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NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN M. KEELER

FOR THE

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

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Sandra Stewart Holyoak: This begins an interview on October 9, 2008, in Branchville, New Jersey, with John M. Keeler and Sandra Holyoak. Thank you, Mr. Keeler, for having me here this morning in your lovely home. Tell me where and when you were born.

John M. Keeler: I was born in Seattle, Washington, on April the 11th, 1944.

SH: To begin with your family history, let us talk about your father. Please, for the record, tell me his name and a bit about his family background.

JK: My father, Keith Cameron Keeler, was born in Jackson, Minnesota, but he grew up and spent most of his early years in Fresno, California. His father was a Presbyterian minister … who primarily served the migrant workers and Native American population in California during the '20s and the '30s. My father went to college in California, Occidental College, and then, went to medical school at the University of Michigan.

SH: Did he talk about his growing up there, as the son of a Presbyterian minister whose congregation must have been suffering terribly in the Great Depression?

JK: He didn't talk much about it. He did tell me he would spend his summers working at various Indian reservations, with construction projects. My grandfather was on the road a great deal of time. He didn't have a church or a congregation in one locale. He drove hundreds of miles, throughout the San Joaquin Valley, to be able to visit these various groups. So, my grandfather was not at home, I think, quite a bit, during my father's early years, but my father had other siblings. He had two sisters and a brother, and, of course, my grandmother, at home. So, they spent a lot of their time doing home kinds of things.

SH: Did your father talk about wanting to become a doctor from the beginning?

JK: Well, the Keelers have a long history of service orientation careers and I think that my grandfather probably put it to him, "Either you're going to become another minister or you're going to do something else in the service area." … My father, who was a chemistry major in college, was more interested in the sciences, and so, he decided that he'd become a physician.

SH: Were his sisters also college-educated?

JK: All of my father's siblings were college-educated. His oldest sister went--I think both of his older sisters went--to Washington State University. One was a Phi Beta Kappa there, and, later, when she was in a Japanese concentration camp, the only personal object that she kept during the entire war was her Phi Beta Kappa key. My uncle, my father's brother, did become a Presbyterian minister, and, of course, he was college-educated, at the University of Chicago, and then, my father went on to medical school at the University of Michigan.

SH: It was quite uncommon for women to be college-educated then.

JK: Well, it took me a long [time], pretty much a lifetime, to figure out how different my family's background was from other people of that period of time. The idea that all the members,

all the siblings of a family, would all be college-educated in the '20s and the '30s was very unusual.

SH: Especially in a family on a limited budget.

JK: Yes, there was certainly a dedication to the importance of education over everything else.

SH: Let us then talk about your mother and her family background.

JK: My mother came from Missouri, pronounced "Missour-uh" where she was from, a small town, Sainte Genevieve. … Her family, I think, originally came from the Maryland area, but they had been, for some time when my mother was first born, in Missouri. She met my father; she was a nurse. She went to nursing school, and I think it was when my father was doing some summer internship during [his] early years in medical school, they met in New Mexico, and then, finally, they got married a year or so later.

SH: Did she talk about how she went from Missouri to New Mexico?

JK: Well, I think it was just [that] jobs were hard to find in the '30s and there was a job that became available and she was a staff nurse there at the hospital, where my father was sort of visiting … between semesters. At that point, the medical school was still having, I think, summer breaks. Later on, when the war started, of course, they went all year round.

SH: That is true. What year did they meet?

JK: They met in 1940.

SH: Okay.

JK: And I think they met in 1940, and they were married in 1940, and my sister was born in '42 and I was born in '44. … Well, my father was in medical school when my sister was born and he was, of course, in the Army when I was born in 1944.

SH: When your sister was born had they remained in Albuquerque or did they go back to Michigan, where he went to medical school?

JK: … Yes, Ann Arbor, Michigan, is where the medical school is, of course, and that's where they lived after they were married in 1940. So, '41, '42, '43, they were living in Ann Arbor. Then, when my father graduated, he did an internship in Washington State, in Seattle, and so, the family then moved back to the Seattle area, where my mother stayed with her mother for the remainder of the war.

SH: Your mother's mother had moved to Seattle at this point.

JK: … She had been in Missouri and she was a single, elderly woman and had no place to go. So, during the war, my mother and her mother and my sister and I lived in a place called Enumclaw, Washington, which is not far from Seattle.

SH: As you were growing up--obviously, the war was over by the time you could talk with them--did they talk about what they were aware of concerning the buildup to the war? Was there any discussion of that at all?

JK: I don't recall ever talking to them specifically about their anticipating the war. I think that they were pretty much aware that things were not going well in Europe. I don't know to what extent they were surprised by what happened in the Asian Theater, but I think they were pretty much aware, … during the '30s, that things were going badly.

SH: I had the opportunity to look through some of your family memorabilia. How soon after your father's relatives were put into the concentration camp in the Philippines was the family in the States made aware that they had been incarcerated? Were they allowed to freely correspond?

JK: I don't believe that any correspondence was permitted at all. … A letter did come from a person that my uncle had interviewed that gave them the only information that I know of about them during the course of the war. … That's when they found out that they had, in fact, fled into the hillside for a number of weeks, and then, had to come out, surrendered, and then, spent the remainder of the war in the camp. I don't think my father, or the rest of the family, had any other news than that about what their fate was. They did know that they were alive and that they were in the camp and they were just going to have to wait out the war.

SH: They were there as missionaries, your aunt and her husband.

JK: Yes, yes.

SH: How many children did they have?

JK: … I believe they went to the Philippines about 1935, as missionaries, and they spent several years there, until the war broke out. They had two sons, my cousin Jay, and my other cousin, Lynn, in the camp.

SH: Just for the record, what was their last name?

JK: Their last name was Bollman, B-O-L-L-M-A-N. …

SH: Did your father's brother, the Presbyterian minister, also join the military?

JK: No, he did not. He was a civilian. … I believe, for medical reasons, he couldn't pass the physical for the military.

SH: Did your mother have siblings?

JK: She had one sister, who was an Army nurse during World War II, in Santa Barbara, California.

SH: Really? [laughter]

JK: Yes.

SH: Did your mother ever talk about what she did, or perhaps your grandmother as well, as part of the war effort?

JK: Well, I think that by that [point], [laughter] during the war, my mother was pretty busy. She did work a nursing shift, and then, she took care of two young children that she had to drop off at what was, I guess, a day-care center kind of thing in those days. Who knows what that was like? So, she was pretty busy the whole time.

SH: She continued to work.

JK: Yes, I think it was probably something that was necessary, that she needed to work at least on a part-time basis.

SH: Do you know where she worked during the war? Was she working for the military?

JK: Well, the hospital where my father was an intern, Virginia Mason Hospital in Seattle, was a fairly large medical facility. … I think that … she might have done some things there during the war, but, obviously, work was something that she was going to do less and less of, simply because she had a young, growing family and her own mother to take care of.

SH: Right. What are your earliest memories of growing up and where were you at that point in time? Were you still in Washington?

JK: [laughter] Well, my earliest memories of growing up were in Idaho. My father, when he was discharged in 1946, collected the family in Washington and went into general practice in Lewiston, Idaho, and so, my earliest recollections are of living in Lewiston, Idaho. … My father's medical practice there was all-inclusive. He did everything. He was a general practitioner. He delivered more babies in that part of the world than anyone, simply because there was Indian reservations close by and they had no medical facilities, and so, he was the one that took care of all of those kinds of things--quite often paid with chickens and farm produce. … The older gentleman, who was the senior [partner] in the practice, died and my father was either going to have to take it over by himself or he was going to [have to close it down], but he was interested, by 1948, in something different. So, he packed up the family. He entered a new, brand-new, program in physical rehabilitation, and the only place where they were doing the training for that was at Bellevue Hospital in New York City, part of NYU. … So, in 1948, he packed up the family and we took a cross-country train trip, three thousand miles, to go to New York City, and that's one of the early memories that I have as a child, is making this train trip that took days and days, and we finally ended up … in New York City.

SH: At that age, were you aware of how different it was, going from Lewiston, Idaho, to New York City?

JK: Well, … certainly, I don't think I was that aware, at the time. You know, when you're--I would've been about four years old--you can accept pretty much anything and everything. … That becomes a pattern with my family, because I ended up going to--I think I counted one time--before I graduated from elementary school, I had gone to a dozen different schools. My family lived in Washington, then, in Idaho, then, New York City. Then, because this was a new field that my father was in, no hospitals had rehabilitation centers. There were no rehabilitation centers. So, he would then be invited to various places to establish the first rehabilitation center. He went to Cleveland and actually taught rehabilitation there at the medical school in Cleveland. Then, we moved to Akron, Ohio. … At one point, we were in Illinois. Finally, by the time I was in high school, we got to New Jersey, but my father hadn't finished yet his various trips, although he spent, I think, sixteen years at the rehabilitation [center]. He established the rehabilitation center in Montclair, at Mountainside Hospital, and, after being there sixteen years, he was invited by the State of Arkansas to come down. They had no rehabilitation facility in the entire State of Arkansas, and so, he went to Little Rock and spent three or four years there, establishing [one]. Then, he returned to New Jersey and took over the directorship of the rehabilitation program at Morristown Hospital. So, my experience as a young child was one of constantly moving across the country. … When I came to New Jersey, finally, when I was in--I guess I was a sophomore in high school, about--people, they would ask me where I was from and I would say, "Well, I was from Ohio," and they'd say, "Iowa, Idaho, Ohio, where is that?" I was, for sometime, a foreigner, simply because … I'd lived so many different places, and probably spoke with an accent that was not very recognizable in New Jersey, but I've been here a long time now.

SH: You came to New Jersey as a sophomore. Where did you start high school?

JK: Well, when I lived in Ohio, the school system was [set up so that] the junior high was seventh, eighth and ninth grades. So, my sophomore year was my first year of high school and we lived in the Caldwell area, and so, I went to what was then Grover Cleveland High School, but that school system was on double sessions. They had recently voted to create two new high schools. So, I spent one year as the last student at Grover Cleveland High School. Then, the next year, we entered a brand-new school called West Essex High School that had no building, and so, we had to stay in the old high school in Caldwell [laughter] until a new building was created. … So, I got to spend one year, my senior year, in a new building and I was in the first graduating class of West Essex High School. … [laughter] It's a pattern. I've been to so many different schools, school systems

SH: Even when you were in the same place, you were still changing schools. [laughter]

JK: Exactly, exactly. Even though we were living in the same house, I was still going to different schools, different school systems. …

SH: How did this impact your sister's education?

JK: Well, she was, of course, part of the same sort of thing. She was a couple of years older, and so, by the time I finished high school, she'd been in college for a couple of years.

SH: Where did she go to college?

JK: She went to a small college in Ohio, Wooster College.

[TAPE PAUSED]

JK: Oh, that's fine.

SH: Did your father's decision to get into this brand-new field of rehabilitation impact his service in World War II and his military career?

JK: I think that his time in the military had a direct impact on where he was going to end up in the medical field. As a medic on the frontlines, not in a field hospital, where so many physicians spent their time during the war, my father got to see directly the impact [of war wounds] on the soldiers in the field and their ability to function. So, he was very much interested at the end of the war in finding ways to help these soldiers who had lost limbs and couldn't feed themselves, that were stuck in VA [Veterans Administration] hospitals, that there was no program for how to help the disabled, and so, I think that had a direct impact. Also, by the time he entered the residency at Bellevue, the country also had a huge impact of children who were polio victims and, of course, that had immediate impact on the amount of work that was needed to be done in the field of rehabilitation. So, the veterans from World War II, the children from polio, I think those two things had a lot to do with his entering the field, and then, developing it.

SH: You have been interested in your father's military career. You have kept a tremendous amount of memorabilia, and so did your father, because he preserved papers, documents and photographs. Can you guide us through his military experience? He was in medical school during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

JK: Well, he was in medical school when Pearl Harbor took place and, of course, immediately, it became apparent that they were going to need all the physicians they could possible muster for the military, but, also, there had to be some sort of protection for people back at home. Almost all of his class was then put in the Army Reserve … until the completion of their medical education, which was not going to take place for a year or so. So, my father did enter into the Army while he was still a student in medical school. … That was accelerated, no summer breaks, and, also, the internship that he did in Virginia Mason Hospital in Seattle was an accelerated program. I think they cut it down from a year to nine months, and then, he went directly into the military, had to be sent to school to learn how to be an officer, how to wear a uniform, how to march, and he was about twenty-seven years old at this time. He was still a pretty young fellow, inexperienced in that. He went to the training at Fort Carlisle [Carlisle Barracks in Pennsylvania] and he was there with all other medical personnel. They weren't going to let them have their first experience by mixing with the real Army, with the real world, [laughter] … but they did learn how to be soldiers and officers. … He said that, in his memoirs, that there was a major that came around at the end of that training period and asked them if they

wanted to join the paratroopers. Well, no one knew what a paratrooper was, because there were no paratroop units as yet. People weren't sure even what a parachute was, … but this major said that anyone who served as a medical officer in the paratroopers would get a hundred dollars a month extra pay, and that did it for my father. The extra hundred dollars a month was going to help out a great deal. So, he volunteered, and so, … after he completed the training at Fort Carlisle, I think he spent a short period of time in Fort Devens [in Massachusetts], at a general hospital, which he didn't like at all. Medical practice in the military was not something he liked very much, because it was all formalized, all "by the book." … Everything had to be done in a certain way, a regimented way, even to the stowing of patients' clothing, what they ate, how much they ate, weighing what they ate. He didn't think that that was a very practical way to treat patients, but he was then sent to jump school and he graduated from jump school. …

SH: Did he talk about jump school?

JK: Only to the extent that he thought he was more physically prepared, in better shape, could do almost anything. You know, they really trained them in a way that boosted their optimism about themselves and everything, and so, … what he remarked was how ready they were. By May of '44, they had sent him to Washington, where they kept all these medical personnel in a hotel.

SH: Was this Washington State or Washington, DC?

JK: No, this would be Washington, DC. What they were waiting for were orders for Europe, and they were secret orders, because, … I guess, deployment of medical personnel would give some indication about other troops, troop strength, and that sort of thing. So, in May, he was waiting in Washington, DC, for orders, which he did receive, and then, he flew to England and he arrived in England just after D-Day took place. [Editor's Note: The 101st Airborne Division was dropped into Normandy on the night of June 5-6, 1944, in advance of the amphibious force that struck the invasion beaches on the morning of June 6th.] I think, in his records, he said June 10th is when he arrived in England.

SH: Did he fly or take a ship?

JK: He flew. He flew in a [Douglas] DC-3 and, when he arrived in England, then, they were waiting for the return of what elements were left of the 101st Airborne after the D-Day [operation]. They had about fifty percent losses from the D-Day operation, so, they were [replacements]. My father was in that first group of replacements. He was assigned to the 377th Airborne [Parachute] Field Artillery, whose entire medic unit was wiped out. So, they got a whole new group of medics in the 377th. So, that's where, when, he began, actually, in the war with the 101st Airborne.

SH: Do you remember how long he stayed in England?

JK: I think they were doing training and reconstitution through July and August. I know that they were on several orders which were all cancelled because [US Army General George S.] Patton was moving so rapidly through Northern France that they couldn't plan an airborne

operation before Patton's units would start to roll up on them. So, although they … had plans for a number of different jumps that were to take place supposedly in Northern France, I guess, that did not occur until [the fall]. It wasn't until September of '44 that [British] Field Marshal [Bernard] Montgomery came up with this big plan of how they were going to outskirt the Germans in Holland and, of course, that became the primary focus. … That was my father's combat jump, into Holland in September of '44. [Editor's Note: The 101st Airborne Division was dropped into Holland on September 17, 1944, as part of Operation MARKET-GARDEN and fought there until being withdrawn in late November.]

SH: When was your father assigned as the surgeon for General Anthony McAuliffe?

JK: My father became McAuliffe's personal physician because General McAuliffe was the artillery commander of the 101st Airborne Division and because my father was assigned to an artillery battalion. Then, he was assigned … to closely watch after the artillery commander and the medical unit was a part of the headquarters of the artillery. So, there was proximity there with the headquarters staff and the General.

SH: Did he ever talk about how big his staff was or how many physicians he worked with?

JK: … I believe that there was only one field artillery battalion in the division at that time. There were several regiments of infantry, and then, there was a glider element that made up the division, and I think I have that pretty much correct. There was only one physician in the battalion. All the rest of the medics were enlisted personnel who were trained in first aid and recovery. So, he was the only medical officer for the battalion, for the artillery battalion in the unit. Now, other medical officers would be assigned to the 502nd and the other infantry elements. I don't know how many of them there were, but what was interesting is, I think my father enjoyed being in that position, because there was no one looking over his shoulder. After his experience at Fort Devens, … at the Army field hospital, he now found himself alone and in charge and he could do pretty much as he wanted, in terms of medical treatment. So, he mentioned that, for the remainder of the war, no senior medical officer ever overlooked anything he did. He liked that kind of freedom and independence and he was consulted a great deal by the [commanders], at least the battalion headquarters, about medical issues for soldiers in the field, because he was the only physician available.

SH: I noticed there were photographs of the gliders you mentioned. Did your father ever talk about being involved in any glider flights?

JK: He had to have training in the gliders. He did not like the gliders at all. They were "flying coffins," though he did write about one experience he had … during training in a glider, where they [got stuck]. Typically, the gliders, on landing, it was a crash landing, and because the American gliders, … the door was … the front of the glider that opened up, not from the sides. On impact, typically, that door got jammed and would not operate. … So, all the troops inside the gliders and vehicles that they put in there, jeeps, typically, would be trapped, and he did say that … the one time that he was on a glider training exercise that they couldn't get out. They were all trapped in until, basically, people just cut them out.

SH: We mentioned earlier that if General McAuliffe jumped, then, your father jumped. How close in proximity to General McAuliffe did your father have to stay?

JK: I don't know that he talked directly [to him]. He said that he was assigned to him personally on the day of the jump, which I guess meant that they were in the same "stick" together, because, upon landing, … one of my father's first jobs would be to check to make sure that the General was all right, that he didn't have any sprained ankle, broken bones, anything like that, and he had to certify that everything was okay with the General. So, that was my father's first responsibility on a combat jump, or training jumps that the General might make. Then, as soon as that was determined, then, … he took over his medical units, had to find his equipment. … They were allotted two jeeps in a combat situation. When they were in base camp, they had the addition of an ambulance, but that never went into combat, just jeeps that they used, that they strapped stretchers on--two stretchers were strapped to a jeep--to recover wounded from the front, and then, bring them back where they would get medical care from my father. … He would then make sure that they were stabilized and return them to a field hospital, but his association with the General was on the initial jump and to make sure that everything was all right on landing.

SH: Did he write about what we now know as the Bulge?

JK: Yes. He, of course, was directly a part of that and he wrote quite a bit about that experience. By the time the Battle of the Bulge took place, the 101st Airborne was in France, outside of Paris, in near Reims, and they received notification on one afternoon to pack up all their gear and to get into trucks. [Editor's Note: The 101st Airborne Division left Camp Mourmelon, near Reims, on December 18, 1944, for its deployment during the Ardennes Offensive.] By the afternoon, they had all gotten everything that they could. It should be remembered that, when the Bulge took place, the 101st Airborne had already spent most of the autumn in Holland, where their equipment, and so forth, was greatly deteriorated. They had not been issued any winter uniforms, they did not have a complete resupply of ammunition, food stocks, everything else. So, by the time they were ordered to go forward in December, to what … was to be the Battle of the Bulge, they did not have everything they ordinarily would have had, including food and clothing and ammunition. They actually picked up some of what they needed from retreating soldiers who were going the other direction, and he did mention that in his memoir. They arrived at nighttime in an area outside of Bastogne and that's where they set up their initial deployment. The commanding general of the 101st Airborne Division, Maxwell Taylor, was not present at the time and the two airborne divisions, the 82nd and the 101st, were both ordered forward. … In the absence of General Taylor, and I believe, also, the corps commander, XVIII Airborne Corps Commander, who was [General Matthew] Ridgeway, General [James] Gavin took over … as corps commander and he decided where he was going to send the 82nd and where he was going to send the 101st. … He sent the 101st in the direction of Bastogne and the artillery commander of the division, General McAuliffe, then became the acting division commander during the Battle of the Bulge. So, when they arrived at Bastogne, McAuliffe decided to set up his headquarters in the town, because [of the] five roads--it was an intersection of five roads--and he deployed the various elements, combat teams, around the perimeter of the town. The division hospital was set up in the church at the center of Bastogne, and then, the various aid stations, of which my father had one, they would bring the wounded in from the perimeter, and then, send them to the hospital set up in the church, where, then, they were

supposed to be then taken to field hospitals further back. According to his memoirs, the hospital staff that set up in the [church], originally in Bastogne, were captured by the Germans. Later, they found out that they were all shot, and he also witnessed, on Christmas Eve, an attack by German Stukas [dive-bombers] that annihilated the church and killed all the wounded in it. So, he watched all of this from his perimeter location. … All the work they had done to take all of … the wounded to the church field hospital, that was all for naught, because they were all killed anyway. So, he did write about that, although he never talked about it for, oh, fifty years or so.

SH: Did he wait fifty years to write his memoirs?

JK: Let's see. He sat down and tried to do some writing about it, I guess it was about forty-five years later, and he actually sort of did two attempts. I'm not sure why that was. Maybe he didn't include everything that he remembered or maybe he was not completely satisfied with it, but he did make several attempts, which I thought was sort of interesting on his part, because he was obviously trying very hard to go back and capture the details of something he tried for fifty years to forget.

SH: Did your mother keep the letters that he wrote?

JK: That, I don't know. My mother has never shown me any. [laughter] I don't expect her to. There are a couple of Western Union telegrams in the old material, but none of the, what I would call letters, personal letters, that took place during the war.

SH: I mention this because I noticed that there was some correspondence, but only telegrams, that I found.

JK: Yes.

SH: One of the things that you have, just for the record, is the mimeographed, "Nuts," memo sent by General McAuliffe.

JK: Yes. Probably, if there's one word that is more famous from an American commander in all of World War II, it's General McAuliffe's response, "Nuts," to the German commander--actually, it was a number of German commanders, not just one--that sent word to the Americans surrounded in Bastogne to surrender and, of course, they just would not. … They didn't know what response to make, but McAuliffe is attributed to having made this famous one-word response to the Germans.

SH: The mimeographed sheet we spoke of earlier still has the thumbtack holes in it, which says, "For medics," across the top.

JK: Yes, yes. What I understand was that, in order to try to boost the morale of the division, which was [low]; you've got to remember, at this time, they'd run out of food, they don't have winter clothing. … They've already been in the field for a week or ten days. There is no air re-supply, which is the way it would be done ordinarily to airborne troops, because of the bad weather, which didn't break. These troops were in, you know, a demoralized [state]. They were

[wondering], you know, "When is help going to come?" and, of course, it did come in the form of Patton's tanks, but, yes, … the headquarters mimeographed a sheet with greetings for Christmas, that General McAuliffe had put out for the whole troops. Now, I don't even know how they had a mimeograph machine that was operational in Bastogne at that time, but, apparently, they did. … I don't know how many copies they were able to run out, but they certainly didn't have enough copies for every man at [Bastogne]. What they did is, they sent them to the various [units], and so, my father got one for the medics, which was posted on something or other. You can still see the holes in the paper. I guess it was on a board or something like that, so that everybody in the medical detachment could see the greetings from the General and his response to the German commander of, "Nuts," and that document did a lot to encourage the troops in the field.

SH: When was your father sent back to the United States? I know, from what we looked at, he spent time near the end of the war near Berchtesgaden with the 82nd Airborne.

JK: No, that's just a little later. My father joined the 101st shortly after D-Day and stayed with the 101st for its entire deployment, until it was disbanded in France. … I guess that would be in '45, and all the troopers of the 101st Airborne were then reassigned to the 82nd and they all came home together on the *Queen Mary* and arrived in New York City in December of '45. So, my father stayed with the division … from shortly after D-Day until it was disbanded, then, was reassigned to the 82nd. My father did wear the patches of both, so that, you know, that was unusual.

SH: Had your mother stayed in Washington State while your father was overseas?

JK: Yes, she was still back in Washington State during this entire period of time.

SH: How did your father get back to Washington?

JK: Yes, the journey back. When they arrived … on the *Queen Mary* in New York City, there was to be a grand parade of the entire 82nd Division, which now included all these people from the 101st, and, directly after that parade took place, all the men in the division were to be sent home to be discharged. Earlier, before the 101st was actually disbanded, those paratroopers who had been a part of the D-Day jump, they were sent home early, but the rest of the division waited until they were reassigned, and then, [were] brought home. So, right after this big parade in New York City, then, my father was given orders to return to Fort Lewis, Washington, and he made that journey by train, across the country, and then, was discharged in Fort Lewis. [Editor's Note: The 82nd Airborne Division departed from Europe on the *Queen Mary* on December 29, 1945. The 82nd led the World War II Victory Parade up Fifth Avenue on January 12, 1946.]

SH: Did he ever entertain the thought of staying in the military?

JK: … I think he'd seen enough. I think he'd seen enough.

SH: Did he stay in the Reserves? Do you know?

JK: He did not, and, oddly enough, I think--maybe not so unusual, the more I find out about veterans of that era--he did not keep up with any of the men he served with, that served under him, his jeep driver, the kind of people that, when I served, I've kept up a connection with a lot of people that I served with, but my father, I think he wanted to leave it behind. … That was a very difficult thing for him to do. He had all sorts of problems, years later, with dreams and memories and things that he would never talk about, but did bother him--they were demons.

SH: I have seen a photograph of the jeep driver you spoke of. He was a conscientious objector, [a person who refuses combat and/or military service based on moral or religious beliefs].

JK: Yes. The medical unit that he was in charge of was an odd combination of a variety of different kinds of soldiers, and the jeep driver was a conscientious objector, obviously drafted, and, as a CO, he would not serve in a combat capacity. So, they made him a driver for a jeep in combat and he was my father's driver. My father also, in his unit, had a young fellow that was serving time on a Georgia chain gang and he volunteered--he was willing to volunteer--to join the paratroopers in order to get off the chain gang. … He became a paratrooper, but they didn't want to give a convict a weapon, so, they put him in the medical unit. So, this group that my father was in charge of, … it must have been an interesting combination of young people of all different kinds of backgrounds, and I'm not sure how my father dealt with all of that. … He wasn't even thirty years old yet and here he was, having to deal with not only the situation in combat, but … [being] in charge of this group of unusual people.

SH: Did either your mother or father talk about the incarceration of the Japanese-Americans?

JK: You know, I never heard any discussion about that. I don't know why. I just don't recall that they talked about the Japanese-Americans that had been incarcerated. … I, of course, knew that that had taken place and they were certainly aware of it, but … that was not a dinnertime discussion that ever took place.

SH: Is there anything else about your father's career, medical or military, that you would like to share with us before we move forward to your high school and graduation?

JK: Well, I think I've covered pretty much his experience and its influence on his career, ultimately. I think he was probably very proud. … He didn't like the time he had to spend in the military, but he was very proud of it.

SH: Did he talk about your decision to go in the military?

JK: No, that was not something that my father and I ever discussed. … He never said it was one way or another about my decision to join, and my decision was, in part, forced by events of the time, just as his was. There are certain things that you just [have to do because they] … are beyond your control. … It happened to him and, to a lesser extent, it happened to me as well, and millions of Americans have always responded to that.

SH: I just wondered if he had made any comment.

JK: No, not specifically.

SH: We are back to Caldwell and West Essex High School.

JK: West Essex High School is where I went to high school, yes.

SH: Was it assumed that you and your sister would go to college?

JK: Yes. … I don't think there was any discussion that we weren't going to go to college, either one of us, and I have a younger brother as well.

SH: Do you?

JK: All of us expected to go to college and benefit from it.

SH: Were there organizations that you belonged to, or trips that you took before you graduated from high school?

JK: Well, yes, my father was a great believer in travel. Grass did not grow under his feet very much. … As a family, we made, I believe, five trips to the West, to Arizona, to New Mexico, Grand Canyon, to Wyoming. … We traveled, and … this is in the 1950s. We would typically travel for three or four weeks in the summertime, visiting all sorts of strange places in what are now antique cars, the old Fords, [laughter] and my father, … he was very fond of a Studebaker he had at one time. So, we made these large trips, traveling several hundreds of miles a day and going to remote places in the Far West, and we visited Indian reservations and spent weeks at a ranch. So, [throughout] my youth, … there were a lot of those kind of activities. I was a Boy Scout for years. I was an Eagle Scout. So, I did a lot of camping and outdoor kind of things.

SH: Did your family stay in hotels or camp on these trips?

JK: No, we were not camping. We would actually stay in something new at the time called motels, along routes like Route 66 and probably a few that are sort of like the Bates, you know, Hotel. [laughter] … That was, you know, an experience of itself, too, staying [in] all these different places. …

SH: Would all three of the kids go?

JK: Yes, and we'd be, all five of us would be, in this car and we'd set out. We'd determine, "Well, are we going to go three hundred miles today or five hundred miles," and we did use the pay phones to call ahead, to try to make sure we had a place to stay at where we were going, … you know, if we were pulling into Rapid City, South Dakota, or something like that. So, I got to see a lot of the country and, of course, I lived in quite a number of different places in the country. I was pretty fortunate, and that was something that I think that separated me from my high school classmates, many of whom had never been out of New Jersey and didn't know what was west of the Delaware River. … You know, I had had quite a bit of experience with that.

SH: Was your maternal grandmother still living when you lived in New Jersey?

JK: Yes, my mother's mother lived to be ninety-eight or ninety-nine. She didn't pass away until probably the '70s, 1970 something, and my father's mother also was [alive], had quite a long life. My mother's mother continued to live in a nursing home in California, and my father's mother, pretty much the same.

SH: Did you visit them in the nursing homes?

JK: Rarely, because of the distance from New Jersey to California.

SH: Did your mother continue to nurse?

JK: … After the war, she no longer was on the register. She ceased her career. She became a 1950s home mom and, all the time that I grew up, she was the homemaker.

SH: What activities did she keep herself engaged with?

JK: Oh, she belonged to the women's organization in Caldwell. … She loved bridge, and so, she had a bridge group that she played with, those sorts of things.

SH: With the Boy Scouts, did you ever go to a jamboree, [a Scouting gathering, usually associated with camping]? Where did you go to camp?

JK: I went to Philmont Scout Camp, which was in New Mexico. I spent several weeks there. I went to a jamboree [in] about 1956 in Valley Forge, and I still have some things from those. Yes, I did get to go to quite a number of national events of the Scouts during the '50s.

SH: I think the Scouts were really burgeoning at that point in time.

JK: Yes. I was living, at the time when I was … most active in Scouts, in Akron, Ohio. … It's very much of a blue-collar town, at that period of time. It was the center of the automotive tire industry for the entire country. … The factories there, I mean, when you smelled burnt rubber throughout the city, everyone was happy, because they were making money. That was the smell of money in Akron, [laughter] and Scouting was a very huge activity, because these corporations and their unions, in particular, had large Scouting activities and troops and they supported them and [were] very active with them. So, the troop that I was in was one of many in that particular area, where there's lots of Scouts.

SH: Did you have afterschool jobs?

JK: I had summer jobs, but not so much afterschool jobs, … because of all the different schools I went to and because … one year was double sessions. You know, we did not go to class--we did not go to school--until noon, and then, we would [be] in school until five-thirty or so in the evening. So, an afterschool job was not something that was possible … under those kind of circumstances. [laughter]

SH: What were some of your summer jobs?

JK: I was a camp counselor at a Boy Scout camp in Ohio. … Well, later, I became a busboy in a restaurant. I did all sorts of, you know, those kinds of kid's jobs.

SH: Was it a shock to come to New Jersey from the Midwest?

JK: No, not really. I was so used to … going to different places, being introduced to something new and different, [that] it wasn't a shock, but … the culture of New Jersey was quite a bit different from what I was used to. When you're from the Midwest and Midwestern kind of towns and values and churches and organizations, [it was] very different to come to a place like Caldwell, New Jersey. … New Jersey was a much faster culture than I was used to. [laughter]

SH: Did your family stay involved with the church?

JK: Not a whole lot. We would go, [occasionally]. Caldwell has a large Presbyterian church, a very famous one that actually [was] named after James Caldwell from the Revolutionary War. … We did go there, but my father, if he was interested in doing something like that, he'd be more interested in going into New York City, which we would do occasionally.

SH: We hear many stories from children of physicians about their fathers rarely being home. Was your father's schedule typical? How often was your father home?

JK: Yes. My father worked six days a week. For thirty years, he was a professor at NYU as well. During the time he was a director, say, in [Mountainside Hospital], at Montclair, he also would, one day a week, go into Bellevue and teach. … He maintained that contact for over thirty years. So, if he wasn't at the hospital directing a program or teaching at Bellevue or doing [something else], one day a week, for example, he would travel to various parts of the state, too, because they would have some small program that they were developing and he would [go there]. So, I got to see my father when he came home every evening. He did not have a private practice where he's constantly being [called in]. He worked as a director of a hospital, so, he came home every evening. I'd see him, but he did work six days a week, and so, … weekend things, it was [that] I'd see him on one day, yes.

SH: In your sophomore year of high school in New Jersey, were you involved in any kind of clubs or sports?

JK: Well, I played on the basketball team for; let's see, West Essex only existed for the last two years of my [high school career], so, yes, for those years, I was on the basketball team. I was on the track team, I was in the key club, … yes, I had a number of activities that I was involved in in high school.

SH: Did you have a mentor or a favorite subject?

JK: Well, I've always been interested in English as a subject and I had a number of high school teachers that were influential in that. One of my high school English teachers, Joe Martino, … today, he's retired, lives in Spring Lake. … I get together with him every month or so and have lunch. So, I've had a connection, long connection, with people that were high school teachers of mine.

SH: Why did you decide to attend Rutgers?

JK: Well, originally, I went to the University of Michigan as an undergraduate, and that was influenced primarily by my father, who had gone to medical school there, but the University of Michigan is quite a bit different place … from what Rutgers College was like in 1960.

SH: Did you look at Rutgers College or other schools?

JK: I'd looked at a variety of schools and had been accepted at a number of them, University of Virginia, but I decided to go … out to Michigan and, of course, it's a huge institution. Undergraduates get lost there. Its reputation is primarily built on … the size and number of its graduate program. So, after I'd been there for a year, I felt sort of lost out there. I decided I would look around for something else and that's when I began to take an interest in Rutgers College, and so, I transferred there.

SH: Had you been to the campus before?

JK: Yes, I'd been to the campus, but, let's see, if you could recall what New Brunswick was like in 1960, it's quite a bit different from New Brunswick today, and the University was quite a bit different, but, of course, there was no Livingston Campus at that time. So, I began to feel that the size, scope, of Rutgers was much more something that was going to be for me, and I did know some other classmates from high school who were there.

SH: I was just going to ask that.

JK: And so, … in my sophomore year, I became a Rutgers College student.

SH: Did you major in English?

JK: I did major in English, yes.

SH: Did you go to Michigan thinking that English would be your focus?

JK: Yes. I wasn't quite sure then what I was going to do, but the English courses were the sort of things that I was interested in, so, it became natural for me. Now, Rutgers, … at that period of time, had a very fine English Department, and so, I did get to study with a lot of very good English professors from Rutgers. Probably the most favored professor I had at Rutgers was not in [the] English Department. He was the President of the University, Mason Gross, taught one course every once in a while, and I took a course in aesthetics from him and it was one of the most interesting things I've ever been through. [Editor's Note: Dr. Mason Welch Gross served as

President of Rutgers University from 1959 to 1971.] I'm not sure that I learned much about aesthetics from the class, but I learned a lot about how to teach in a class. See, the thing that I was amazed at [was] what he would be able to do and how he would conduct a class, not the least of which was, Mason Gross was a chain smoker and he taught in … one of the old buildings right next to Old Queens …

SH: Van Nest Hall.

JK: Van Nest, which was a firetrap. … All the rooms had these big "No Smoking" signs on there. There's Mason Gross, teaching his class, smoking a cigarette the whole time, stubbing them out in the chalk trays. … I was just amazed at his [style], how he was able to, you know, conduct [the class]. …

SH: He was President of the University at this time.

JK: Yes, yes, he was President of the University. I'd visit him during office hours and I'd go to the President's Office. … For an undergraduate, that was kind of fascinating.

SH: Had Mason Gross already been on the television shows? [Editor's Note: In the late 1940s and 1950s, Mason Gross was a judge and personality on the television game shows *Think Fast* and *Two for the Money*.]

JK: It had already taken place. What was the name of that program? Yes, he had been Provost of Rutgers at the time; he hadn't become the President. They had another title, where he was provost or chancellor or something like that. Yes, I remember earlier, before I ever became college age, … watching him … on TV, yes.

SH: Was that also part of the draw to take his course?

JK: Well, I think I probably just, by happenstance, landed in this course. You know, aesthetics was something I was sort of interested in and, … probably--typical undergraduate programming--it fell at the right time and the right place, and then, I found out that the President of the University was teaching it. Then, it became much more interesting to me. … Of course, otherwise, I probably never would have seen Mason Gross during my entire time at Rutgers, but here was this guy who had been on TV, … yes.

SH: When you came to Rutgers, that first semester, where were you housed?

JK: Because I didn't go to Rutgers as a freshman, I was not placed in any of the dorms, and what I did is, I had an apartment off campus during all my Rutgers years.

SH: Did you live in the same apartment for all your years there?

JK: Yes, the same place, yes. … Actually, it was far enough away that I commuted to the Rutgers Campus and my roommate was a fellow, another high school friend of mine, who was

going to Rutgers-Newark. He was a student at Rutgers-Newark, I was a student at Rutgers-New Brunswick and I had other friends down in New Brunswick.

SH: Where were you commuting from?

JK: Glen Ridge.

SH: Really? [laughter]

JK: Yes, right off the Parkway in Glen Ridge.

SH: That is a bit of a commute.

JK: Yes. It was a bit unusual, but I had enough friends in the New Brunswick area where I could stay over, and particularly on weekends. … I worked out a schedule that made it easy for [me]. My roommate went to Rutgers-Newark. I actually spent some summers … taking classes in Rutgers-Newark as well. So, I knew, I found out something, about the Rutgers Campus at Newark, Rutgers Campus in New Brunswick, during [that time], yes.

SH: Did you commute by car?

JK: Yes, yes. The difficulty was finding a parking space, as it is now. [laughter]

SH: Was ROTC mandatory for incoming sophomores?

JK: No. Back in those days, if I remember correctly, … what was a requirement for the degree was some sort of gym, physical education courses. If you were in the [ROTC], one of the ROTC programs at Rutgers, which had a rather large ROTC program, both the Army and Air Force, I believe, then, you were not required to take the physical education courses. Now, as a transfer student, … I did not join the ROTC. I was not involved in any of the Rutgers military programs at the time. Other friends of mine were, but I was not. I had nothing to do with the military at that time. That came later. [laughter]

SH: Was attending chapel mandatory? Was a convocation part of the curriculum at that point?

JK: I think, at the beginning of every year, in September, there was a large convocation outdoors by "Silent Willie," in that area. [Editor's Note: A bronze statue of William I, Prince of Orange, erected in 1928, sits on Rutgers' Voorhees Mall in New Brunswick. William was known as William the Silent and the Rutgers statue is known as "Silent Willie."]

SH: On Voorhees Mall.

JK: Yes. Now, at that time, I think the entire Rutgers College could fit on Voorhees Mall. I don't know that that's the case today. I can't imagine the entire University having their, you know, undergraduate class [there] and, of course, … in those days, it was all men. … I think there were maybe five thousand in the entire undergraduate program at Rutgers [College]. I

don't know what the graduate programs were, … and, of course, Douglass [College] was a separate entity altogether across town.

SH: Were there mixers between Douglass and Rutgers College?

JK: Oh, yes, and we did take classes together. Sometimes, you'd have Douglass students in a class, but, by and large, they were mostly male classes, but you could register cross-campus.

SH: Could you?

JK: Yes. Some students who particularly had female friends across town would make sure they scheduled classes over there, [laughter] and vice versa.

SH: Did fraternities rule the social life at Rutgers?

JK: Well, they were a large part of it. I'm not sure that they ruled the social life. The fraternity row there was a big deal, particularly on the weekends, and I never actually belonged to the fraternity, but I went to some, many, of their parties at different houses. I happened to have friends that were in all of those houses, so, it wasn't necessary for me to actually join. … I was living off campus, so, the idea of living in one, I don't think that helped your grade point average either, [laughter] those who were in residence in those fraternity houses.

SH: Did you ever consider accepting a rush?

JK: I was a pledge at Chi Phi for a short period of time.

SH: Why did you decide not to?

JK: Simply because it wasn't going to work out in terms of my commuting, and I was getting, at that point, probably in my junior [year], closer to senior year. It was just too late for that sort of thing. I was looking, you know, ahead.

SH: You also graduated Phi Beta Kappa.

JK: Yes.

SH: How hard was it for you to keep up your grade point average?

JK: Well, you know, I did a lot of studying while I was at Rutgers. It was a full-time job.

SH: Did you have a minor?

JK: No, no, I can't think of a subject area that I'd be able to identify specifically as a minor.

SH: What were your plans? What did you think that you wanted to do with your degree?

JK: Well, I always wanted to be a part [of a university]. After I first went to college, I thought that, "What could be a better job than to be working at, you know, a university? Higher education is the place to be," and so, … my goal, always, was to find [a college-level position], to be a teacher in a college. I wasn't going to be involved in the K-through-twelve area of education. … That was not something I was temperamentally able to do. I have no idea how my wife teaches eighth graders today, but higher education always did interest me and I wanted to be a classroom teacher. …

SH: Talk about some of the activities that you were aware of that were happening on campus, such as protests against the war, or for it, whatever the case may be.

JK: Well, during my freshman semester, when I was at the University of Michigan, that would be 1962, … I was there during the Cuban Missile Crisis, which stunned a major college campus like that, and there were growing elements. … I guess, I think it's the SDS [Students for a Democratic Society] actually was formed at the University of Michigan among students, and so, there was a great deal of that political kind of activity on the part of undergraduates, during a major awakening about nuclear warfare that took place during my freshman year at Michigan. … In some ways, that overshadowed everything else you were doing, all the academics. [laughter] It might have had something, or maybe it had more to do than I thought before, about why I left there, and then, sought something different. Now, by the time I got to Rutgers, student political activity was expected and was in the *Targum* [Rutgers University's campus newspaper] all the time. There were protests. Genovese was very controversial. Mason Gross stood up, you know, for academic rights, regardless of political point of view. That was all part of my undergraduate experience. [Editor's Note: Dr. Eugene Genovese was a Rutgers Professor of History whose comments on welcoming a Viet Cong victory in Vietnam at a teach-in on campus in April 1965 led to a public backlash and criticism from legislators.]

SH: Did Rutgers students discuss these issues or was it something that was just in the background?

JK: Well, I think it was endlessly discussed in some places, and so, … after a while, you wanted to just sort of stay away from it, you know, and, in other places, it probably was not. There were students who were not involved in any of that. They sort of blithely went along, unaware of these other activities, but what happened on the Rutgers Campus certainly was a reflection of what was happening on campuses all across the country. … The Vietnam War became more and more and more a focus of a generational gap.

SH: Going back to your freshman year, were you aware of the danger presented by possibly having missiles in Cuba?

JK: I think, before that took place, I was typical of so many undergraduates. We didn't have a clue of what nuclear warfare might be like, or the threat of it, and what was so startling about it was the recognition that, "Yes, this is something that could happen--today, now," and it had a [significant impact]. I remember walking across the campus; now, the University of Michigan Campus in Ann Arbor is huge. To walk across it is several miles, and I recall just how [quiet it

was]. Usually, there's all sorts of activity and things going on, day and night, you know, typical university kind of thing. There is no end and beginning to things. It goes on all the time.

SH: [laughter] Except between about five and nine in the morning.

JK: The Michigan campus was just silent. I'd never seen it like that in the time when I was there. So, I think that there was [an awareness]. Certainly, everyone was aware and it was quite a sobering experience. … I think that there was a point when we had to wake up to the fact, we were living in a very dangerous world and a mistake could very well just, "Whoosh."

SH: Were there Civil Defense drills in Ohio, and then, later, in New Jersey?

JK: [laughter] Well, particularly in Ohio, … I recall, yes, we were taught how to shield our eyes, how to crawl underneath … a desk, to prevent--I don't know what part of nuclear destruction that was going to help with, but we did have practice of those kinds of things, air raid shelters. I remember those particular signs that warned of radiation and, you know, not to go near that. So, yes, there [was Civil Defense activity], and, when you look back on it, it's almost comical the attempts at Civil Defense, at trying to protect the population, particularly schoolchildren, from nuclear weapons.

SH: Was this something that was talked about in the Boy Scouts as well?

JK: I don't recall it so much in the Boy Scouts, no. I think they were more interested in camping and outdoors things there.

SH: Did your father ever express his thoughts on Truman's decision to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

JK: I don't recall him specifically talking about that, but my impression was, from some of the things he said, that he thought that that was a decision that had to be made.

SH: Was your family politically involved at all?

JK: I would say generally not. My father was, at one point, I think, interested in maybe becoming a school board member, but being a physician in a town, and then, taking a political [office], that was a difficult problem. So, he, for the sake of his medical career, … sort of stayed in the background on political issues.

SH: Did your mother and father talk about how they felt about Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal programs, and then, Truman and Eisenhower?

JK: I don't recall, specifically there, much discussion about the Roosevelt years, other than I think they were part of the American public who just couldn't conceive of the United States being led by anybody [else], anyone but FDR. He was a very much larger than life kind of person, and the fact that he was disabled and, of course, that is the field that my father entered into. I think I would myself be curious about what my father thought, because … that is exactly

what his medical practice was all about, how to make people lead productive lives who are disabled, and, up until that point, … when you became disabled, you were part of the "refuse pile." The culture didn't know what to do with you. Today, that's very, very different.

SH: As a young person, were you excited about the Kennedy election? Were you apathetic?

JK: Kennedy's election was, I was in high school at that time, probably my senior year. There was a lot of interest in the Kennedy/Nixon election, and … not just a little bit of concern over the fact that Kennedy was coming from a background that was very different from what most people had been used to for several hundred years, as a Catholic in the White House. That was going to be a big change. People were very, I think, suspicious of what that might mean. Everybody knew he was from *PT-109*. That's a [fact], but, although there was a lot of interest in that election, I think that of greater impact was what happened when he was assassinated. [Editor's Note: President John F. Kennedy, while serving as a US Navy lieutenant in the Pacific Theater during World War II, was awarded a Navy and Marine Corps Medal for his actions during the August 2, 1943 sinking of *PT-109*, a motor torpedo boat he commanded.]

SH: Do you remember where you were when you heard the news of Kennedy's assassination?

JK: [laughter] I'm one of the few who doesn't remember. Everyone else does. I do remember, of course, the days thereafter. …

SH: You were a freshman in college.

JK: Yes, I think I was a freshman in college when that occurred.

SH: November 1963.

JK: Yes.

SH: Did you call home to talk with your parents about it?

JK: Probably so. I don't recall specifically that I did, but that would be the sort of thing that [I would do].

SH: What other activities do you remember being involved in at Rutgers?

JK: Well, I was mostly involved in my classes. [laughter]

SH: You said Mason Gross was your favorite professor. Were there other professors that you found wonderful or not?

JK: Well, the English Department had quite a few really very good people. Paul Fussell was a person I had for class. … I would say he wasn't an enthusiastic fan of Rutgers undergraduates, to say the least, but he tolerated us, and … I took courses with him. Donald McGinn was one of my [professors]. I used to have lunch with him quite often. He developed a course which I,

much later, … did in a different [way], something slightly different, but he was the first person to try to teach a completely interdisciplinary course, one that was literature, music and the visual arts. … He organized that, and then, I learned from that, years later, to do some interdisciplinary courses myself, but C. F. Main was one of my professors. He was very well-known. Let's see, Bezanson was the Melville guy. Leslie Marchand was there. … I mean, I had a lot of good exposure to a variety of scholars when I was at Rutgers. When I went to graduate school, that helped me out a great deal.

SH: Did you plan to go straight from college to grad school?

JK: I did. That was always my [intention]. … If you were going to get into higher education, that's what you had to do. So, actually, I wanted to stay at Rutgers, but Professor Fussell had a particular view about Rutgers undergraduates, that he did not want them in Rutgers graduate schools. He thought that you should go out someplace else. The idea of Rutgers having the same old kind of thing was not what he was interested in. He was interested in getting graduate students from other places than Rutgers and sending Rutgers [students elsewhere]. …

SH: What was Professor Fussell's position?

JK: … He taught undergraduate courses, but he also taught graduate. I believe, … at the time, he was director of the graduate English program. So, he was the main gate. …

SH: If he said, "Don't stay," you did not stay.

JK: That's right, and so, … I ended up going to NYU.

SH: Was there any direction given on where he or others thought you should go?

JK: No, not really, not that I recall. I did have other [options]. I knew that simply applying to Rutgers was not a wise idea. You had to try to look at various places, and NYU was one and I was accepted there. So, as soon as I graduated; because I was a transfer student, I actually was with the Class of '66. I started with the Class of '66 and I completed the requirements for the degree in December of '66, but my degree says January of '67. So, I'm always listed in all the Rutgers official documents as a member of the Class of '67, but I never took a course … with the Class of '67. I was with the Class of '66 and I would have probably graduated later if I hadn't taken summer courses, and that's why I got introduced to Rutgers-Newark, is by taking summer courses there in the English Department and other departments, biology and other things that I did. So, I actually was the Class of '66. … When I completed those requirements in December of '66, the following January, I enrolled in courses … in the graduate program at NYU. So, there was no break at all between going from undergraduate college into the graduate program, and I stayed in the graduate program at NYU for, well, … I don't know if it was a year-and-a-half or two years that I was in that program, and that's when … I entered the military.

SH: Being a non-ROTC student at Rutgers, what did you think about Professor Genovese's comments regarding the Vietnam War? How aware of them were you? Were you involved in any teach-ins?

JK: No, I did not go to the large protests or teach-ins. It just didn't seem to me at the time as something that was going to be very profitable for my time as a student there. I had my own personal agenda that I wanted to get moved along, and, although this was interesting and, certainly, his remarks for that time period, … they were extremely left wing, different, I wasn't attracted to getting involved. I was too busy reading all those novels. … [laughter]

SH: Did you attend social activities, like the Soph Hop and the Mili [Military] Ball?

JK: Not really. Most of my social activities in that period of time was with [my wife]. I was married in December of '66, so, you can see that much of my social activity in 1965 and '66 had to do with my future wife.

SH: Where did you meet your wife?

JK: Well, I met her when I was in high school. She was the sister of a friend of mine who went to Rutgers and later on to become a pilot in Vietnam, and so, I had known her in high school, but I hadn't had any sort of social relations with her until much later. … A lot of our social activities would be [with] her brother and his girlfriend, who went to Douglass. We spent a lot of time together and we didn't need to attend all these other activities.

SH: Did she attend Douglass College?

JK: No, no, she was not enrolled.

SH: Did she attend college at the same time as you?

JK: She had gone up to Vermont and gone to college there for a year or so, but, when I knew her at Rutgers, she was not enrolled.

SH: You got married in December of 1966.

JK: Yes.

SH: Then, you entered NYU soon after.

JK: A couple weeks later, yes.

SH: Did you keep your place in Glen Ridge?

JK: No, we had to move, move from the place that I had in Glen Ridge. Glen Ridge was sort of a bachelor's kind of place. The friend that I was living with at that time had graduated from Rutgers and I had completed the program, so, we dispensed with that place. … Then, my wife and I got an apartment in Bloomfield, and that made it easy for me to [commute]. She was working at AT&T at the time, then, and I was commuting into New York and that was an easy commute, from Bloomfield into the city.

SH: Did you assume that you would be drafted once you finished your schooling? What were the rules for the draft?

JK: The draft had all sorts of rules that changed and developed during the course of the Vietnam War. Originally, anyone enrolled … full-time in a college program was given a student deferment, and I had a student deferment, basically, the whole time I was an undergraduate. About the time that I went to graduate school, they developed the system of lottery numbers, which was supposed to--I'm not sure what it was really supposed to do, [laughter] other than, if you got a very low number, you were sort of guaranteed of going in the military and you could make your plans accordingly and, if you had a very high number, you could say to yourself, "Well, I'm not going to go." That lottery system didn't really apply very much to me. When I went to graduate school, there was no break in my enrollment, so, I did continue on in what was then called a student deferment. It was when I completed the master's degree that, all of a sudden--actually, was a week or two before I completed the degree--that I got a notice from the draft board saying that I was to report and that my student deferment had ended, because I had completed the program. So, under those circumstances, I was married, I had been a graduate student and … this was 1968 now. Vietnam War was quite a bit heated up and I was told to report for duty. I went down to Montclair, to the local recruiter, and just wanted to ask some questions about what all of this meant and what to expect, and so forth. … He said, "Well, there's an alternative. You can volunteer for the military. We'll cancel the draft notice. You'll volunteer. You can have some choices." I took a test. I was offered a position, an option to go to OCS [Officer Candidate School] as a part of that, and, at that time, they had an enlistment of two-years. All other enlistments were actually three-year enlistments, but, if you did this particular program, you could [avoid that], which is the same length of time as a draftee. So, I ended up, eventually, enlisting myself. … Let's see, I finished the MA program in June and, by July, I was in basic training, yes, at Fort Dix. [Editor's Note: Fort Dix is a US Army installation in Central New Jersey.]

SH: Did your wife continue to live in Bloomfield?

JK: Yes, she continued to live there for a while, and, eventually, I think she moved back with her folks just simply because it was easier.

SH: When you reported to Fort Dix, had it been your plan to go to OCS?

JK: Well, yes, the idea of the program that was offered to me was, I would complete basic training, and then, advanced individual training that everyone had to do, and then, at that time, I could exercise my option to go to OCS or decline that option to go to OCS, and just finish out the two-year enlistment. Now, … for that particular program, though, you had to be infantry trained. So, I went through [the] basic training that everyone goes [through], and then, I went through advanced infantry training.

SH: Still at Fort Dix.

JK: Still at Fort Dix, yes. They did not send me to one of the other sites, and it was when I completed the infantry school there at Fort Dix that I decided that I wasn't going to exercise the OCS option, because that was going to add [to] it. The time in OCS would not count towards your [two years]. I would have to [fulfill that], … and the OCS school was about a year in length, so, I would have had to put in a total of three years under those circumstances, instead of a total of two years. … I wanted to get back to what I thought was going to be graduate school. So, I declined the OCS appointment and was immediately issued orders. Now, in 1968, if you were infantry trained, there was only one place in the world that you would think you would get orders to and that would be to Vietnam. They had five hundred thousand troops there at the time and infantry MOS [military occupational specialty] was a very highly sought-after specialty. [Editor's Note: A military occupational specialty number classifies members of the US Armed Forces by the specific tasks and jobs they have been trained to perform.] So, I thought for sure that I was simply going to get orders to Vietnam. Instead, I was put on orders to report to Germany. … We had three hundred thousand troops in Germany as well, while we had five hundred thousand in Vietnam, and I don't know how many, were in Korea, but those were the main deployments. … Maintaining the troop structure in Germany was extremely difficult under the circumstances. They were getting the [leftovers]. They were the last priority, but they were facing these thousands of the Warsaw Pact. [Editor's Note: The Warsaw Pact was a 1955 treaty between eight Communist Eastern European nations that established a Soviet Bloc of military support. The alliance lasted until 1991 when the Soviet Union officially dissolved.] So, I was assigned to the Third Infantry in Wurzburg. When my plane landed in Rhein-Main [Air Base], I reported to the replacement station, where a young clerk took a look at my file and asked me, "Are you a college graduate?" I said, "Yes," and he said, "And you went to graduate school?" "Yes," and he shook his head and said something like, "What's wrong with this Army?" [laughter] … He sent me to Heidelberg, said, "I want you to go down there and have an interview," and so, I reported, instead of to Third Infantry in Wurzburg, I was sent to Headquarters of the US Army Europe and Seventh Army in Heidelberg, which is a very nice place just to be. …

SH: Nice university town.

JK: Yes, university town. Now, it was because I had a college education, and this is one of the things I'm very [aware of, that] Rutgers really worked for me, and NYU as well. If I hadn't had that on my records, I would have spent my whole time in the infantry, and probably [would have] ended up, at some point, in Vietnam, but I did not, because someone looked at my records. …

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: And read them.

JK: … Read them and sent me for this interview, that I had the next day. … I immediately became a personnel management specialist. I hadn't the slightest idea what that was. I didn't know what was involved in the job, and my military records--all the records of my attending infantry school and infantry background--were deleted. One question they asked me at the interview, that was the most important, was, "Do you type?" and I said, "Well, yes," and they

said, "Okay, you now type fifty words a minute," and that was put into my records. The record of my infantry training was all removed and I became a personnel management specialist, and then, I had to find out what that was.

SH: [laughter] You had to find out.

JK: Yes, … I hadn't had any introduction, anything involving military paperwork or administration, and it turned out that I had a very interesting job, at an interesting time. My job was to fill the positions of a division-sized unit with the right personnel, with the right training, in the right job.

SH: To hold this position, did they make you an officer?

JK: No, no, I was an enlisted man.

SH: Okay.

JK: And I worked for the Adjutant General [the chief administrative officer of the unit] and my job was to requisition and fill these jobs of very specialized personnel. This, the USAREUR [US Army Europe] and Seventh Army Special Troops, was made up of not ordinary soldiers. There was the 66th Military Intelligence Group. Almost all of them were spies, and my job was to fill the right spy in the right job, which meant that …

SH: What kind of security clearance did you have?

JK: I had to have a "secret" [level clearance]. …

SH: Okay. How much time elapsed before you actually began your work? What kind of training did you go through?

JK: Oh, within a week. [laughter] Actually, I sat down with another person who showed me what he did and what they were doing and I began to get the idea of how all of this worked, and then, eventually, … my clearance came through. … So, the kinds of personnel that I was responsible for getting into the right jobs were people that were involved in military intelligence. They had to be all properly language-qualified. You didn't want to send a person who was qualified in Polish to a position that is going to involve Ukrainian. So, it was difficult in that regard. I mean, there was a lot of tedious kind of things that you had to work through. The Aviation Command also came under this group, … and so, all of the mechanics we got for maintaining the helicopters had to be assigned properly. The 56th Pershing Missile, 56th Artillery Group, that covered targets in Russia with nuclear weapons, and the people assigned to those tasks, to do that, came through my office, my desk. We had a mapmaking group, that was very [specialized]. They were all graphic artists, because they had to make these maps. Just sending any old engineer into that was not going to be very helpful. Also, the Communications Command came under Special Troops. It was a grouping of very technical kinds of units that were in charge of making sure that the combat troops … that were deployed in Germany had the

right kind of backup. So, in that regard, it was an interesting job that I did, and probably very different, … well, certainly different, from what it was like to be an infantryman. [laughter]

SH: Did your wife ever come to Germany while you were stationed there?

JK: Yes, she joined me after several months and … we lived in Germany. We did not live on post. We lived on the German economy. We lived in a German apartment. We did all of our shopping and my landlord--we lived over his business--he had a beer and wine distributing business, which made it very convenient. We lived right on the [river]. … The backyard went right down to the Neckar River. So, I got to see a lot of Germany, but, also, got to travel in many other places, as long as it didn't present a security problem. Because of my job, they were very careful about, you know, where I went. I couldn't, for example, go to Berlin to visit, because the train then went through East Germany. Soon as they saw somebody from Heidelberg, you know, Headquarters from Heidelberg, you'd be detained. … So, it was just useless trying to go there, but I did get to go to Holland and France and Switzerland and Italy and places like that while I was there.

SH: What was your typical schedule like there?

JK: It worked almost like a typical office job here, in Heidelberg. The workday would be from eight in the morning until five in the evening, and it was a busy office, phones, paperwork, all kinds of things. We wore class "A" uniforms all the time.

SH: Did you have a background in German?

JK: At Rutgers, I'd taken German, up to the third year. So, I could at least get by in German conversation, read the menu, make telephone calls, do some [translating]. Occasionally, I would be asked, if somebody in the office who didn't speak German needed [help], you know, I could do some sort of minimal level translating, or at least help out.

SH: Did civilians work in your department?

JK: Oh, yes, yes, … amazing how many, both German civilians working in certain capacities in the Headquarters, but, also, a large number of American civilians. … There was, of course, an entire, huge American population that lived … in military housing, right there in Heidelberg.

SH: Because of your security clearance, did you receive security alerts?

JK: For all troops stationed in Germany, there was an alert a minimum of once every thirty days, which meant that the entire command mobilized for what would essentially be an attack from the Soviets through the Fulda Gap, and every unit had its assigned positions. … These alerts would typically take place about three o'clock in the morning, where you'd get a phone call or some notification, you'd report in to your station and, depending on what your job was, you were deployed. If you were in an armored battalion, you got into your tank and went out into [the field], and you might be there for three or four days at a time before you were brought back in, but these alerts were continuous. They were never [announced]. You never knew about them.

You didn't know when they were to take place, and all of us participated in it, but the kind of job that I was in, mine was mostly to protect the records that we were working on. Troop strengths were secret documents, particularly troop strengths that were broken down by what jobs they all were doing, and that's exactly, you know, what [the enemy wanted]. So, my job was either to make sure that these were all packed up or destroyed. … Typically, we headed the other direction from where the rest of the troops were headed, [laughter] because the headquarters had to be displaced.

SH: Did you ever experience an alert that was not just a drill?

JK: No. During the nineteen months that I spent there, we had nineteen alerts, but all of them were essentially drills. The only other interesting thing that happened was, … I told you that a missile [unit], a Pershing missile unit, was a part of what I was assigned to. … These missiles were rather large and they are mounted on trucks and they are constantly mobile. … In other words, … the idea is to make sure that no one knows where this particular truck is going to be on any given day, and then, they keep having to reprogram the targets that they are covering, typically in the Soviet Union. Well, it just so happens that, one day, a person who was assigned to this Pershing missile truck pulled the wrong lever and … a nuclear warhead fell on the ground. Now, [according to] the German government, the official understanding--the public understanding, I should say, at the time--was that the United States was not deploying nuclear warheads in West Germany. The fact of the matter is, there were nuclear warheads, American nuclear warheads, traveling all around their countryside on these trucks all the time, covering these targets. … So, the implication of having this nuclear device sitting on the ground someplace, out in, you know, Schwabenland or something, was not only an embarrassment, it was a very [secretive matter]. Immediately, everything was "hush-hush," and, of course, one of the things they wanted to know is, "Is it dangerous?" which it was not. I mean, it was not going to be destructive in any particular way, but it did have to be recovered. The major general that was in charge of [our unit], was in command of us, he had to report back to Washington. I don't think that was pleasant, and one of the things that came down [was], one of the questions that began to be asked, soon after …

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: Are you ready?

JK: Yes.

SH: You were talking about the general who had to return to the United States.

JK: General [Howard W.] Penney, yes. … One of the questions that ultimately was asked is, "How did this person, unqualified person, get into that job?" and, of course, that came down to my desk. [laughter] … So, I did have to go out to wherever it was in the field, go visit, go interview and try to resolve, make a report on, [the issue], and that was a very [interesting assignment]. That put me in intimate contact with how serious the efforts were in Germany to make sure that … there was sufficient deterrent against the Soviet and Warsaw Pact, and I really got a direct impression about how important that was.

SH: During the time that you were in Germany, what kind of Soviet activity and movement were you aware of?

JK: In my job, I wasn't personally aware of their activities. I was much more aware of what our activities were and the difficulty of trying to maintain the viability of those troops, because everything, for example, with helicopter maintenance, 15th Aviation Group came under our command. Helicopters were very important for being able to do all sorts of things, but you couldn't have those helicopters operational unless you had the proper mechanics. All of the mechanics were going to Vietnam, because, in Vietnam, they were attempting this new kind of air assault kind of thing. … Those helicopters there were damaged and needed top repair all the time and you couldn't put a truck mechanic on a helicopter. It just didn't work. So, there was a lot of difficulty in terms of trying to maintain the proper level of troop strength and the right people in the right job.

SH: To your knowledge, did this ever compromise America's mission?

JK: Yes, thankfully, at my level, my job was to try to keep this going. My job was not to worry about what the consequences would be if we could not. What I did know was that the longer I stayed, the more difficult it became to fill all of these positions and that, for months at a time, some of these positions would not be filled. To what the impact was to the actual troops in the field that depended on that, I can only guess at, and I'm sure that there were days when we were much thinner than people would like to think.

SH: Did you have any interaction with the NATO forces?

JK: Well, because this is US Army Europe Headquarters, there's constant visitation of top brass, of all the NATO forces. The *Budeswehr* [West German Army] people would be there quite a bit, and others. So, you would see evidence of that. Thankfully, I did not have to get involved in all the ceremonial ends of that. [laughter]

SH: There was nothing that shook down to your level.

JK: We were too busy working.

SH: How many people would be in your office in a typical day? How many others were in the same position that you were in?

JK: Oh, I would say the team that I worked on, we had a lieutenant and a sergeant and probably a dozen [men]. We were not all doing the same things. … Well, we were, all of us were, at that time, they had a rank called specialist five. It was the same thing as a sergeant, but another interesting thing about the way this team worked is that the rank [was played down]. It was not like other elements in the military, where rank mattered a great deal. Everybody took their jackets off at the office, so [that] there was no way of telling what the rank of a particular individual was. … People who would come in to us, … unless they saw a stripe on your pants, they wouldn't know if you were an officer or not. Many times, they didn't know if they were

speaking to an officer or to someone else … and that's the way our office worked. Outside the office, then, it was different, but, within the office, we were a team that did things, and almost everyone in this office was a college graduate.

SH: Really?

JK: Yes. A few had been to law school.

SH: All men.

JK: Mostly men. We had one, as I recall, one female. There was a WAC [Women's Army Corps] detachment. They did have WACs back in those days. There was a WAC detachment and we did have at least one that was in our office, or close by to our office, but, otherwise, it was all-male.

SH: Was it integrated?

JK: Yes, yes, but you do have to recall, they were mostly college graduates. The number of minorities at that time who were college graduates was a lot fewer, so that there weren't many.

SH: Did you face problems with integration in Germany?

JK: A great deal, I would say. There was tremendous tension, racial tension, in the troops that were in the field, particularly if those troops had already been to Vietnam. These were guys who … weren't going to let any Army bullshit, stand in their way. They had been through it already. It was very difficult to control those troops. I think that was a major problem for a lot of commanders. There were racial incidents of all kinds. It was a difficult time in Germany.

SH: Were you involved in moving people in and out because of these incidents?

JK: Occasionally, it would become essential that some reassignment is going to take place, yes, and there were incidents. [laughter] … I remember one where a soldier in some small town went down to the motor pool after he'd been to the local *Gasthaus* [a German bar] and he got in a tank and just drove down. … He crushed a dozen cars going through a small town. Those kind of things did happen. Those weren't particularly racially motivated, but there was a lot of tension, racial tension, … from what I could tell, among troops.

SH: How much of these …

JK: And a lot of it had to do [with] because of what was going on in Vietnam.

SH: What percentage would you say had already served a tour in Vietnam?

JK: In the office that I worked in, probably a quarter of the people had already been in Vietnam and this was a second assignment. They had done something similar in Vietnam, probably headquarters there, and, now, they were sent to Germany for the rest of their time in. So, … we

had quite a few Vietnam vets. … One of the interesting things was that the Department of the Army also sent down a monthly levy, which would be like drafting troops out of Germany to send to Vietnam, which further depleted and complicated the problem of trying to keep these manpower levels. So, once a month, I would get IBM printouts that would list all the MOS-es, names, and these [were the] people that were now going to be reassigned to Vietnam within thirty days. … Of course, that just combed out all the people that we were hoping were going to be operational in Germany. So, those levies were difficult to deal with. [laughter] … Because we got them in the office that I worked in, typically, what the supervisor would do would be to go through the list and see if there was anybody that they knew, particularly those who were assigned to the headquarters, that were doing a particular job and, mysteriously, those pages would disappear. … Then, three months later, back in the States, they would figure out that … something had gone awry and that, now, they had to redo it again, but there were certain people who bought time, because, if you had less than thirteen months left to serve, you weren't going to be reassigned. It was just too difficult and expensive to send you to Vietnam for eight months or six months or something like that. So, it always involved people that had more than thirteen months left.

SH: Was there any danger that your name would appear on one of those levies?

JK: Yes, until I got less than thirteen months left in service, yes, and, presumably, what I would end up doing is the same thing, just in another locale.

SH: You talked about how relaxed the officer-enlisted men relationship was within your office, until you stepped outside.

JK: Yes. When you stepped outside the building, outside of your daily workplace, then, of course, military decorum and all the rest of it applies, particularly at headquarters.

SH: Was it more difficult, I should not say difficult, but very obvious, because, as you said, it was headquarters? Was there ever an opportunity to socialize off the base with anyone that you worked with?

JK: Our work group used to have picnics together, we would have dinners together. Yes, we did a fair amount of what I would say was socializing outside of the [office]. You know, this would be strictly civilian clothes, … and there were so many places in a town like Heidelberg to go … for an evening or something or other.

SH: Do you think living off post helped you be more relaxed about all of that?

JK: Well, not having to live in a military facility twenty-four hours a day certainly was.

SH: Was this a conscious decision on your part or was it because there was a lack of housing?

JK: It was certainly my preference, but there was a lack of housing. So many of the people assigned to Heidelberg had families, children. They had American schools there, and the amount of housing was limited. These would be career soldiers, whether they were enlisted or officers,

[who] would be occupying all those places. There wasn't any room for those of us … who were on a limited tour, that were not going to be career soldiers. So, we had to live off post, if we could find a place, and, of course, all the dependents, like, my wife, at the time, she was not an official Army dependent.

SH: Really?

JK: She was considered a foreign national. … As a dependent, she had a military card that would get her into the PX. [Editor's Note: PX an acronym for post exchange which were government owned and operated stores for the use of military personnel and their dependents.] But she was not there [with] an official status of the United States Government or the US Army, and there were, of course, thousands of them. If there was a situation that broke out in Europe where all dependents had to be evacuated, those dependents would be in a category all by themselves. … It was uncertain exactly how they would be taken care of, but, you know, … there was a distinction there.

SH: Did you have children while you were there?

JK: No, no.

SH: Did your wife work?

JK: It was difficult, as a foreigner, to get a job and she didn't speak German, … but she did work occasionally at on-post kinds of things. Post had all sorts of, you know, libraries and things and she did spend some time, but not much, working.

SH: You talked about having to fill all these slots in your position. Was there ever a humanitarian aspect to your job in Headquarters?

JK: I don't recall that there's any specific humanitarian side to the position. What I do recall is that … there was a great deal of public relations that had to occur between the Headquarters and all of its personnel, from its highest-ranking officers down through, with regard to the German population. That was an ongoing "problem;" we didn't want to be in a position where we were seen as, [laughter] you know, occupation troops. So, there were constant efforts to try to keep all relations friendly between US soldiers, particularly in the Headquarters, and the surrounding population that had to put up with all of these Americans. There were thousands of Americans, you know, basically, and I'm sure it was good for the German economy, [laughter] local German economy, but, also, you know, there were just so many Americans.

SH: What were some of the efforts? Do you remember what some of the public relations type efforts were?

JK: Well …

SH: Efforts that perhaps backfired? [laughter]

JK: Yes. I don't recall any that particularly backfired, but every German town and village, of course, had their little *fisherfests* or these ceremonial kind of things that took place seasonally. … Some American troops or something like that would be involved in some friendly basis of supporting that, or working with local councilmen, mayors. That is the sort of thing that went on all the time that I recall out of headquarters.

SH: Are there any other stories of your time there that you would like to add?

JK: No, I guess that pretty much covers what my experience there in Germany was like. What I should probably say is, I think, what a lot of other people who returned from service at that time [faced] and what that was like. When I was in the military in Germany, we were treated with a great deal of respect and friendship by the German population. When I returned to the United States, the citizens here had a very negative attitude towards anyone in a uniform.

SH: Tell me about that.

JK: And I remember, … I returned to Fort Dix to be processed out, and then, in order to get back to the Caldwell area, I actually had to take a bus, into New York City, to the Port Authority [Bus Terminal], and then, from the Port Authority, back out to New Jersey to come home. … People at the Port Authority would just look at you. There was an open hostility to anyone who was in a military uniform.

SH: What year would this have been?

JK: This was 1970.

SH: 1970, okay.

JK: The Vietnam War had become such a flashpoint with the country that anyone in military uniform or something was likely to feel … the vindictiveness of a country that had been through the war and they were tired of it. … That was a major change from when I left Germany one day, and then, I returned home and found that [laughter] this was [the case]. You know, you weren't really welcomed back.

SH: Did anyone say anything to you directly or was it just body language?

JK: Well, I recall someone at the Port Authority sort of came up to me and said, "What in the world did you come back for?" So, that, I think, is something that people have to understand about what occurred during that period of time. It certainly has changed from then to now.

SH: Like you said, you picked the service that would keep you in the military for the least amount of time. Did you ever reconsider staying in the military?

JK: No, I think my wife was pretty much anxious to get back home. So, by the time I'd put in the two years, I was pretty much anxious to get back to either graduate school or [focusing on], "What was I going to do next?" …

SH: When you left Germany, did you know what you were going to do next?

JK: No, I actually had applied for a number of jobs when I was still in Germany. Now, at that time, the community college was a brand-new concept. There weren't any community colleges when I went off to the military, but, when I returned, there were. This was a growing and flourishing sector, a new sector of higher education. So, I made a number of job applications to both four-year colleges, and community colleges. … It just so happens that when I got back in July of '70, there was a letter waiting for me, asking me if I could come up for an interview at the County College of Morris, … which was brand-new. So, I went up there and, lo and behold, I ended up taking a position there and started in September.

SH: Right off the bat.

JK: Yes, yes. [laughter]

SH: While you were in the military, did you ever run into any of your Rutgers friends?

JK: [laughter] Oddly enough, I did, in basic training. … You don't have much time to [socialize], but I did see some other Rutgers people that I knew. "Wow, what are you doing here?" "Where are you headed?" "No, I don't know," you know, and then, I wouldn't see them again after [that], but I did bump into a couple of Rutgers folks.

SH: That group that you were serving with in Germany, in headquarters, where were they from? Were they from all over the country?

JK: All over, all over.

SH: You said they were mostly college-educated.

JK: Yes.

SH: You said they were lawyers.

JK: Some were, a few people, yes.

SH: What other degrees were floating around there?

JK: Almost all of them were undergraduate degrees. I was one of the few people that had a graduate degree. They all were sort of amazed at that, except for those who had been to law school, but they were from Virginia, California, Michigan, Minnesota, all over.

SH: We talked about Vietnam and its affect on your manpower. What other talk was there of Vietnam within this group, within your social circle?

JK: Well, those who had already been there, of course, … most of their discussion was, "I'm never going back." [laughter]

SH: Really?

JK: Those who hadn't been there, I think, were pretty quiet about it. It was not something you wanted to really openly discuss. …

SH: Was there anyone who was *gung ho* about the war? Were there people who were openly against the war in Vietnam? How was it discussed?

JK: Well, certainly within the office atmosphere, this was not something that was going to be talked about. Everyone understood, who worked in this headquarters, how privileged they were to be there. … If you had eyes, [looking at] anything you saw about the military outside of this kind of headquarters, you understood how lucky you were to be there, and you weren't going to do anything in that office atmosphere that was going to jeopardize that. So, everyone was very cooperative, very friendly, very polite. … Behind that stood, of course, … the fear that, you know, you could be immediately reassigned and that was not going to be pleasant. So, within the office atmosphere, you certainly were not going to talk about sensitive issues, particularly when you had quite a number of officers who already had served there and were quite sensitive about the fact that their service wasn't getting the kind of support that they thought the country should give it, and, now, they were here in another capacity. Now, … outside of that atmosphere, as when you were in more of a civilian mode, I think there was more just sort of amazement. "Oh, you wouldn't believe what I saw in the news now that's happening back at home," and, of course, … let's see, when did the Kent State incidents occur? [Editor's Note: On May 4, 1970, members of the Ohio National Guard fired into a crowd of unarmed students protesting the United States invasion of Cambodia at Kent State University in Ohio, resulting in the death of four students. The shootings sparked national outrage, including strikes on college campus across the nation.] … I remember, I was on leave and … my wife and I were in a bar in Amsterdam. We were watching the television and, when the Kent State shootings took place … on the TV, there was this crowd of Dutch protestors, and what struck me about it was that the name Nixon was on there and the "X" in Nixon was a *swastika* [the symbol of the Nazi Party]. … I looked at that and thought, "Oh, my gosh, … what is going to happen? Now, Europe is becoming involved in this," and they couldn't, they just couldn't, understand how American troops of any kind could fire on college students and that they would be killing them. Well, my younger brother, Ron, was a student at Kent State at the time. So, when the news of this came, I had no idea what happened to my brother. He was there, but he was not one of the casualties. … So, instead of talking about those things, or taking sides, I don't recall people doing so much of that. It was an amazement of where things were headed and it was sort of the mentality of, "Who can guess what can happen next?"

SH: It was more a discussion of what was going on in the US in reaction to Vietnam than how the war was going in Vietnam.

JK: Yes. … At least that's what I recall. We were much more concerned about what is happening back in the US because of all of those deployments. … The reports that came directly

from Vietnam, I don't recall those. As a matter-of-fact, I think that there was a lot of subdued reporting about what was actually happening in Vietnam. [You have] got to remember, the Tet Offensive took place in 1968 and I was in Germany at the time. The command there in Germany did not want a lot of this information to be disseminated to the troops. So, we did know about it and we did hear about it. There was no blackout on the information, but the kind of information, the amount of information, the portrayal, the spin on it, was, I think, very subdued, simply because they worried about the reaction of three hundred thousand troops in Germany. [laughter] [Editor's Note: On January 31, 1968, Viet Cong and Northern Vietnamese forces struck and seized major cities around South Vietnam in a surprise attack coinciding with the Tet holiday celebrating the lunar New Year. Often seen as the turning point of the Vietnam War, coverage of the Tet Offensive, particularly television reporting, convinced many in the American public that the US and its allies were losing the war.]

SH: Did you have access to German television when you lived off post? In the States, our news at night …

JK: Yes.

SH: It was the first war, they say, covered on television. Was it the same thing in Germany?

JK: We did not have a television in our apartment, but we had a radio. … It was sort of like living at the end of World War II, actually. We would go and listen to radio broadcasts. My landlord did have a TV, and they did watch TV for, I think, a half an hour every day. This apartment that we lived in was typical of the way Germans, German families, lived. … For example, we had hot water, but you didn't take a bath every day. You took a bath once a week. … That's the way the German culture worked. You were wasting a lot of fuel by this excess of the way the Americans are used to living. So, we lived the way the Germans lived and our access to television was limited. What we did [was], you would go on post to watch a movie, for example, and that was a popular sort of thing to do. You didn't have to deal with the language problem, but, otherwise, we weren't getting news. The news I recall watching on German television, where we were invited to watch this with our landlord and landlady, who, by the way, had both served in the *Wehrmacht* [the German Army] in World War II.

SH: [laughter] Oh, no.

JK: But, it was the landing on the Moon. That was the event that was such a media event over there, and … everybody watching … felt a part of, "Wow, we made it to the Moon; that there are real men on the Moon." … That was a fascinating event that I do recall watching on television. [Editor's Note: The landing on the Moon by the crew of *Apollo XI* took place on July 19, 1969.]

SH: Okay. In the headquarters' company where you worked, was there any news of infiltration and spies? Was your office ever compromised?

JK: … Not that I know of, not that I know of. I am sure that the place was crawling with people seeking information, because we were the data center for all the numbers. So, I'm sure that there were German nationals that were under constant scrutiny, I'm sure there were American nationals

that were under constant scrutiny, and all of us. Our documents, for example, we would go and take them out of the safe. We'd get them--that someone was assigned every morning, about six o'clock, to go and get them--and then, they were protected all day long in various people's offices. They had to be covered, they had to be kept under lock and key, they had to be this and that, and then, they'd be returned in the evening. So, there was a lot of security about the documents that we worked with, particularly the numbers. … You know, this was the Cold War and … I think it was a very active part of the Cold War, and I happened to be working with units that were so instrumental in the Cold [War]. The infantry soldier was not really the Cold War soldier, from what I could see in Germany. It was the technology. It was the intelligence. … All of that sort of thing was what kept us on top of the vast numbers of Warsaw Pact troops. You know, we were outnumbered there, probably two-to-one, and what was to make up the difference was the technology and the expertise of the soldier to use it. So, that was critical and, as far as I know, my particular area was never compromised. We worried very much when we compromised ourselves by having accidents, which we did have, but I don't know of any incidents, and I'm not sure that I [would like to], you know. I'm glad I didn't. [laughter]

SH: What about the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency]?

JK: Yes. I never had any experience involving the CIA. I'm sure there was the CIA, [laughter] but I certainly never had any experience with it.

SH: You talked about this real sense of polarization when you came back to the States. What was your wife's reaction? She had been a military dependent and had been over in Germany.

JK: Yes, good question. … I think she was just so glad to be back, [laughter] [for] one thing, … and it didn't impact that much on her. I mean, who would know that she … had been a military dependent? but, if you showed up in uniform or you were at a public place in uniform, you know, everyone would know. … I did have at least one experience that was a positive side to that. … This was before I went to Germany. … One day, we went into New York City to go to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and I was in uniform and the guard there pulled me out of line, you know, waiting … for admission, and sent us in. Now, that kind of response was more what I was expecting--I think a lot of soldiers were expecting--when they returned home, and they never got that. As a matter-of-fact, what they got was a cold shoulder. There were people who didn't want to see you in uniform. They didn't want to be reminded of anything to do with [the] American military at all. …

SH: I think that many of these soldiers were also the sons of the World War II generation.

JK: I certainly was, and, of course, I was just a part of the same cohort of many people. … When I was there, one of the nice things about being in Germany was, I did go to visit many of the places my father had been.

SH: Really? You were aware of where he had been.

JK: Oh, yes, I went to Berchtesgaden. I stayed in the hotel down there, where his unit ended up in World War II. I went to Remagen, [Germany]. I went to a lot of places. Of course, there are

monuments and cemeteries all over that part of Europe, both from World War I and World War II. So, I did get to go to some of the same places where my father had been.

SH: Did your father come to visit you while you were there?

JK: We did have a chance to meet my parents in Austria one time, during the summer, yes, where we spent a couple of days. … I think it was in Innsbruck where we were at the time. Yes, that was [it].

SH: He got to go back and see.

JK: Yes, my father did go back to Europe several times. He returned to Bastogne [in Belgium] once. … One of his most favorable experiences was when he returned to Arnhem [in The Netherlands]. … They were visiting primarily out of [curiosity]. He wanted to show my mother, and my brother was along, I was not, where he was in Holland during World War II. [Editor's Note: The 101st Airborne Division operated south of Arnhem during Operation MARKET-GARDEN, between Eindhoven and Nijmegen.] … On a train, he happened to just be talking to someone who was a citizen there and, when he found out that … my parents were Americans visiting because he had been in Arnhem during World War II, he became [involved with them]. He was very surprised, and he worked as a part of the railway system, from what I understand, and took them under his wing, took care of them, so that there was a great deal of grateful response from the Dutch, in particular, that my father had a chance … to feel years later, which was, … I think, very nice for him.

SH: It sounds like it would have been. Was your brother ever drafted?

JK: No, no. My brother was five years younger, and so, he basically escaped the whole Vietnam thing, and then, … of course, there was a large stand-down of American troops that was going to take place there. So, my brother never served in the military.

SH: Did you stay in the Reserves?

JK: I did not. When I came home, I became more interested in my teaching career. … What occurred was that, ten years after I was discharged, I happened to be at the local ShopRite and, behind the ShopRite, there was an armory, and so, I just happened to [stop in]. I didn't have anything to do, I guess my wife was shopping, and I went into the armory and looked around and started chitchatting with the first sergeant [who] was in there.

SH: Where were you?

JK: … Here, in Branchville. Yes, I was in Newton. I went to Newton and I just happened to talk to this fellow in the armory and he said, "Well, you know, why don't you think about giving the National Guard a try?" and I said, "Well, I don't know. I'm pretty busy." … It ended up that they had what was called a "Try One" program. … You entered at your previous rank and you signed up for one year. You try one year [in the National Guard]. If you liked it, you stayed. If you didn't like it, you left. So, I ended up doing that ten years after I had been discharged.

SH: [laughter] 1980?

JK: Yes, it was in 1980, and I tried one [year] and stayed ten [years]. That's how I got into the National Guard and, for ten years, I was a member of the New Jersey National Guard here, locally.

SH: Have you stayed in touch with some of the people that you served with?

JK: Primarily people I served with in the National Guard. … I never was able to keep in contact with those people from Germany, but, here, of course, it's a lot easier, because so many of the former soldiers in the [National] Guard all live here yet. … So, I have quite a network of people from … that aspect of the military that I keep in contact with.

SH: Do you still teach at the County College of Morris?

JK: I'm retired now.

SH: Is that where you spent your career?

JK: Yes, I ended up [working there] from September of 1970. I was offered a job there, and I got involved in that. I thought that this was going to be a kind of transition kind of job for me--I ended up spending thirty-six years [there].

SH: It was so new, and you were right there as it built up.

JK: Well, yes, I did come in as a faculty member at the very beginning of this operation. The college had existed in 1968, but it hadn't had any students, didn't graduate any students, until I was there in 1970. So, I was … among the first faculty members at the college and, after a while, it became more and more difficult in higher education to make a move. If you did make a move, you ended up, typically, taking quite a large cut in salary and other things. So, the longer I stayed, the more I was committed to staying, and so, I ended up with a thirty-six-year career there. … During that time that I was teaching, during ten years of that time, I was also in the National Guard.

SH: Did you get involved in the administration at the County College of Morris?

JK: No, I got more involved with the administration. The faculty, at a new college, … had no representation with the administration. There was no faculty union, no faculty organization at all. So, early on, after I'd been there for four or five years, it became evident that there had to be some way that this faculty … could talk on equal terms with the administration, and that was going to have to be through collective bargaining. [Editor's Note: Collective bargaining is negotiations that occur between employers and employees, normally through unions, over disputes to solve them in a civil manner.] So, I was instrumental in creating collective bargaining at the County College of Morris and, for twenty-five years, I negotiated their faculty contracts.

SH: Were you ever called upon by the Sussex County Community College to work with their faculty in any of their negotiations or bargaining?

JK: … I had a meeting or two with the [Sussex County Community College faculty]. When Sussex County Community College was first created, and it was actually occupying trailers over at the vo-tech [vocational and technical school], by the time they had moved to where they are now, I did have a meeting or two with some of their faculty, who were interested in, "What do you have to do? What are the problems? What can we expect if we, in fact, attempt to have collective bargaining with the administration?" Of course, every administration that has a faculty that is not represented, they love that, [laughter] and they don't want to have to deal with this group of employees on a footing that is going to have give and take, serious give and take. [laughter] They want to just tell you what [to do]. So, there was a time when they were trying to organize, and I think, finally, they did, but … I only talked to them on an informal basis.

SH: Were there any other county colleges forming throughout the state that you would be called to assist?

JK: Collective bargaining did not enter into the State of New Jersey in higher education until 1968. That's when I was in Germany. By the time I got home, it was just [starting]. It was so new, no one knew what it was about. So, not only did I become a new faculty member, but I also got involved at a very early stage of something that was a whole new legal representation of employees in higher education. Now, of course, it's been around for quite a long time. People are not afraid of it. They're used to it. They understand the process, how it works.

SH: At that time, there were many new county colleges popping up.

JK: Before 1968, I don't think any of the nineteen community colleges existed, and it was just about that time that every county college was created, and some of them have joined together. For example, Raritan, I believe, represents, actually, two counties, and they vary in size and [are] quite different in character, depending on what communities they come from. I mean, obviously, an urban community's going to have a very different kind of community college from, say, Morris County, where I was, and the model there was, of course, the Ivy League [and] liberal arts. That's the kind of college they wanted to be.

SH: What about the connection to Rutgers? Were you involved in that?

JK: I'm not sure what you mean by that.

SH: What I mean is how these community colleges are able to place their students, after two years, in Rutgers.

JK: Oh, that's what we call articulation agreements. How do your graduates from a county college then go and fulfill a two-year degree? At the County College of Morris, ninety-five percent of all the students there wanted to complete a four-year degree. They saw this simply as a way of getting the first two years out of the way, and then, they're going to go to a real college.

So, that problem of how to make a seamless transition from a community college student into one of the state colleges, whether it's Montclair or whatever, and Rutgers, had always been a problem, and probably always will be. These articulation agreements, they sign them, they date them, and then, they turn around and find them out of date, and so, they're constantly wanting to update the kind of agreements that allow students to transition into the four-year college. … Frankly, I just don't see that coming to an end. I just hope that over a period of time, they find a way to make the transitions easier. I mean, everybody wants to have, you know, a quality educational program, and there's a lot of distrust among institutions, unfortunately.

SH: It has to do with money. [laughter]

JK: Well, it's always about money.

SH: Have you stayed involved with Rutgers as an alumnus?

JK: … To the extent that I contributed to the alumni foundation [the Rutgers University Foundation], typically. … Once in a while, I go to an event down at Rutgers. I used to go to more when I was working, because there would be higher education meetings, conferences, something or other, that took place on the Rutgers Campus and I would go down for them. I don't have a lot of connection with Rutgers, but I do keep some connection.

SH: Is there anything I forgot to ask you that we should put on the record?

JK: … I guess not.

[TAPE PAUSED]

JK: Well, yes, maybe you should.

SH: Okay.

JK: When I joined the National Guard, ten years after I had been discharged from the Army, I joined an armored battalion, which was a very different kind of work than I'd ever had before in the military. … An armored battalion is a combat unit. …

[TAPE PAUSED]

JK: I had to have a new kind of job to do, and certainly a different one from being a personnel management [specialist]. There is no role for that in an armored battalion. So, I took quite a bit of training to become what is known as the battalion staff NBC NCO [non-commissioned officer], which stands for nuclear, biological and chemical warfare, and there is one such position in an armored battalion. … During the Cold War period, that position became more and more significant, because the Warsaw Pact armored units were all chemical capable and all nuclear capable, and so, every armored unit had to have defensive training to be able to withstand nuclear, chemical and biological attack. … So, my job, in the headquarters of the battalion, was to be advisor to the commander about all issues that related to nuclear, chemical

and biological warfare. Now, that's what I did on the weekends in the National Guard for ten years, which was very, very different from what I did Monday through Friday, teaching students about novels, poetry and drama. [laughter] You can imagine that there's quite a difference, … two different kinds of worlds that I lived in during that ten-year period. … I was fascinated by the challenges of what is involved in trying to survive either a nuclear attack or a chemical attack, particularly when you have these large fifty-two-ton vehicles, you know, that do help protect you from gamma rays, but are also very vulnerable to chemical and, of course, the biological agents, which are usually on the scene. So, I did spend ten years doing that, and it became more and more important at the close of … what they call the Cold War period, simply because there was more and more concern that, in the frustration of the Soviet Union to maintain parity, that they would … use these kinds of weapons. … So, it became more and more important to train for protection against them.

SH: Were you involved in the training, or writing any of the manuals, anything similar to that?

JK: Most of the procedures and doctrine, of course, is produced by the Chemical Corps itself, of the US Army. [Editor's Note: The Chemical Corps oversees the US Army's defense preparations against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons.] So, my job was to implement that at the battalion level and my job, much of my job, particularly in home station, was in the training of that, and then, while we would deploy up to, say, Fort Drum, [New York], to practice that in the field. If we had ever been sent into a combat situation, then, my job would have shifted from the training end of it to the actual maneuvers, calculations, communications all involved in that. There's codes and all kinds of things that are involved in how to manage such a situation.

SH: How diverse was the Guard unit that you were involved with here in Newton?

JK: Well, certainly, it was racially diverse. … It was gender diverse. We had women in our units, serving in a variety of capacities, not in combat kind of positions, though, medics, and so forth, yes. They're from [the] local citizenry of Sussex County. Many of them, I would say eighty percent of them, had been Vietnam vets. They knew something about the [military]. Many of them had been from other services. I've served with people who served … during Vietnam in the Navy and in the Marine Corps, and some had been in the Air Force and some of us had been in the Army. So, we all knew something about the military. They … had experience and many of them--certainly not all of them, but many of them--were going to complete a twenty-year military obligation, and then, get the benefits of the retirement from that.

SH: Why did you only complete ten years?

JK: When I first joined the National Guard, … the New Jersey National Guard was the 50th Armored Division, and it's one of the few states [with an armored unit]. … New Jersey, a very small state, and Texas, a very large state, had the only two National Guard armored divisions in the country, I believe. In order to maintain an armored division of about fifteen thousand soldiers, it takes a very large population base, that New Jersey always struggled to try to maintain. So, in about 1990, … Washington, I guess, had determined that maintaining [the] 50th Armored Division in New Jersey was untenable and, therefore, they were going to change the

whole structure of the National Guard, in New Jersey and elsewhere. So, when that came about, my battalion ceased to exist, and, if I stayed, I would have to be reassigned to someplace that might be in Trenton or Long Branch, or who knows where? I just wasn't willing to make that kind of transition. … When you worked together with people over a ten-year period, then, all to be sent in different places, in a sense, I had lost my base. My home--a place where I knew everyone in the unit and they all knew me--changed, and so, with the breakup … of that division, and the battalion that I was in, [I left], but, today, I maintain contact with those people in the [National Guard]. …

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: You have maintained your contacts.

JK: With this group of soldiers. Over the years, I've maintained contact with many of them, both my former commanders and other people that I worked with, and, because the battalion I was in is a part of the 102nd Armor [Armored Regiment], it was a sister unit of the Essex Troop, which is one of the most legendary units of World War II, but also of New Jersey. … So, as a member of the 102nd Armor, I maintain connection with them. I'm a member of the Essex Troop and the Iron Horsemen Association in New Jersey. So, I do keep in contact with them, and my former battalion commander, Bill Marshall, became a general in the National Guard. … He's also the president of the Essex Troop. So, I have a number of interesting contacts, friends, … throughout my National Guard experience.

SH: Have you ever been down to the New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Memorial [in Holmdel Township, New Jersey]?

JK: Yes. For many years, … on the Parkway, I would just simply drive by and I would see the sign and it was not something I really wanted to go in and see, but, about two years ago, in November, I was actually going down to Sea Girt, where the New Jersey Militia Museum has a facility. I was going to attend a meeting down there and I decided that I would stop in and see it. … I was quite impressed to see not only the Memorial itself and the size of it, but the educational facility that is a part of it, which I didn't know existed. I thought that this was simply going to be a memorial and it turned out to be much more informative, and I was glad to see that.

SH: How have you stayed involved with the Sea Girt Militia Museum?

JK: … The Militia Museum of New Jersey has facilities in Lawrenceville, Sea Girt and in Trenton. They have displays and facilities in all those locations. [They] decided that they needed a greater kind of support basis. … The idea was developed to try to get all of the various veterans' associations in the State of New Jersey that are related to New Jersey military, and particularly the Militia National Guard, whether it's the Air Guard or whatever, that they would form an umbrella group called the Alliance, [which] sounds like something out of *Star Wars*. [laughter] … So, I became involved in the development of that Alliance. That has existed now for a couple of years and it includes veterans from all over the state, from all different kinds of units over a long period of time. Some of them go all the way back to World War II, some of them, you know, more recent, and, of course, now, with the deployment of the New Jersey

National Guard to Iraq, three thousand of, you know, … what we consider our fellow members to be are, you know, in Iraq. That's sort of how that came about, and so, … typically, every week, I do something or other that involves this group, whether it's the Alliance or whether it's the 102nd Armored Association. …

SH: Is there anything else?

JK: No, I think that's [it].

SH: Thank you again for having us here.

JK: Thank you.

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

Reviewed by Matthew Knoblauch 2/22/11
Reviewed by Noah Glyn 2/22/11
Reviewed by Alexandra McKinnon 2/22/11
Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 3/11/11
Reviewed by John M. Keeler 4/1/11