. Sometimes the planes would fly over because they were going up to Podunk up here and drop their bombs I can recall once going over to China, and we were going over-- we had to go through Burma. ... I don't know why we-- well I don't remember now why we had been down that far, but it was, and we saw-- we ... didn't see the planes, ... for some reason we just didn't see them. ... They were little bi-planes, ... and they were bombing the troops, the Chinese, the Japanese troops in Burma, you know. They were ... personnel bombs.

KP: How many times would you fly to China?

WCH: Well, I didn't fly too much. See I was ... not a-- I technically was-- in fact I was called on the carpet for it one time because I was over in China when something happened ..., and I wasn't at my home base Theoretically I was not really supposed to fly over there on most of the

missions because that was supposed to be their job. But I wanted to go over to understand what their problem was there, so that when our planes came back I knew what problems they had to go through So, I mean, that's the reason. ... I talked to my CO, and he said, "Well, I don't want you to go over there." But I know what happened. One of the other fellows was always jealous. I'd come back and talk about what was going on and what things were like, and he didn't know, see. ... I'm sure he, I know he did. He told me. I'd asked him. He went to the CO and told him that I was-- and then one time I was there when something happened, and they could have used me. ...

KP: What did you learn? I mean you mentioned you were trying to figure out what some of the problems were. What did you learn by going over to China and seeing ... where some of the problems were, or what were some of the problems?

WCH: Well, you could see how they took care of the planes, how they serviced them, how they were careful, and how the personnel operated, and if they were doing things that would abuse the plane or hurt the plane, you know, make the plane unserviceable or maybe bang a door in certain ways that you couldn't then close the door. You know the big door, cargo door, so I mean things like that. And see what personnel were over there to take care of the things, too. I always felt that you have to see ahead to know how to handle yourself. Of course, a lot of it was I wanted to do it, and a lot of it was I liked to see it, and I enjoyed seeing other people and understanding how they worked. And I'd see fellows that I had come over with, you know, at times. [I'd] see what they were getting for food. They got better food over there than we did in India. What's the matter? Anyway, what else?

KJ: How about the correspondence? When you wrote letters back and forth, how did you receive most of the letters or did you find out when you got back home that ...

WCH: No, my wife wrote to me, and I wrote to her every week, at least once a week. I'd write more if there was anything particularly interesting, and then I'd write a little note to my son who was then-- how old was he then? I don't remember, about thirteen, I guess-- no, he wasn't even that old. I don't know. He was about ten, nine or ten, I guess, ... around that time.

KJ: But the mail got back and forth pretty quickly?

WCH: Yeah. Yeah, we got good mail. We got good mail service. I usually get it within a week.

KJ: That's good.

WCH: That is good.

KP: That's very ...

WCH: Right now if you ... write ... to California or some place, the damned thing takes two months, it seems to me! No, they were very good on mail, and I think it was marvelous because that kept up the morale. ... Our morale was pretty high except as I said one or two guys like ..

this one guy that was crying. But no, I went over as a casual when I went over to India in January of 1944. As a casual, it meant I just was an individual. I was on a manifest. There were four of us, but ... we never saw each other before, until we got into-- it wasn't Miami-- Homestead Air Force base in Florida, and we sort of traveled together until we got over there.

KP: How did you get over to India?

WCH: We flew over.

KP: You flew the whole route?

WCH: Yeah. Yeah, that's one thing that I-- ... this is another [place] where I tried to work things. I always thought I'd like to get into the southern hemisphere, and we did that when we got that way. I didn't have anything to do with that. That was the way they went. Then when we were coming home-- the war was over-- this was December of '45, when the war was over-- I had to stay ... after it was over because I had too much in material. In other words, I had to see that everything was cleaned up, that all the material was back where it was supposed to be, you know what I mean? And one of ... my assignments was when a base closed, like there was a base in Burma-- you see that ... (points) That Buddha? That Buddha was-- one fellow-- the base had closed. The base CO was satisfied. He left and he, I think, left only two fellows there that we were to pick up the next day. And we were to report the condition of the base, you know what I mean? And it was, ...some of the things, we had ...--well, you can imagine. I mean all, every ... barracks or whatever tent, whatever ... you were sleeping in, they had to have blankets, and they had to have cots, and they had to have a few things that were necessities of life, and ... you'd see the equipment and when you'd go into-- this particular base I remember so well because of the Buddha and other things. But it was clean. It was really nice. Of course, I mean, you could see that ... the base of the ground had been used and tents, where they had been, but it was clean. ... And they had only a day or so before that burned up something like a 1,000 blankets ... because they ... weren't worth taking home. They didn't have ... room or what. And there were other things than that, but the blankets [were] always in my mind because I thought it's so terrible because, you know, that all the hill people around there, and I mean they're hill people. They don't come down and do, they could've left them in one place and let one of the Chiefs know that here's some blankets for the people. You know? They didn't and watches, we called them Hack watches. I don't know why ..., but they were Air Force, and all the pilots were eligible to draw Air Force watches, you know. And when they turned them in, then all they had in the-- now I didn't see this, but I'm sure of it. ... They piled all the watches that they had in the store house ... and all the watches that had been turned in, and they took a bulldozer and ran over them. Then they had ...-- some of these things I didn't see, but with what I did know and everything, I can well believe it. The British didn't want any of this stuff to go back into the native hands because then the natives wouldn't be interested in procuring that which would be made in England, you know, say blankets But they would-- ... oh, anything. So what ... the British did or ... what was done-- I guess it wasn't all British-- was ... like auxiliary power units, generators, electricity, stoves or equipment or any ... military equipment, I guess if there were bombs ... too, they put them on a flat barge, ... take them out to the deepest spot and push them all overboard.

KP: It struck you that this was a tremendous waste?

WCH: That's the way I felt. But I mean I can see where probably it wasn't. I mean I would have thought the watches were, and I'd have thought the blankets particularly were ...because, well anyway just because. War is a terrible thing. It's so destructive, and it's so-- it costs so much in time and labor, not necessarily in dollars, but it's And I don't know, ... I'm a little bit scared about ... what they're doing now over there, what Clinton is doing with the troops.

KP: ... Well, let me see if Kathleen has ...

KJ: Upon returning home, what are some of the things that you remember like when you first came back, anything in particular?

WCH: Yes, I can say so. I started to tell you, and I didn't-- ... I had flown across the equator, but I had never flown around the world and I had gone almost through Africa east, [and] when we were in India, then ... through east I had to come through the Pacific. But we had ... supplies for, well it was for high brass and ... particularly ... real important supply stuff. They had-- we had what we called the Globester, and it only flew that way because the winds were that way, and it was much more economic to fly around the world that way. They didn't go back. So, what I did, I lined myself up for a flight to go on the Globester, and so I flew around the world. And I came into-- we flew day and night, and it was, I'm telling you I was ... a wreck. Anyway we flew out, went into Manila, the Philippines. We stopped someplace before that, and then we went into Wake Island and then from Wake Island we flew into Hawaii and [from] Hawaii we flew into the San Francisco area, and then I flew across the U.S., but I left the Globester then and got on one of the local planes, I think. I don't remember now. But you asked me-- so, I didn't know that I got a leave. You know, I mean I was just, I just took the opportunity, poof, so I didn't have time to write home, ... so they didn't know I was on my way home at all. And as I said we flew night and day, we didn't stop. Well, we stopped to get food. We stopped to get gas. We stopped to change planes, but So, ... I got off in Washington from the Globester. Yeah, anyway, and then I took [the] train, no, I got a plane from there up to Wilmington, a government plane, and I got off in Wilmington, and I got on a train and flew into west Philadelphia. And when I was in Wilmington ...

-----End Side One, Tape Two-----

KP: You mentioned that you were in Wilmington when you called your wife up.

WCH: Well, it was in that area. I don't remember exactly the air base where I was, but I called her up, and she wouldn't believe me. She said, "Well I just got a letter from Carl a few days ago. He can't be here." She thought I was my cousin and that he was kidding her and So, I finally got her to-- and I said, "Well, bring Fred down" because I hadn't seen Fred now for over two years. And she said, "I can't." She said, "He's got a cold." I said, "The heck with his cold. Bring him down!" So, I said, "I'll be in Wilmington-- I'll be in Philadelphia about so and so." So, she ... bundled him up. They were living here and brought him down in the car. She had a car. And when I saw her, of course I knew her, but I wouldn't have known Fred from nothing. He'd

grown in two years about that tall (gestures with his hands the height). He was almost as tall as his mother it seemed to me, and he sort of-- he didn't run up and grab me like a kid normally would, he sort of pulled back. Who's this guy? My Daddy? ... So I got home, but that was an interesting thing on that. Listen I'm ...

KP: No, keep going.

WCH: You'll shoot me when When I was in India ... just before I came home, for a few days I got this rash all over my side, and it itched and it burned and it itched and it burned, and ... it was hard to see a medic, but I got to see one. And he said, "Oh." He said, "You've got hives." I think that's what he called them. I guess that's what they were. And I said, "What do I do for them?" He said, "Just get under a cold shower when you can," he said, "to relieve that burning set up." And that's what I did, but I was coming home, and here I was all full of hives and then when I got in bed up here ... I stayed in bed for about three days. I mean just stayed in bed. I was just so exhausted. But those hives were like fever blisters, I mean have you ever seen a hive? ... It's just like a little fever blister, but they're all over. And I'd get up to come down and maybe have something to eat or go to the bathroom and here would be all these-- it looked like bedbugs all over the bed. (laughs)

KP: You mentioned that you hadn't seen your son for two full years, and you really had been away from home for five years?

WCH: Well, when we came back from Panama, we came back to Fort Myers, and my family did come. They were with me a year then. You know what I mean?

KP: But you're still-- that's a lot of time when you're not ...

WCH: Yeah, well then when Korea came in I was about a year and a half in Korea that I was not with him. You know what I mean? So, that's the only thing that I really regret terribly. That I was away from my family that much. That's the only thing I really regret.

KP: Do you think that it effected your son either positively or negatively, or what was positive or negative about your being away?

WCH: ... I think it was very positive.

KP: ... You can make the argument that it taught him to be independent earlier, ... your son. It sounds like you really missed him and he missed you.

WCH: Yeah, yeah that's pretty true. That's pretty true. Well, I used to send him all kinds of little trinkets or something, you know, something that I'd tell him about. Or I'd known an elephant up there, or be up in Darjeeling and going and seeing Mount Everest, you know, or something like that. I think it kept him interested.

KP: Your son did follow you to Rutgers in a sense, but he never did join the military?

WCH: No, no, neither did my ... my two ... grandsons.

KP: Any regrets that none of them ...

WCH: No, not if they didn't want to I mean But he didn't have, see I was in the military then or when my son was growing up, and I had enough money that I could pay his-- so, I paid all his way through Rutgers. He didn't have to do what I did to make money. He did ... certain things, and I only gave him-- I got the Rutgers catalog, I don't know whether ... they still put out a catalog for ...

KJ: For classes and things?

WCH: No, no, no. For entrance-- what you have to have and what you have to do Well, anyway, I got out the catalog, and I sat down with Fred. I always try to make ... him understand that these things were what he was going to run into And I said, "Now Fred, here's what your ... tuition is, and this is how much your board [is], and this is your schedule here today, and this is what ... your cost will be for something else, you know for books and stuff." And we worked it out, and I said, "I'll put this money in your account." I had him set up an account, so he'd know how to handle money, ... a checking account. And I said, "... Every three months I'll put in this amount of money, and then you draw it out and pay it." And I said, "Anything else you want, if you want to go to a football game, if you want to go to a dance, if you want to buy something ... special, why good, but you earn the money." So, he worked. I don't know what he did up there. He worked tables somewhere, and he worked in the football field, on the games. He figured that he earned about 25 or 30 percent of his, what he needed for college. So that's ...

KP: But it sounds like he ate three square meals a day.

WCH: Yeah, I'm sure he did. Anyway, that's the way I worked that. What was that question? How did you bring that question up?

KP: Oh, ... you were mentioning about ... seeing your son after so long. ... When you came home from World War II, did you think that was it? That there would not be another war that you'd have to go off to?

WCH: No, I didn't think so. I didn't think so. ... Well, as a matter of fact when Korea came, and they gave me the orders for it ... I tried to get out, and I couldn't. I don't remember now just ... what avenue I took, but I saw ... that I couldn't ... resign, you know, my commission at that time. I mean it wasn't a gentlemanly thing to do. I guess it was about-- and I knew my business was not up to where it was going, and I was so sure that this would be the end of it if I had to go. And I made a couple of attempts, and I didn't get anywhere, so I said, "Oh the heck [with it]." And I just threw it up. I just let the people carry on that were here ... the best they could, and then I did everything by mail. You know I mean I had to suggest. You couldn't do much because you didn't know what was going on.

KP: What was your assignment? What was your mission, your assignments ... during the Korean War?

WCH: I was on general staff.

KP: And where were you based out of? ...

WCH: Well, I went over there, and we ... had indoctrination as a full colonel, but we got two weeks indoctrination to understand what things were like in Japan. And then I was to go to Itazuki which was in the southern part of Japan and be in their material section, supply and maintenance and all the rest of it. And I was-- well, I'm trying to think of-- oh I'd gotten out of that. That was it, and I had to go down to Itazuki to take over, and I didn't know just exactly what ... fate I was getting into. ... You could fly ...-- we'd go into headquarters, transportation headquarters and show your orders that you're assigned to (Itazuki?) and you want transportation. So, they'd say, "Well we got a plane going in tomorrow morning at so and so." I say, "Well how about a train?" "Oh, you don't want a train." I said, "Yeah, I'd like a train" because I had a date, and ... I had to report, a reporting date on my orders, and I had enough time, I had about four days. So, I cleaned up things. So, I got a train, and I rode on the train. Very few G.I.s other than troop movement over in Japan ever rode a train. So, I rode a train, and I was overnight and the compartment was crossways, doesn't go the length of the train, it went crossways and there was-- I don't remember now, I don't think you could get from one to another except the stations. But it had two bunks, an upper and lower bunk. They were just bunks. I mean they, it was nothing at all, and I guess there were blankets in there. ... I had a true Japanese civilian that was riding with me, and he couldn't talk English, and I couldn't talk any Japanese. But anyway, we rode all night and-- but you didn't have any facilities around. I mean there was no washstand or anything. But they had a hole in the floor, and it looked like a spittoon, you know the old spittoons. It had a little hole in the center, ... and I said to him, "Binjou?" He said, "Si, Binjou," yeah. That's toilet. ... It just went down the hole right down So, you had that accommodation. That's the only thing I can remember. (laughter)

KP: What did you think of being based in Japan? What did you think of Japan and the Japanese, I mean, they had been feared enemies?

WCH: I thought they were very nice. But now remember this was ... Korea now. There was a five year period in there, four or five years between the time I got out and before I got in. So, I mean, you can't put the two together because it was a totally different time and different conditions.

KP: It sounds like you also got out in Japan when you got the chance?

WCH: Yeah, I sure did, I sure did. ... I have a Nikon camera that I got over there that I bought right out ... of the factory.

KP: Really?

WCH: Yeah.

KP: Are you surprised or had you expected-- I mean Japan is this really mighty industrial power. Did you have any sense that Japan would be successful as a nation in 1950?

WCH: I thought so. Yes, I thought so. I liked the Japanese, all of them. I mean they were very interesting people, very clean, very neat. ... I liked to go into the Japanese tea houses or whatever they were, and I ... was very fortunate in one thing, a fellow that lived here in Mount Holly, he was older than I, about maybe ten years, had been in industry around here, and I think he, I don't know whether he'd retired or was about to or what. But anyway, somehow he had enough connections. He was in business, big business enough, so he knew people around, and he ... was assigned to General MacArthur's staff for industry. And he had been over there for two or three years before I got over there ... in Korea. And when I was over there, he was already back in the U.S.A. He had finished up his assignment, his job. When he got back here, he heard that I was over in Japan. And we knew each other but not close, and he wrote me and said he hoped that I liked it over there, that he'd enjoyed it and ... someday maybe he'd get over there and meet me. And he did get over, and he contacted me, and I was in Korea then, and I ... took several days off-- I can't tell you how-- when he was over there. He called me on the phone, and I went over, and I had about three days with him. And it was very interesting because he knew everything. He took me-- ... he and his wife were both there ... at that time. She traveled with him. She wasn't with him the first [time], but she was [this time]. So, it was nice. Well, any other questions?

KP: I'm trying to think, is there anything we forgot to ask you?

WCH: No, but I'd like to tell you, I've got to see the Binjou. If you'll excuse me.

KP: No, that's fine ...

WCH: Do you have to go to the Binjou?

KP: I'll wait till you're done, but I have to go to.

WCH: You do?

...

KP: You wanted to tell the story of the Buddha that you found in the base that was cleaned up.

WCH: Well, ... it was there. There were these two fellows, and this one fellow had it, and he just loved it. He wanted to take it home. This was-- it came from Burma after they had ... a battle and the temple that it was in had been totally-- this was the story he gave me-- had been totally demolished. And he saw this and picked it up and brought it up, and he wanted to take it home. And he had no way he could find to get it home. ... And he said, ... "I don't know what to do with it." I said, "I'll take it." (laughs) So, ... I brought it, ... and then I packed it up when I got back to India I wanted to send it ... home because I knew I wasn't going to carry the darned

thing, and I would never So, I packed it all up and took it down-- where was it? I guess it was, it wasn't Calcutta Anyway, it was in one of the Army, big Army posts, you know base. ... I took it in to-- it was heavy. It was as heavy as a (?) And I had to send it through New York. Our APO ... was New York, New York, and all we had to do was pay postage from New York to our home, ... transportation. And when I took it down there ..., they wouldn't accept it. They just arbitrarily said it's too big, too heavy. They didn't know what it was. Well I didn't tell them actually. ... So I said, "Well, the heck with that." So, I took it over to China. Next time I took it to China. I took it to their APO, and they took it. ... The APO had to fly it all the way back, you know, because everything was going that way to come home. So it went to APO. Now, the only postage was from New York to here. It cost something like 35 cents.

KP: Which even in 1940s dollars is not very much money.

WCH: (laughs) Well, I had a lot of other things that I brought home. I was a scavenger. I had a lot of fun. I said, "If you're going to be in a place"-- this was my theory, "and you've got to live through it, why not make it interesting for yourself?" You know? And time goes really much faster when you're doing that than if you sit there and cry like this guy I told you about. But it's interesting.

KP: There was one question that came to mind that I forgot to ask earlier. Your wife during the war, ... she was a nurse. Did she re-enter? ...

WCH: She did one year. But she, what she did, she really did this house over, and she did a marvelous job. It was-- you know from when we bought it. ... I did what I could, but she did some of the things that I wouldn't have done it. But I mean I probably wouldn't have done any of them. But it's good that I wasn't here so she did them.

KP: So, what kind of work did she do? Did she do carpentry?

WCH: No, no, no, no, no. She had somebody else do it. ... Because at that time, ... there weren't any big, you know, nobody was building houses, nobody was doing this. So, you had carpenters, and you had plumbers and things. ... Well, she put that mirror up which is the most marvelous thing because this room looked small as anything, but when you've got that mirror it brightened it out. She changed the fireplace. It had ... a big .. heavy mantle that came way out which was out of context with the house because it was so big. It was fine for a big house. ... And she changed all of those steps, but-- and all of the woodwork here was Do you know wood? You know different woods? Well, it was chestnut, and it was stained chestnut and beautiful grain and everything, and that was the only thing I didn't like. I mean I was sorry it had to be done, but I think it was really a good thing. I mean I think it was, you know, I think it made the house. But ... she did an awful lot in here. She ... changed the side porch that used to be a regular porch. She took out the side railings and everything and put in, so it was screened in. Oh, she did an awful lot, and she ... got a lot of different furniture. This is ... something. That was new. She would write about it, and I remember that settee or whatever it was called there. She said, "I went down to (Vanskiver's?)." (Vanskiver's?) was a big furniture store. They manufactured everything, and they were going out of business, but she said, "I went down ..."-- she bought

everything down at (Vanskiver's?). There's the stop kind of thing-- a Duncan Phyfe which is that settee there. And I wrote back and said-- she said, "We bought a Duncan Phyfe at the" I said, "What in the hell is a Duncan Phyfe?" (laughs) She never got over that. Every once in while she'd bring that up. What the hell is a Duncan Phyfe?

KP: And this is even going back further, how did you and your wife meet? You told us about your first date, but how did you and your wife meet?

WCH: You mean the ... very first time?

KP: Yeah.

WCH: Well, I always said that she got me unconscious and kept me that way. She was a nurse ... and at that time if you had a tonsillectomy you always had ether, and you always stayed overnight. At least overnight. In the case there was bleeding or something, they'd kept you longer. When I came to that next morning, why, there she was standing there. So, I said she got me when I was unconscious and kept me that way. We had a wonderful life together. She was, she failed pretty much in last--, she had about eight or ten years that she just slowly was going downhill, couldn't do more and couldn't, you know. So, and then ... the last three years she was in a nursing home. But she was-- I used to take her out. She wasn't so you couldn't [take her out]. Every day I took her out while she was in the nursing home, about every day. Once in a while I needed a break. We'd drive ... around the country, and she loved it. She loved to see things in nature. She wouldn't express them that way, but ... she'd always refer to them. "Look at that squirrel going across there!" And I had a route, and I still-- I do it on a bike. It's about seven and a half miles, and you can see just about anything. There are deer out there if they're not getting shot at, and there's possums and skunks you run into, and there's a little stream you cross, and I always stop there and park the bike, and look around. ... You see different ... fish, not too often, but you'll ... see Pike in there. I've seen little bitty minnies, and I've seen bass, you know, and there's a lot of frogs come out there, and there's turtles, turtles come out there. You know you (... ?) at certain times of the year you And so I mean, it's really, I get a thrill out of just riding it now. And I'd say it's wonderful to do that for the simple reason that that keeps me in shape. Otherwise I'd be sitting here reading a book or-- and, you know, not getting ...

KP: No, my wife has put me on a physical fitness regime, and I'll have to tell her ...

WCH: Well, I never liked physical fitness things. I mean I tried ... saying, "In the morning I'll get up, and I'll do 30 minutes of exercises." And I never could get into that. But I feel that I get-- well not all, but I get a good portion of exercise, and I don't know. That's the way I do it. Now...

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

Reviewed 6/20/96 by Linda E. Lasko

Reviewed 6/22/96 by G. Kurt Piehler