

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID KINGSTON

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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NOVEMBER 14, 1997

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Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with David Kingston on November 14, 1997, in Oceanport, New Jersey, with Kurt Piehler and ...

Christopher Hillary: Chris Hillary.

KP: I would like to begin by asking you about your childhood. You were born in Newark.

David Kingston: Yeah.

KP: How long did your family live in Newark?

DK: When I was two years old, they moved down to Long Branch.

KP: Do you know why they moved to Long Branch?

DK: Well, my father's father died and they had to sell the house. There were several family members. It was better to split up the cash, I guess, rather than try to sell other things.

KP: Your father had a variety of occupations.

DK: Yeah.

KP: Could you outline his occupational history?

DK: Well, the first job I am aware that he had was with Dennison Manufacturing Company in Boston, and, from there, he ... worked for Henderson Manufacturing Company, who made greeting cards. ... Most vividly, I remember him working for Norcross, which was furnishing gift shops with greeting cards, and then, he finally went to work for Francis L. DuPont, who were members of the New York Stock Exchange, and he was a broker. Oh, before he went with ... DuPont, he was with a firm called Eisle and King in Newark, and I might interject that my father had an inheritance back in 1932, which was very opportune, but, he thought he had it made and [that] he didn't have to work after that. He soon found out, [laughter] and that's when he went with Eisle and King. He figured [that] they took all his money and he'd finally see if he ... [could] get some of it back. So, he worked for DuPont right up until the war, and then, he went to work at Fort Monmouth. I don't know what he was doing, ... checking freight cars or something like that. Then, after the war, why, he went back to DuPont, and he ... worked until he was in his eighties, and then, he finally, very reluctantly, retired, and he ... lived about five years after that. He passed on in April 1970.

KP: You wrote on your survey that your father had some college experience. Where did he go to college?

DK: ... You might not call it college, and I wouldn't call it college, but, it was called Wood's Business School in Newark. The main thing he got out of that was beautiful penmanship, [laughter] as far as I know.

KP: Why did your parents move to the Long Branch area?

DK: I really don't know. One thing was, all [of] his brothers and sisters stayed in North Jersey and I think it gave him a chance to get away from them. [laughter] It wasn't as easy to ride to Newark from Long Branch as it was from Nutley, or Bloomfield, or Montclair, or something like that. I'm not sure [that] that's the reason, but, that's my reason.

KP: Your hypothesis?

DK: My hypothesis.

KP: How many brothers and sisters did your father have?

DK: Yeah, my father had seven brothers and sisters, one of whom died in infancy. So, he had one brother, who was very much older than he was, and all the rest were girls, until you came to him, and, as a result, being the only boy, really, in the family, his father spoiled him rotten, and then, he had a sister after that. ... The only thing I remember about ... [his] sister was, the teachers would ask her, "You're Cliff Kingston's brother?" and she'd say, "Yes, he's my ... brother," and they weren't ... being kind about it.

KP: How did your parents meet?

DK: Oh, let's see, I don't even think I ever thought of that. I don't know.

KP: Your mother was a housewife. Did she ever work outside of the home?

DK: Well, when she was a young girl, why, she worked in her father's cleaning plant. Being the oldest child, why, she had to go to work, and so, she had that job. Whether she had any other jobs, I don't know, but, not in my recollection did she ever work. She stayed home [and] took care of the kids.

KP: Was your mother active in any organizations?

DK: She was active in the Woman's Club. I don't know about growing up. ... When I was growing up, she was active in the Woman's Club and in church, things like that.

KP: Your mother was a Christian Scientist.

DK: Right.

KP: Your father was a Baptist. However, you followed your mother's faith.

DK: Yeah, and my brother did and my sister did. I wouldn't say [that] my ... father was a very good Baptist. [laughter]

KP: You noted on your pre-interview survey that he was a Baptist who ...

DK: Yeah, faded away.

CH: What was Long Branch like at that time?

DK: Well, what do you mean, "What was it like?" It was like any other place, except ... it was always a resort. We always went to the beach and things like that. ... My classmates were average, run of the mill, black, Italian, a lot of Italians, Jews.

CH: The town was very diverse.

DK: Oh, yeah, yeah. We had a mixture of [people in] the class and the city was much different, as you say, than it is today. We lived on a street called Washington Street, which was a nice street, nice neighbors, and the superintendent of schools lived next door to us. It didn't help. [laughter]

KP: What did you do for fun as a child?

DK: Well, roller skate, play football, play baseball, hockey in the street, with roller skates. ... Well, my brother was very mechanically minded, and I'd come home from school, and he'd be out in the garage, starting a lawn mower ... motor, and he couldn't understand why I enjoyed playing baseball, and football, and so, forth more than working on somebody's motor. ... He was quite ingenious. He was [inclined to] build things, you know, of his own design and all that sort of stuff. He planned to be an engineer. ... He went to Newark College of Engineering for one year, but, then, the money ran out. He took a job, and then, when he came back ... from the war, went to Rutgers, he took a business course, because ... all [of] the math and everything like that had long since gone.

CH: What did you think about the quality of your education?

DK: The teachers were very good. The superintendent of schools was from Maine, and he brought a lot of dedicated teachers down from Maine's Normal Schools, and so, forth, and I think ... Long Branch had a good school system, then. I don't know about now, but, I think it's pretty good still.

CH: Did you enjoy going to school?

DK: Yeah. I especially liked the baseball and the football, not the studies so much. [laughter]

KP: Did you ever go to any minor or major league games?

DK: Yeah. ... I saw Babe Ruth and George (Sulkur?) and several [others]. Yeah, I went to several games.

KP: Did you follow the Newark Bears?

DK: Yeah, a little bit. [I] went to a few of those games, too, the Jersey City Giants, too.

KP: Did you work when you were in high school?

DK: ... In high school, yes. I worked weekends at the A&P in Long Branch and I cut grass and did all those things that young people do to try to make a buck, anything. [laughter] If somebody would pay me, I'd do almost anything. [laughter]

KP: How often did you go to the movies?

DK: Oh, I'd say maybe once every two weeks or something like that.

KP: Do any movies stick out in your mind?

DK: *Tarzan*, [laughter] and I saw one movie about the Navy, I can't remember what it was, and my father thought that would be a good movie for us to go to, ... and it was terrible. [laughter] In fact, he said he was sorry he took us, but, I don't remember most of the movies. When we got a little older and dated and went to Asbury Park, to the movie theaters, why, that was another matter. I still don't remember the names of the movies, [laughter] but, it was a good date. ... [The] Mayfair Theater in Asbury Park, you know, was a beautiful theater. It seated about 3,500 people ... and they tore the darn thing down.

CH: Asbury Park was quite a social center.

DK: Oh, it was, yeah, the boardwalk, and the airplanes, and the cars that go, "Whirly, whirly, gig." Yeah, we used to go to Asbury Park ... on most dates.

KP: You mentioned that you played baseball and football. Were you active in any other clubs or organizations?

DK: ... I'd like to say [that] I was active in the French club. Since I failed French, ... I don't think I was very active. [laughter]

KP: How did the Great Depression affect your family? You mentioned that your father had received an inheritance.

DK: Yeah. My father was quite successful. We lived in a nice house in Long Branch ... and we spent a summer down in Surf City and things like that, but, ... it was 1929, you know. I was six years old, and, [in] 1932, ... we had a tough time in the Depression. If it wasn't for my mother, we never would have made it.

KP: Why do you say that?

DK: Well, she took over the finances, ran the show, sent us down to pay the electric bill, you know, with money she'd set aside in an ... envelope or something like that. So, how we survived, I ... don't know, but, we did, and then, right in the middle of all [of] this, my father had ... a mortgage on the house, and it was not one of these mortgages where you pay down the principle as well as the interest. You just paid the interest on it, so, the mortgage was as big ... at the end as it was in the beginning. ... So, we lost the house. ... Somebody demanded payment of the principle and he couldn't pay it, because he didn't have any money. So, we had to move, and we moved from this nice, kind of luxurious, house to a small, small house, and they paid 3,500 dollars for the house, ... but, it didn't seem to make any difference in our happiness.

CH: You stayed in Long Branch.

DK: Stayed in Long Branch, 290 North Fifth Avenue.

KP: When did you move?

DK: 1935.

CH: How long did you live there?

DK: We stayed there until I got married. [I] went to Rutgers, and got out, and lived there, paid a few bucks for rent, and then, when I got married, I moved. ... I've only lived in one, two, ... well, including Newark, I've only lived in three houses my whole life. [I] bought this house in 1950, three ... months before I got married, [and I have] lived here ever since. I won't tell you what I paid for it, but, ... it wasn't much. [laughter]

KP: Have you added on to this house?

DK: Yeah, we added this porch. We added the ... two garages over there. There's a third garage in here and we added that wing in 1973. So, we've added to the house. ...

KP: Did you buy this house on the GI Bill?

DK: No, I didn't. Irving Mitchell Fell owned this house, ... [from] the Fell Forum in New York, and his wife was afraid [that] his kids would fall off the dock, so, [laughter] she ... insisted on moving. ... He had a mortgage on it already, so, I just assumed the mortgage. I didn't use the GI Bill, [because] it was a nice mortgage. It was four-and-a-quarter percent. Prudential said, "We can't give it to you at four-and-a-quarter. We'll give it to you at four-and-a-half." So, it was a fifteen-year mortgage and I long since have paid it off. So, I own it, free and clear. I own the place. I don't owe anybody anything. I even pay my bills the day they arrive. [laughter] I'm a good credit risk.

KP: In the 1930s, what did your family think of Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal?

DK: You've touched a tender part. My father thought it was abominable and that he was abominable, and our trip to the Yalta Conference, with me guarding him, was almost a sacrilege.

KP: To your father?

DK: Well, yeah, yeah. No, he didn't say anything about that. I had personal feelings about it, too.

KP: What did you think of Franklin Roosevelt at the time?

DK: I thought he was a Socialist. I mean, I grew up in a Republican household. My school classes in civics and things like that were very much anti-New Deal and I was quite vocal about it.

CH: You did not think that the New Deal was helping the situation.

DK: Well, ... I guess I didn't know enough about it and it was really my family's opinions that I adopted. Since then, ... I've found [that] he was probably a pretty good president, even though I didn't like him.

KP: Growing up, did your parents assume that you would go to college? Was that their hope?

DK: It was the hope. They encouraged me to take college courses in high school, which I did. You might say, when I graduated, [that] I was over qualified, but, you know, the reality, ... you come face-to-face with it. I did ... go to Monmouth Junior College. I realized [that] some kind of an education was a healthy thing for me. So, it was an expectation, but, it wasn't a reality, not in the beginning.

KP: Did you choose Monmouth Junior College because it was the only one that you could afford?

DK: That, and, also, I had a job at Fort Monmouth at the same time, and it was the closest educational institution around, and I could stay home, and I could go at night, and I could make some money.

CH: What did you do at Fort Monmouth?

DK: I started out as a messenger, on roller skates. [laughter]

CH: That sounds like a very unusual job.

DK: Well, there was a ... messenger center, where all the mail went, and then, there were fellows around who would take ... the mail around to various offices, and it was kind of unique and fun that they provided us with roller skates. So, then, ... there was a major there who was developing

radar ... with an Englishman, too, so, he needed a personal messenger and a draftsman. So, I had no training as a draftsman, but, I became his draftsman and his personal messenger.

KP: Radar was top secret at the time.

DK: Radar, yeah.

KP: How much did you know about radar?

DK: ... All I knew is, they'd take a truck and park it up on the hill and they'd take another truck and park it up on this hill, so they have a line of sight between them. Yeah, I knew what it was. I knew that they could send out beams and bounce them off something and that it would show up. Yeah, I got the idea.

KP: Did the Army conduct a security background check on you?

DK: Not that I know of. [I am] glad they didn't. [laughter]

KP: You were working on a secret project.

DK: Yeah. I was in Maj. O'Connell's office when the Japanese dropped the bomb on Pearl Harbor, and, the next day, or the day they declared war, in came the antiaircraft guns, things like that. I mean, it was as scary as it could be.

CH: How did the major react to the news about Pearl Harbor?

DK: Well, the bomb was dropped on Sunday and I don't think I was there that day, although I worked Sundays. We worked a lot of overtime and never got paid for it.

KP: How did you get this job at Fort Monmouth?

DK: Well, I was working in the A&P at eighteen dollars and seventy-five cents a week and ... it was generally known that Fort Monmouth was hiring people and that they were looking for some messengers, young people. So, I applied.

CH: You worked a full day, then, went to school at night.

DK: Yeah, worked seven days a week, and I forget what the hours were. I remember [that] we went to work in the dark, in the wintertime.

CH: You probably went home in the dark as well.

DK: Yeah.

KP: You were also attending school.

DK: Yeah.

KP: How many classes were you taking?

DK: I don't know, but, I think four. I forget.

KP: What kind of courses were you taking at the junior college?

DK: I took a business course. I took history. I took geography. I took math, algebra I think it was. Maybe there were more, but, I think that was it.

CH: How did you commute from work to college?

DK: Car. I had a 1930 Model-A Ford with a rumble seat, red with yellow wheels. [laughter]

KP: Where was Monmouth Junior College?

DK: It was in the Long Branch High School and we just moved in when the students moved out. I might incidentally remark that Helen is my second wife, my first wife died, and I met her at Monmouth Junior College. Her cousin was a fellow [that] I'd grown up with and, one night, he brought her over and introduced me. The ... thing that I remembered most about her was her name. Her name was Helen Bitter, B-I-T-T-E-R. [laughter] I thought that was a great name and I never forgot it.

CH: How old were you when she passed away?

DK: She passed away ten years ago, so, I was sixty-three.

KP: When did you have your first date?

DK: Helen? After my first wife died, about three or four months afterward. We were going to the Rutgers-Army football game, and we had six tickets and five people, and so, I called one of these people up who was a good friend of mine and a good friend of Helen's. ... I said to her, ... "I don't know what to do about the game, whether to invite a man, or invite a girl, or invite nobody," and I said, "Do you suppose Helen Bitter Thompson," who was a widow for eight years, "would like to go?" So, ... this other girl, says, "Why don't you call her up?" I said, "I don't even know where she lives." She says, "Well, she lives right by you, over by Little Silver Station." So, she said, "Would you like me to call her up?" I said, "Yeah, that would be much better." So, she called her up and got her son, who is a lawyer and a magistrate in Middletown, Richard Thompson, if you've ever heard of him, and he was home. He answered the phone. ... [He] said, "Well, she's in Colorado, but, she'll go." [laughter] So, he called her up and told her to come home. She got on a plane, and she came home, and ... I picked her up on a Friday afternoon, and we had a wonderful time.

CH: Did Rutgers win?

DK: I think so, but, I'm not sure. I was too excited.

KP: You met your first wife at Monmouth.

DK: No, that was my second wife, Helen. Helen and I met at Monmouth. My first wife I met in a strange way, too. I was putting the ship in mothballs in Philadelphia and a friend of mine was there and had a friend stopping in to say hello to him, ... on his way back to California to get out of the Navy. So, he said to me, "Do you know Carolyn Tietje?" and I said, "No, I don't know her." He said, "Well, she and her mother were very good to me in Asbury Park." I guess he was at Lakehurst Naval Air Station. So, he said, "Would [you] say good-bye ... to her for me?" So, the next time I came home, I called her up and she wasn't home. Her mother said, "Come down and see us. We're right here." So, I called up, the next time I was home, and we made a date. Her mother was a jovial person, and I ... knocked on the door, and I walked in. She ... called Caroline, "Woogie Woo." I don't know why, but, she did. She calls upstairs, "Woogie Woo." This other fellow had been an enlisted man. "Woogie Woo, he's an officer," like it's the greatest thing in the world. [laughter] So, we had a date ... at the Rainbow Room in Asbury Park and we eventually got married, took about two or three years. She was really a terrific girl. She got a doctorate in education, was very well-versed, academically, and a dear, dear girl. Want me to tell you how she died?

KP: If you would like.

DK: Well, I had a forty-foot Bristol Yawl out here. We went out into the bay, stayed overnight in Staten Island, and, the next morning, we were coming back, and she said, "I don't feel good," and, in fifteen minutes, she was gone, right there on the boat. What was I going to do? you know. I couldn't believe it.

KP: We are sorry.

DK: Yeah, well, it was a sad day, I'll tell you. I never thought I'd find anybody like ... [her] again, but, Helen's a dear, sweet girl. I'm very happy with her.

KP: You were at Fort Monmouth when America entered the war.

DK: Yeah, yeah.

KP: What was your immediate reaction? Did you think that you would be drafted or that you would enlist?

DK: Oh, sure. Everybody was who was physically fit. It was just an inevitable thing. [You tried to] pick the best spot you could find.

KP: Would your job at Fort Monmouth have allowed you to get an exemption?

DK: No. It wasn't a vital job.

KP: Did your boss encourage you to join the Signal Corps?

DK: No. All he wanted me to do was go to Washington with him and I said, "I don't think I want to go," ... 'cause, actually, it came along that I got a chance to go to Rutgers. So, I thought that was more important than a job. ...

CH: What year was that?

DK: In 1942.

KP: When did you enter Rutgers?

DK: Well, I went to Monmouth Junior College [for my] freshman year, '41 [to] '42, and I went to Rutgers [from] '42 to '43. Then, I went to Colgate from '43 into early '44. Then, I went to Midshipmen's School, Plattsburg, and I got out in June of '44. Then, I went in the Navy. I mean, I was in the Navy. I went to sea on a ship.

KP: Had you thought of enlisting immediately?

DK: No, I didn't, ... I just didn't. I didn't want to get into the military any sooner than I had to. I mean, you might get killed, you know. [laughter]

KP: You worked at Fort Monmouth through the end of June of 1942.

DK: Yeah, June ... of '42.

KP: You mentioned earlier that, immediately after Pearl Harbor, there were antiaircraft units in position around the fort. How did the war continue to change Fort Monmouth?

DK: Well, it was a ... vital area. I mean, it was Signal Corps. It was all into these things like radar and so forth. ... Physically, it didn't change at all. Mr. (Noyes?) still came in his Model-A Ford, etc., etc., Mr. (Noyes?) was a civilian engineer and a technical person, and there were soldiers. People who were employed there left daily to go in the Army and they marched around the base.

KP: Why did you decided to go to Rutgers?

DK: Where else? [laughter] ... [When] I initially started [looking at colleges], I thought it would be nice to go to Princeton. My father was a friend of the director of athletics, so, he was arranging a baseball scholarship for me. Whether I'd have gotten it or not, I don't know, but, it was in the works. ... I would have to start over again as a freshman, and I'd have to become an engineer, and neither of those things appealed to me, particularly. I wasn't very good at math.

So, the Rutgers thing kind of evolved because the superintendent of schools, this is a different one than the one that lived next door to me, ... his daughter was in my high school class and we knew each other fairly well. So, anyway, I was working down in Steinbach's in ... Long Branch when the Signal Corps took over that building, and I was working the night shift, and I got a phone call one day, and it was from the superintendent of schools, and he said, "There's a scholarship, a county scholarship, open at Rutgers." [It had] been vacated, I guess. Somebody went in the Army or something like that. "Would you be interested?" and I said, "Sure, I would be." So, I applied and went out and talked to the county superintendent of schools and I ended up getting it. This was in the summer, August, I guess, of '42. So, I enrolled at Rutgers in the fall, got a job in the fraternity, which my uncle got us, Jack and I, ... and a job I had in the Dean's Office, and the job I had in the YMCA, and we were waiting tables in the fraternity house, and I was able to swing it, all on a scholarship.

CH: At Delta Kappa Epsilon?

DK: Yeah.

KP: Since you mentioned your brother, is this the same brother who served in the Navy?

DK: Yeah, the only brother I got.

KP: Did your uncle also serve in the Navy?

DK: ... No, my uncle was my mother's sister's husband. He was always very academically minded, and he ... didn't get me in Rutgers, but, he encouraged me to go.

KP: Which dean did you work for?

DK: Marvin. He was a nice man. I just addressed envelopes, and licked 'em, and licked stamps, and did a little typing, and things like that.

KP: You came to Rutgers after it had already been dramatically affected by the war. What was the campus like when you arrived in 1942?

DK: Well, we tried to be as normal as we could, and we knew there was a war going on, but, no big deal, you know. You're just part of the ... group, and fellahs were leaving all the time to go in the Army, or the Navy, or the Air Force, or something like that, and we still had our ... weekends, party weekends, girls in the house, and we'd go over to Ford Hall and spend the night, but, ... no men were allowed upstairs. ... We had a very strict house mother and she was really good for us. She kept the moral standards, somewhat, Mary Sliter. [laughter]

CH: That has changed.

DK: Yeah, I'm afraid so, but, we had chapel every morning, which I think [is] a great thing, and I'm sorry they don't have it now. In fact, at the fiftieth reunion, I tried to interest some people in getting it, when ... Kirkpatrick Chapel got [re]-done, ... to restart this chapel environment.

CH: Did you feel that most students supported the war effort?

DK: Yeah, I think they were in support of it. Nobody went to Canada.

KP: Dean Metzger is often closely associated with chapel.

DK: Yeah.

KP: Do you have any memories of Dean Metzger?

DK: Yes, I do. He was the old gentleman, wasn't he?

KP: Yes.

DK: Yes, I remember him, "Whistling Willie." No, no, that's ...

KP: That was Demarest.

DK: Ned Demarest, that's right. ... I don't especially have any memories of him.

CH: What did you do at the YMCA?

DK: I ran a switchboard, and signed people in, and so forth.

KP: Did you play baseball?

DK: Yes.

KP: At Rutgers?

DK: Yes.

KP: Did you play football in your first year?

DK: I didn't. I hurt my knee playing football in high school. I was scared to death that I'd ruin it forever, you know, and not be able to play baseball. So, I played baseball at varsity level, played the Princeton game, and the Lafayette game, and we won the Middle East Championship. So, I was only there [for] one year, actually. I played baseball at Colgate as well. ... At Colgate, did you ever hear of Gene Hermanski? He was a right fielder for the Brooklyn Dodgers.

KP: The name sounds very familiar.

DK: He played on our team and ... Al Rosen became the American League's most valuable player. He played on our Midshipmen's School team. He was a shortstop.

CH: While at Rutgers, did you play against any service teams?

DK: Yeah, we played Sampson Naval Base and I think that's all.

KP: Do any professors from your first year at Rutgers stick out in your memory?

DK: Not the first year, yeah, my first year. One does stick out in my memory and for one reason that you'll never believe. In this V-12 training program that we were in, ... I enlisted in that on October 30, 1942, and we had a certain schedule of classes that we had to take, and physics was one of them. Physics, my God, I never; anyway, I struggled through that and I got a D in the class. I went to the professor and I said, I don't remember his name, ... "Professor, ... if there hadn't been a war on, I would never have taken physics, ... but, I'm glad I passed it." He said, "Son, if there hadn't been a war on, you never would have passed it." [laughter] So, I said, "Thank you," and I picked up my hat and went out. That's the only [professor] I remember, Professor Peterson, too. ... I guess he was an intellectual, but, he was kind of a strange guy.

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DK: ... You had to read it on three or four different levels, and I said to the fellow, a fellow by the name Huber [who] was sitting next to me, ... "You know, I think he's reading a lot of things into this," and ... the fellow Huber said, "That might be true." So, about three minutes later, he raises his hand and he says, "Professor, I think we have to be careful [that] we don't read things into this book," and Professor Peterson says, "That's a brilliant observation." [laughter] Never did get to him that I said it, but, Huber, I can't remember his first name, anyway, he became a judge, so, he was probably figuring things out beforehand.

KP: You enlisted in the Navy V-12 program. What led you to the V-12 program? You worked at Fort Monmouth for several months, so, one might have thought that you would have gravitated towards the Army.

DK: ... Well, I had a partiality for the Navy. I was a water person, my brother was in the Navy, and it sounded like a good program, because you could get in a ... full semester of college and you wouldn't go in until the 1st of July, 1943, and you can become an officer. So, it appealed to me. It was a good program.

KP: By enlisting in October, you could finish the fall and spring semesters.

DK: ... Yeah, ... and I wasn't called until July 1st, and then, I got two more semesters of college.

KP: The Navy then sent you to Colgate.

DK: Colgate, yeah.

KP: After you reported on July 1st, did you go through the classic induction?

DK: I don't think so. I think they treated us special, 'cause you were dealing with Naval Reserve people and you were dealing with college people, all [of] your professors were college people, and I think it was a little ... different.

KP: Where did you report?

DK: Hamilton, New York. Actually, I reported to Weehawken and we got on a train and went to Hamilton, New York. ... They lined us up, and we didn't have any uniforms or anything, we were in civilian clothes, and we wore them for about four or five days. [laughter]

KP: Did they tell you to bring a change of clothing?

DK: "Don't bring any change of clothes."

KP: Okay.

DK: "Just report with [the] clothes you have on," but, you know, things were not spit and polish at that point.

CH: Were you surprised when you were called up or were you expecting it?

DK: Oh, no, ... we were expecting it. They told us a month before.

KP: What did you do after you got your uniform?

DK: They lined us up in the street and said, "We're going for a run." [laughter] They ran us down to the athletic field and around the track and the fellows are dropping out like flies, you know. They weren't in condition, and they pushed us, but, we ended up in pretty good shape.

KP: How much of the Colgate campus did the Navy occupy? Did the V-12 cadets comprise the bulk of the student body?

DK: Oh, yeah. There were ... V-7 people there, too, which were Navy Air Corps [cadets], us, and there were, oh, about fifty civilians, I guess.

KP: You outnumbered them?

DK: Yeah, we outnumbered them.

KP: Were there civilian students in your classes?

DK: Yeah, as I recall.

KP: You were enrolled in regular classes.

DK: Oh, yeah. We were in college classes.

KP: At this point in your life, you had attended three different colleges. How did the professors at Colgate differ in their teaching style from those at Rutgers and Monmouth?

DK: No, they weren't any different from the Rutgers professors. Monmouth professors, some of them had jobs and they taught at night, but, ... I can't compare the academics. I'm sure that they were better at Rutgers than they were at ... Monmouth and about the same at Colgate.

KP: The winters can be pretty hard up there.

DK: Oh, you know it; thirty below zero on the platform at Ithaca, New York, one noontime going home for Christmas. It was ... cold. You'd breathe on the pea coat and it would turn to ice, you know.

CH: Why did you switch from Rutgers to Colgate?

DK: The Navy sent me there, and then, ... I'll tell you, [on] the 1st of February, I went to Midshipmen's School. Guess where? Plattsburg, New York. I thought I was going to get a little break in the weather, but, ... it was four below zero the morning we got to Plattsburg. ... They rode us in an open truck from the rail station to, ... this was an old Army barracks, you know, up there, and the snow ... out in front of the barracks was about four feet deep. Anyway, ... I don't know why people live up there.

CH: Did you ever get frostbite?

DK: Not that I know of. I can tell you one thing, ... we had to ... pass a swimming test before we graduated in June, and they didn't have an indoor pool, so, we went out in Lake Champlain. The ice left about the end of May, and the first week in June, we had to go swimming, pass that swimming test. [When] I jumped in the water, I ... never felt anything like it in my life. Blood just went surging to my head and I don't think anybody failed the test. They would have drowned if they hadn't swam.

KP: You took one semester at Colgate, then, went to Midshipmen's School.

DK: I went two semesters [at Colgate]. Well, ... maybe it was one. It was the 1st of July.

KP: You went for a summer session.

DK: Yeah, and then, a fall session, and then, the 1st ... of February, I went to Plattsburg.

KP: How military was the V-12 program?

DK: Pretty military.

KP: Did you have inspections and roll call?

DK: Well, we fell out and took a run, and then, all we did was run, and the drill instructors were Marines, so, they didn't kid around. You know the real, typical, barking Marine.

KP: Where did you live?

DK: I lived in a fraternity house, Sigma Mu house.

KP: Was everyone in that house in the Navy?

DK: Yeah.

KP: Did you have inspections?

DK: Oh, yeah, yeah. ... I'll never forget, one day, ... they surprise you with these inspections, you know, they don't tell you when they're coming, and, after the morning run, and so forth, you liked to shower, shave, and so forth. So, I was standing there in the bathroom, shaving one day, and in walks the commandant ... of the base. ... He wasn't very complementary, like, "Are you enjoying your morning bath, sir?" nothing like that.

CH: Was there much of a social life at Colgate?

DK: ... Not really at Colgate. Colgate's a pretty isolated place and there are no women around. If you wanted women, well, you went down to Norwich, which was a town just below Hamilton, ... you know, go to the movies, go to the soda shop, go to church, that's about it. ... Oh, they did bring down some girls from Utica for a dance, but, you [were] strictly chaperoned.

KP: What kind of courses did you take?

DK: Mostly business courses, business courses.

KP: Were you allowed to pick your own courses?

DK: A few. ... The most popular course, I never took it, was called, "Marriage and Family."

CH: Why was it the most popular course?

DK: Well, they talked about sex and things like that. The professor who taught it was a real weirdo.

KP: How often did you get home from Colgate?

DK: I got home at Christmas time and I think one other time in the spring, and then, my folks came up for the graduation. So, [I] didn't see much of them.

KP: You were graduated from Plattsburg.

DK: Yeah, from Plattsburg.

KP: A number of veterans who trained at Plattsburg during the winter remember running through the snow.

DK: Oh, yeah, run. That's all we did was run.

KP: They also remember learning how to fight fires.

DK: Yeah. Well, ... most of the courses I had in fire fighting were after I was commissioned and aboard the *Savannah*.

KP: Did you take the initial fire fighting course at Plattsburg?

DK: I don't remember it at Plattsburg. I was in Philadelphia, which was a scary thing, I'll tell you. [They] put you alone in this boiler room with a fire going, and you have to put it out or get crunched, and I ... became the fire fighting expert aboard the ship, something I didn't enjoy.

KP: What did the curriculum at Plattsburg consist of?

DK: We took navigation, we took plotting, we took signal work, we took a course in how to run a diesel motor, and I'm sure there were others, but, I don't remember them.

KP: Did you encounter anyone from Rutgers or the Long Branch area while in training?

DK: At Midshipmen's School, there were two fellahs from Long Branch, Tom (Baisley?) and Frank ... West. Frank West, I played baseball with. From Rutgers, only at Colgate, where there were quite a few people.

KP: Where were most of the people at Colgate and Plattsburg from?

DK: A variety of places. ... [At] Plattsburg, they were from all over the country, New Orleans, California, [and] so forth, Florida.

KP: Did anyone wash out at Colgate or Plattsburg?

DK: Well, at Plattsburg, ... I remember, we had boxing. They'd ... put you in the ring, put the gloves on you, and say, "Go to it, boys." [I] did that at Colgate, too. [My] favorite thing at

Colgate was, you stand next to the guy, when the whistle blows, you hit somebody. Most of the times, you'd hit the guy next to you. What was the question now, I forget?

KP: Did anyone drop out at Colgate or Plattsburg?

DK: Oh, a fellow I boxed [with] at Plattsburg. The next day, he went to the hospital, [laughter] and there were some who dropped out, not on purpose. They flunked out for one reason or another.

KP: How strict was the discipline at Plattsburg?

DK: It was pure military at Plattsburg. I mean, they're trying to make naval officers [out of us] in four months, ... and I think that I was twenty-one years old when I became an officer in the Navy, and I had all of these people under me, and so forth. It was terrifying.

CH: You were not exactly excited about the level of responsibility conferred on you.

DK: Well, I was excited about becoming an officer, but, I wasn't excited about taking care of sixty men on a ship, being their father confessor, all the rest of the things. What do you do? What do you do when a fellow refuses to take a shower? I said to the boys in my division, ... "You know better than I do how to take care of it," and they took care of it. They grabbed his clothes off of him and threw him in the shower, [laughter] pure ... discipline.

KP: When you were at Plattsburg, what kind of ship did you hope to serve on?

DK: Well, I ... thought [that] I'd like to get on a big ship. I didn't want to be on a PT boat. They talked me out of that. ... A fellow said to me, "You don't want to be on a PT boat." He says, "I served on a PT boat and it's the most miserable duty there is." So, he says, "Pick ... something big." So, I said, "Battleship, carrier, cruiser," and that's about as far as I went, and what do you know, I got a cruiser, and a cruiser is a much more comfortable ship than any of the others. The battleship is the most comfortable. I went on a reserve cruise in 1949. They put me on a destroyer in February. [We] went out of Newport Harbor and I was a line officer, a deck officer, and they put me on the four-day watch in the morning. I walked out of ... my bunk, which was about that far from the overhead beam, I sat up, I hit my head on it. [laughter] Anyway, I got up on the deck, I went out on the bridge, "Whoosh." This cold wave came over the bow of the destroyer and engulfed me, and I still had three hours to serve, and I was soaking wet, in the middle of the wintertime. So, I said to myself, "What's the matter with you? You think you'd like to stay in the Navy? Never ... have that thought cross your mind again."

CH: You were ready for civilian life.

DK: Yeah. I was already back in civilian life, had a job and everything else.

KP: How long were you on the destroyer?

DK: A month.

KP: For a month?

DK: Yeah. We got down to the Caribbean. It was lovely. [laughter]

KP: Getting there was the problem?

DK: Yeah.

KP: You mentioned that the cruiser was more comfortable than the destroyer. How comfortable was the cruiser? Could you tell us a little bit about your quarters and such?

DK: Well, the first ... quarters I was in was a six-man bunk room and ... I stayed in that for quite awhile. Finally, I became assistant first lieutenant on the ship and the job of assistant first lieutenant is to assign the staterooms to the officers, so, I picked the best one I could find. [laughter] [I] took my ... one buddy on the ship, a fellow I really liked, and made him my roommate. We stayed in this cabin, which was at midships and didn't roll too much.

KP: After Plattsburg, where did you pick up your ship? How soon after did you board it?

DK: Interesting. I came home from Plattsburg with all [of] my gear and all [of] my luggage and I was to report to [the] Philadelphia Navy Yard for further transfer to the USS *Savannah*. So, I said good-bye to everybody, and I packed all this stuff up, and I went to Philadelphia, and I went on the base, and [I said], "Reporting for duty, sir." I said, "By the way, where is the *Savannah*?" I thought he'd say Java, or the Mediterranean, or some ... place like that. He says, "Well, if you go out this door, and you turn left, and you go a hundred yards down there, there's the *Savannah*." So, I went aboard as the substitute crew, new crew, 'cause the ship had been bombed at Salerno, and I was home the next weekend. They didn't have anything for me to do. [laughter]

KP: How long were you and the ship in the harbor?

DK: ... I reported in July.

KP: July 1944.

DK: ... We went on our ... shakedown cruise in late September.

KP: Was it an entirely new crew?

DK: Almost entirely new. There'd been a lot of people killed and most of the crew was training up in Newport, Rhode Island, but, they eventually got to Philadelphia. I didn't go to Newport, but, I lived in a hotel, [the] Warwick Hotel, one of the best hotels in Philadelphia, 'cause you couldn't live on the ship. They were repairing it. ...

KP: It sounds like you had a good time in Philadelphia.

DK: I did. I met some nice people, met some nice girls.

CH: What did you do in your time off, while the ship was being prepared?

DK: Well, I was taking courses in gunnery and things like that. Most of the courses were being taught by people who were previously on the ship and I went down the Chesapeake and [had] gunnery school on the USS *Texas*, which is a big, old battleship. That's about it. Then, when we ... set sail, we had drills every day, launched planes and recover[ed them] and things like that.

KP: Where did you go for your shakedown cruise?

DK: Trinidad. Then, we came back from the shakedown, and we had cold water trials up in Maine, and then, where did we go? ... I guess, we went on patrol duty, and then, ... [in] November of '44, [we] went down the Chesapeake, and the rumor was that we were just waiting for Franklin Roosevelt to go on his trip to Yalta, and so, in February of '45, we set sail as a decoy ... [for] the ship which is, I loved it, for Franklin Roosevelt. I'm the decoy. [laughter] Anyway, we set sail, and we went out, and we joined up with the *Quincy* and the *Springfield*, and the *Springfield* left and went to the Pacific, and we went on with the *Quincy* to Malta. ... In Malta, why, we got off the ship and saw Roosevelt and Churchill. They were about from here to the river away from me, and then, they flew to Yalta, and we stayed in Malta [for] three or four days, some of the best baseball we had. [laughter]

CH: When you saw them, what were your impressions of the two greatest men of the era?

DK: I don't know. They were just people in the news, famous people. I'd like to say [that] I felt I was famous, too, but, it would sound wrong, and so, they ... flew to Yalta and we stayed around Malta for three or four days. Then, we went to Alexandria, Egypt, and Roosevelt and Churchill flew back to Alexandria and got on their ships, and we set sail for ... Norfolk, but, first, we were stopping in Algiers to see DeGaulle. So, we were in Algiers, and [we] tied up, and we waited two days. DeGaulle never showed up, and so, we took off with about twenty destroyers through Gibraltar, flank speed, which is as fast as you can go, which was about thirty-three knots, and those poor destroyer guys [went] up and down and into the sea. We went up and down, too, but, not like the destroyers, and we got back to Norfolk without incident.

CH: You were on escort duty.

DK: We were escorting Roosevelt, and then, after that, we ... went to Newport, Rhode Island, to train crews, and we did that for about three months. We were there when Roosevelt died. Then, we went to Annapolis, let's see, yeah, ... and took the midshipmen on their cruise, two cruises, in fact. Then, we went to Pensacola and trained pilots in recovery and catapult launching, since I was the catapult officer. I always ... felt great trepidation [for] these poor fellows, these aviators. They'd sit up there in the plane, and they'd give you the sign that they're ready, and you [have]

got to be sure the ship's going up instead of going down, ... because you'd shoot 'em right in the water, if you're not careful. [laughter]

CH: I take it that that never happened.

DK: No, never happened, but, I was very conscious of it.

KP: How many planes did you launch?

DK: Well, we had five aboard and when we went to Pensacola, we brought a lot of other planes, too. I would guess I probably launched seventy-five, eighty, maybe.

KP: None of them ...

DK: ... No ... mishaps.

KP: Was that unique?

DK: Well, it was normal. I don't know [of] anybody who shot a plane in the water. He's probably not alive today, if he did. One thing I was very grateful for on this ship, we never fired a gun in anger. The ship had before, but, when I was aboard, it never fired a ... gun in anger, and I can honestly say I'm not responsible for anybody getting killed, which, to me, personally, means something.

CH: Do you think that that derives from your religious beliefs?

DK: Yeah, I think so.

CH: How do you think you would have felt if you had fired a shot in anger?

DK: Well, we had one ... pilot killed. That was the only fatality we had.

KP: What happened?

DK: We had new ... airplanes, Grummans, and they were fast, and I don't know, he was practicing power diving and things like that and just never pulled out of it, just went right in.

CH: Did you see it happen?

DK: No, I didn't see it happen. I saw his folks at the funeral. That was about as close ... to it as I got.

KP: You told us earlier that, here you were, this young, twenty-one-year old officer, and it was nice to be an officer, but, you were now in charge of sixty people.

DK: Yeah.

KP: What were your responsibilities? Who was your chief?

DK: Well, if ... you were smart, you let the chief run things, which not only made it easier for you, but, was more satisfying to him, 'cause it gave him a sense of responsibility, and these were professional guys, like gunner's mates and things like that, boatswain's mates, and they knew their job. ... For you, as a twenty-one-year-old, to stand there and say, "Gingersack, do this," ... matters of discipline and morale, or something like that, was different, but, as far as advising them on the profession of their job, you better leave them alone, 'cause they'll run it their way anyway. They'll just smile at you and say, "Yes, sir, yes, sir."

KP: I take it that you had some old Navy hands under you.

DK: Yeah, yeah, yeah, potbellied and everything. [laughter]

CH: They had not been running as much as you had recently.

DK: No, [not] once you get aboard ship. I saw a fellow who came aboard ship ... all slim[med] down and everything. In three weeks, he was, "Poof," 'cause he didn't do any exercising.

CH: How was the food on board the ship? Did you like the Navy food?

DK: The officers' food, but, even there, it wasn't so hot. ... If you had disciplined ... one of the stewards, or something like that, you never knew whether he spit in your eggs or not, but, things aren't always so lovey-dovey with these people. In fact, when we came back to put the ship in mothballs, we pulled in[to] Philadelphia next to the *Alaska*, which was a battle cruiser [that] had just come back from the Pacific, and you don't know how ... hatred can manifest itself with these people. ... Apparently, they had a chief gunner's mate who ... rode rough herd on the crew. They found him dead after the war was over, stuffed in a ... chute. Well, they did it their own way.

KP: Did an investigation ever uncover who was responsible?

DK: I don't know.

CH: What was the atmosphere on your ship like?

DK: It was pretty good. ... I don't know of anything, ... as much hatred as that. You've got to really ... be wronged to murder somebody. No, I thought the atmosphere on our ship was pretty good. Maybe I was just too innocent to see any of it.

KP: I have been told that the captain's attitude makes a big difference. Some captains care if their crew is happy and others do not.

DK: Yeah, I think that's true.

KP: Can you tell us about your captain? Captain ...

DK: Fosket.

KP: Fosket.

DK: I'll say, first, that the captain who came before Fosket, who was the skipper when the ship was bombed, they loved him. I never knew him, but, they loved him, because he was transferred after the ship was bombed.

KP: Why was he so loved as a captain?

DK: He cared. I didn't serve under him, so, I ... can't know, but, ... generally, to a man, they seemed to love him. Our skipper ... was a mustang, as they called it. He'd come up through the ranks and became a captain. Eventually, he was politically inspired, he became Truman's naval aide. ... To me, he was cold. There was no ... reason for me to have great contact with him. ... It's hard to say who you like and who you don't like, but, ... some of the officers I liked and some I thought were political. I thought Fosket was a political machine. He'd been the naval attaché in Alexandria, Egypt, and, from what I gathered, he wasn't too popular.

KP: What about the executive ...

DK: The executive officer?

KP: Yes.

DK: He was a southerner. ... He always thought my name should be Kinston instead of Kingston, ... 'cause there's a Kinston, North Carolina. [laughter] He always called me that.

KP: Was he an Annapolis man?

DK: Yeah.

KP: He was Annapolis?

DK: He was Annapolis.

KP: How many other Annapolis men were on the *Savannah*?

DK: Quite a few. In fact, I was five days junior to five midshipmen, Naval Academy guys, which means, for eighteen months, I was the junior officer aboard by five, ... I think it was two days, by two ... days. I got all [of] the junk jobs.

KP: What were the junk jobs?

DK: Oh, being treasurer of the mess and serving on courts-martial or something like that. It's hard to say, but, what they were is what I got. [laughter] Yeah. ... Seniority has a great deal to do [with the Navy]. Many a career is ruined by seniority.

KP: What was it like to have a mustang for a captain on a ship full of Annapolis men?

DK: Well, he was a captain and, as a captain, why, it was ... his ship, he ran it the way he saw fit. There was nothing bad about it.

KP: Was there any resentment on the part of the Annapolis people?

DK: I couldn't tell, I'm not an Annapolis person. [laughter] I was just a ... 120-day wonder. I think there was resentment between Annapolis people and reserve officers.

KP: Did you experience that?

DK: [Yes.]

KP: Could you, ... oh, please, continue.

DK: I was just going to say, I don't think [that] they did it on purpose. I think it was just ingrained in the system. "He's ... a reserve officer, so, he isn't as good as you, because he doesn't have the training [that] you have." There was some of them [for which] it didn't make any difference. Admiral King, you remember who he was, Chief of Naval Operations, his son was on our ship. He couldn't care less about being an Annapolis person or ... anything else. All he wanted to do ... was listen to records. [laughter] He hated the Navy.

KP: It sounds like there was some parental rebellion there.

DK: Yeah, I think so.

CH: You said that many careers were ruined by seniority. What did you mean by that?

DK: Well, you ... take one ... fellow, [who] is as qualified as another, and there's two days difference, or five days difference, or two months difference in their seniority rank, unless the ... guy's an absolute klutz, he's going to get the promotion. If there are twenty places for lieutenant commanders and you're number twenty-one, you're not gonna get it, unless there's some real reason why, and maybe this isn't true today, I don't know.

KP: However, in your day ...

DK: Yeah, you ... knew it.

CH: Seniority rules.

DK: [Yes.]

KP: You mentioned that you became friends with a number of your fellow officers. Could you tell us a little bit about that?

DK: Well, there was a fellow by the name of Ross who was my division officer when I first went aboard. He was not a hot Navy guy, but, he was very sweet, very kind, and so, I remember him. I remember, one ... thing I observed was, you know, at Annapolis, the midshipmen are spit-and-polish there. They have to be or they won't get through Annapolis, but, you get them aboard a ship and they become absolute slobs. [laughter] I don't know what it is, but, ... I guess they were slobs before they went to Annapolis. ... There was a nice fellow, ... I was Division Four and Division Three, this fellow was a division officer of Division Five, and he was a laid back kind of guy. You wouldn't expect any harm, or any trickery, or any position, or any seniority pushing from him. The thing I remember most about him was, he wanted to leave to go home ... when his baby was born, when his wife was giving birth to the baby, and the captain turned him down, and the captain said, "You have to be there to lay the keel, but, you don't have to be there for the launching," [laughter] and he, you know, ... took it. I'm sure it was dear to his heart if he (put in to going?). There was one fellow who was ... really an intellectual, more than he was a gunnery officer, but, he was more interested in his degree from Columbia and what he was gonna do with it than he was [with] anything else.

KP: What did he want to do with his degree?

DK: He didn't want to be in the Navy, that was one thing. He almost got killed at Salerno.

KP: Did the men who had been on the ship at Salerno talk about the attack?

DK: Yeah, oh, sure.

KP: What did they tell you about it?

DK: Well, ... the bomb landed on turret three, one, two, three, four, five aft, landed on three, just in front of the bridge, and it went through the breach block of the gun, which is about that big, and down into the third, ... three decks to four decks down, oh, I'm sorry, five decks down, blew a hole in the bottom thirty feet in diameter.

CH: In the bottom of the ship?

DK: Yeah, the bottom of the ship, and they just did rescue it by closing the watertight doors. They were in battle conditions, so, the doors were already closed, and they all had universal praise for the damage control officer that was killed, but, who saved the ship, really.

KP: Was he killed during the battle, trying to save the ship?

DK: He was killed by the bomb.

KP: Okay.

DK: And guess what? I came up to visit my battle position, [which] was where he would have been. That's when I became ... assistant first lieutenant. Well, ... there was a lot of write-ups about ... the bomb's destruction. It killed about 180 people, and most of the reasons why [I know this], becoming assistant first lieutenant, I was privileged to read all of these battle reports, and the crew, the ones who were killed, ... not many of them were killed by the blast. They were killed by the lack of oxygen, 'cause, when the bomb exploded, it used up all [of] the oxygen and they just suffocated.

CH: They were below deck.

DK: Some of them were below the deck, but, the ones who were below the deck were the ones that suffocated, yeah. The ones who were up in the turret or out on the deck were those who were killed by the blast, and they thought it was miracle that they saved the ship, and it was down thirty feet by the bow, I think that's what it was, and up twelve feet by the stern, something like this. Oh, I don't know what else to tell you.

CH: Were you involved in Operation: HUSKY?

DK: Not HUSKY, Operation: MAGIC CARPET, which was bringing back the soldiers from France before Christmas. We made two trips to Le Harve and the thing that impressed me the most, or didn't impress me, it disgusted me, was these German prisoners who they had carrying luggage aboard, things like that. They were the most surly bunch of people I ever saw in my life. [They] accused the sailors of ... stealing their money. They didn't have any money and they were gruff. What do I say? I just felt repelled by them, you know.

CH: What were your impressions of the GIs? Did they talk about their experiences?

DK: Not really, not much. You're going to get more out of them. ... Have you read Walter Denise's [interview]?

KP: Oh, yes. We interviewed him.

DK: Yeah, I know you have, yeah. ... He's a friend of mine and ... he really had some terrific experiences as a spy behind the German lines. I found most of the American soldiers that I had anything to do with were just glad to be going home and ... nothing mattered except for them to get home. ... Like in any group of people, there are serious ones, there are those who would joke, and so forth, and so on.

CH: It sounds as if it was not so much about the ideals of the war, but, about personal survival.

DK: ... Yeah, personal survival was ... the thing they were most grateful for; me, too. Anybody who was in the war is grateful to come out of it alive.

KP: Many Navy veterans have told us about watch duty. You mentioned standing watch on the destroyer, however, during the war, you had to contend with the threat of submarines. Do you have any memorable watch stories?

DK: Well, there's the one I told you about, the one [where] we were in the Mediterranean and we saw the destroyers drop some depth charges and so forth. That's about all.

CH: Were you ever afraid of submarines?

DK: To tell you the truth, out of sight, out of thought. ... Unless you were an anti-submarine warfare person, you really didn't think about it. What can you do?

CH: So, you were not afraid?

DK: Well, like my brother said, ... he was in five invasions and he says there were only two times he was scared. One was at Salerno, when they dropped the bomb on the *Savannah*, he thought it was headed for him, and the other time was when he got married. [laughter] So, you're aware of this thing. You know it's out there, it could get you any day, but, you don't think about it. You concentrate on the job you have to do.

KP: What did you do in your spare time aboard ship? For example, was there any gambling among the officers?

DK: No. We'd play acey-doucey. We'd play chess. We'd listen to records, and then, you always had the division work to do, you know, you had your division, certain paper work and so forth. Some of the guys got in trouble and [had] courts-martial, excuse me, things like that.

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

KP: This continues an interview with David Kingston on November 14, 1997, in Oceanport, New Jersey, with Kurt Piehler and ...

CH: Chris Hillary.

KP: You mentioned that you served on two courts-martial. Do you remember the cases?

DK: Yes, I do, and I hate to say it, but, ... one of them, at least, was because the ship's tailor got so drunk [that] he couldn't remember where he was, and it was a court-martial offense, and the other one was when a sailor didn't get back from leave on time. Usually, when you're serving on a court-martial, it's for [the] kids in your division. You have to go and stand up with him at captain's mast. So, that was nothing spectacular or serious.

KP: What were your division's responsibilities? You mentioned the catapult.

DK: ... Well, when I was in the gunnery division, the sailors had to holy stone the decks, and keep the equipment up-to-date, and so forth, and so on. When I was in the first lieutenant's department, why, damage control, being sure that the knife edges of the watertight doors didn't have any paint on them, things like that, things I didn't know anything about, like the electrical systems and the sewer systems, things like that. [laughter] That was the job of my division, not necessarily what I knew about it.

KP: It sounds like you were very dependant on your chiefs.

DK: Oh, yeah. ... As assistant first lieutenant, you had to ... write up some ... cases, "If this happened, what would you do?" "If the torpedo hit here, what would you do and what electrical systems would be affected?" and so, I used to write those things up. I seemed ... to have a penchant for that. I could write a story about anything that happened on the ship. When I was in the catapult, being in the gunnery division, your supplementary job was the catapult, because you fired powder charges to send these planes off, and ... that required constant maintenance of the equipment, be sure the firing pins worked and be sure the cases weren't damaged, and, you know, just a boring, general routine. The only fun you had was when you shot the guns off. [laughter]

KP: How long were you in the gunnery division?

DK: Well, let's see, when I went aboard in July, I was in the gunnery division [for] about a year and I was mostly in ... damage control. ... Putting the ship in mothballs, that was a big job, and, when we brought these sailors back from [overseas], I had [to] get all [of] the life jackets, you know, requisition them.

KP: Was that during Operation: MAGIC CARPET?

DK: For the MAGIC CARPET duty, yeah, and, let's see, when I shot the catapults, [laughter] and there's a crane on the stern of the boat that has to be maintained, too. So, you would say it was mostly boring stuff, unless you get shot at, or shot somebody else, or [you had to] take prisoners somewhere. There wasn't much distinguishing, day in and day out, same thing, shoot the planes off for patrol and things like that.

KP: Were you ever bored by your duties?

DK: Yeah. That's why you look forward to leave. [laughter]

KP: Where and when did you go on leave? You mentioned playing some great baseball on Malta.

DK: Yeah. That wasn't really a leave. That was just to occupy us while the President was off shooting his face off. [laughter]

KP: Nonetheless, it was a break in your routine.

DK: Yeah.

KP: Do you recall having a good time in any other ports of call?

DK: Well, we used to go to Guantanamo Bay, occasionally. We'd go to the officers' club, swim in the pool, things like that. What wasn't ... pleasant was the North ... Atlantic. That was cold and rough, usually. The worst storm I ever saw was when we were bringing the MAGIC CARPET kids back. I say kids; they were older than I am. ... [laughter]

KP: One of the things that has always struck me, particularly among men who served in the South Pacific and survived a typhoon, is that the weather could be more frightening than the enemy.

DK: ... Well, there was a hurricane in 1944, ... October, November, when we were waiting for Roosevelt to ... make up his mind [about] whether he was going, but, we were in the Chesapeake and the big event of that was that one of the ... sailors fell overboard. ... What he was doing up on deck, I'll never know, but, he really got blown overboard, and, you know, somebody yelled, "Man overboard, man overboard," and they manned the whale boat, but, they never would have put it in the water, it was too rough, and I was asked, and I ran over the rail, and I saw him go by on the crest of a wave. ... You know, ships have propeller guards that stick out from the side of the ship, like this, and he ended up jackknifed right over this propeller guard, with his back to the sea, and we dropped a ... life ring to him, and [he] crawled in and got brushed a couple more times by the waves before we got him out, but, we got him up on deck, and he immediately passed out. ... The executive officer, I thought, was kind of touched by the whole thing, and his comment was, "I guess Jesus was with that boy," and that's the way I felt, too.

CH: Did he survive?

DK: He survived, yeah. They put something in the ship's paper about six weeks later, "Somebody tell Frank So-and-So, it's all right to come up on deck now." [laughter]

KP: Your ship had a newspaper?

DK: Yeah.

KP: How often was it published?

DK: Once a week, I think, but, I'm not sure.

KP: Who put it together?

DK: I don't know. [laughter] We just read it. I don't know who put it together. It was somebody on the ship, though.

KP: You were not allowed to drink on the ship, legally, at least, but, once you pulled into port, how much drinking went on?

DK: It depends. Some people didn't drink at all and some of them drank to excess, so, somewhere in-between. ... You haven't mentioned the thing that was most popular; these were the houses of prostitution in places like Puerto Rico, and Cuba, [and] so forth. I had shore patrol in ... Puerto Rico. It was disgusting. It really was disgusting.

KP: Did you know what to expect when you were first assigned to shore patrol?

DK: Yeah.

KP: Did you know about the houses of prostitution?

DK: Yeah. I knew it when they said, "This is your patrol place." It was drinking and, ... well, you had to be a policeman, and there are certain rules that they go by, and these prostitutes had to be inoculated, and so forth, and so on. So, I must admit, I didn't enjoy it at all. Some people would have enjoyed it, but, I didn't.

CH: Did you ever have to exercise your authority while on patrol?

DK: Yeah.

CH: What happened? What did you have to do?

DK: Well, a guy wouldn't come [out] of the ... room with a girl, and this was on our midshipmen's cruise, he was a midshipman, too, and ... I don't know what rules govern the midshipmen or not; it's just [that] ... we were keeping order. ... I learned a few things, like, they ... arrest these people [and] put 'em in a pen. Never go up to the pen, even [for] somebody in your own division, somebody you know, ... 'cause they'll just plead with you to get them out of there, and you can't do it, you can't do it, and then, it carries over a little bit after you get back on the ship, "You didn't ... help me out." So, once you have somebody arrested, leave him alone, let him take his own abuse, his own penance, or whatever it is.

KP: Did you have to break up any brawls when you were on shore patrol?

DK: No, I'd say, ... usually, they're so drunk [that] they can't ... protest too much.

KP: In Hawaii, the houses of prostitution were infamous, among historians and veterans, for having long, orderly lines. Did you see this in Puerto Rico and other ports of call?

DK: Well, most ... of the action took place in a bar, in a bar sort of place, and so, there weren't ... lines. There seemed to be plenty of room in the bar. I think, if there wasn't enough room, they'd make room, but, the girls, ... by the time they were twenty years old, they were worn to a frazzle. ... The worst ... thing was, you'd see them in the afternoon, down in the bar, then, you'd see them that night, [the] same girls, ... after three or four exposures, ... in the officers' club, and some ... of the officers drank as much as the enlisted men, so, they, you know, ... lost their sensibilities, and these girls dragged them off ... up to their rooms.

CH: You said that this was the most popular past time of all.

DK: Well, where it was available, it was a pretty popular pastime. [You'd] see half [of] the ship's company in there.

KP: Did you have a chaplain on your ship?

DK: Yes, he was a good one. He was Episcopal, an Episcopalian, and he was there when the bomb went [off], and he still writes ... letters for the ... reunion newspaper. Yeah, we get that about once a month.

KP: What made him such a good chaplain?

DK: Compassionate. It's always the case. Compassion is, ... to me, the greatest thing there is, maybe next to love. Love is the greatest thing in the world.

KP: How often did religious services take place on the ship?

DK: Once a week.

KP: I have been told that chaplains often had to wear several hats and perform separate services for the different faiths.

DK: It was a non-denominational type [of] service, you know, Jesus Christ, and be a good boy, and do the things you're supposed to do.

CH: What did the chaplain do during the week?

DK: I don't know what he did. [laughter] I never got that involved in his ... duties.

KP: It sounds as if he was well-liked.

DK: He was. I think, from my point of view, he ... just took care of the boys.

KP: Were any officers particularly disliked by the other officers? Does any case stick out?

DK: Too ... strict is, but, respect for ... authority. I think the ones who you had respect for, their authority, they liked, and those that they thought were phonies, they didn't like, and there were a lot of phonies, too, even officers. [laughter]

KP: What made someone a phony?

DK: One, they didn't know their job. Two, [you] just felt ... [that] they weren't sincere, that they'd say one thing and do something else. I'd say that, ... most times, that was the case.

CH: Was it a matter of trust?

DK: Yeah, I think trust. You could count [on] him being behind you. That's why it was so difficult when you saw a fellow who was arrested and put in a pen, which they did, and you couldn't help him, and he'd expect you to, and you can't.

CH: Did you feel that the punishment was unnecessary?

DK: Isn't necessary. Sometimes, you thought Navy rules were unjust, but, ... if you're in the Navy, you don't question 'em, unless it's murder or something like that, where you could exercise your own, ... I don't know what I was going to say. [laughter]

KP: Did you have any Marines on board?

DK: Yes. We had a contingent of Marines.

KP: Were they in charge of the brig?

DK: Yeah.

KP: Did they have any other responsibilities?

DK: Well, they manned the .40 mm antiaircraft guns, yeah.

KP: What was the relationship between the Marines and the sailors like?

DK: Fine. I felt sorry for some of these Marines. You [would] just rattle the anchor chain and they were ... seasick. [laughter]

KP: Were you ever seasick?

DK: Never on the cruiser. I did on the ... destroyer, one night. It's just a feeling you can't ... control. ... I went fishing in Bermuda once, on a boat, ... you know, just shut the motor off and let her drift, and then, I got seasick. Three years in the Navy and I got seasick once, and then, I go out on a ... pleasure boat, fishing, and I get sick as a dog. [laughter]

KP: Therefore, your desire for a large ship ...

DK: It was justified. [laughter]

KP: Yes.

DK: Well, you get used to it. Some people never do, but, generally speaking, you get used to it.

KP: Where were you on V-E Day?

DK: V-E Day, yeah, I was in Newport, and, V-J Day, I was off the coast of North Carolina, no, off the coast of Virginia.

KP: Before V-J Day, did you think that your ship might be ordered to the Pacific?

DK: You never knew, one day to the next, where you were going to go.

CH: Were you afraid of a possible invasion of Japan?

DK: Fear is a funny thing. I think you don't project ahead of time whether ... you're gonna be fearful or not fearful. When the time comes and it's bad enough, you can be fearful. I can honestly say that I was never fearful in the Navy, nothing. Then [again], I didn't have a lot of people shooting at me. ...

CH: Your ship was never attacked.

DK: No. As I say, the only time we fired a gun in anger was never, when I was aboard, and I'm glad of that, as I said before.

KP: You were put on MAGIC CARPET duty after V-J Day.

DK: Yeah.

KP: How many additional men did you take on board for each trip?

DK: Well, we had about 1100 ... in a complement and I think we filled a hanger deck and [some] other decks. Oh, I think we had another thousand aboard. They were sloppy people, too. They were seasick all the time.

KP: How long did an average run take?

DK: About a week, maybe five days, ... depending on the weather.

KP: You were doubling the size of the ship's compliment.

DK: Yeah, yeah.

KP: The ship must have been fairly packed.

DK: The crew was very unhappy, because they had to clean up. That was the first trip. The second trip, we told ... the Army, "You clean it up," 'cause they were at a point of rebellion.

CH: Obviously, many of the soldiers got seasick.

DK: Yeah.

CH: Did the ship's crew get sick?

DK: Didn't count. [laughter]

KP: Where did the Army officers stay?

DK: They stayed in [the rooms] with other officers. We had a major in with us. We put him on a cot. We ran into this storm. I was in the upper bunk, and my roommate was down below, and this fellow was going back and forth ... on the cot, "Bang," into the wall there, "Bang," into the lower bunk. He was afraid to get out of the bunk. He said, "I'd get run over," [laughter] and I'll tell you another story which was humorous, in a way, as long as you weren't involved. We had a ... colonel sleeping in a room with a lieutenant commander and, in ... [the] process of this storm, they ... wanted to pump fuel oil down into the lower holds of the lower tanks. So, they're in the process of doing this, and one of these oil lines goes right through the cabin where ... the colonel is sleeping, and ... he had a pair of white pajamas on. A little pin hole broke in the ... pipeline and sprayed the whole cabin with fuel oil, all over him, and he's staggering around out in the passage way in his white pajamas, and all [of] the steward's mates were black, except [for] the chief steward's mate, who was Filipino, and this cabin was just after the wardroom pantry. ... All [of] the glasses from the wardroom pantry had fallen on the deck and broken and, as the ship rolled, the glasses were sliding back and forth, making a terrible racket. This ... colonel is standing out in the hallway with fuel oil dripping all down [him], like this, and the chief ... steward's mate comes down the ladder behind him [and] sees this. He thought [it was the] steward's mate standing there, 'cause they wore white uniforms, you know, and he says, "See here, boy," he says, "get in there and clean that place up." Here's this ... colonel, standing there. So, anyway, it was one of those amusing things that you always remember.

KP: How many stewards were there?

DK: I don't know exactly, but, I'd say about fifteen. They served the food in the wardroom, prepared the food. As I say, you were never sure whether they spit in the scrambled eggs or not.

KP: Were the stewards the only black sailors aboard ship?

DK: Yeah.

KP: You were a Christian Scientist.

DK: Yeah.

KP: How did you feel about the inoculations and medical procedures required by the Navy?

DK: You did what you had to do; required physical exams, you took them; required shots, you took them. [You] realized [that] they couldn't hurt you.

KP: What was your next mission, after MAGIC CARPET?

DK: Then, we went to Philadelphia and put it in mothballs.

KP: I have heard that that was a long process.

DK: It is. We started ... just after the first of the year ...

KP: January of 1946?

DK: Yeah, and it was still going when I left the ship in June.

KP: June of 1946?

DK: [Yes.]

CH: What part did you play in mothballing the ship?

DK: Well, ... the idea is to get the air out ... of the webbing, put a curtain-like [shroud] over the equipment, the gun barrels, and spray them with, I don't know, a plastic of some kind, [cosmoline?], and then, put this envelope over them. All [of] the machinery has to be oiled and ... the gears have to be oiled. So, ... when you consider how much stuff is on a ship that size, how many guns there are, [it took a long time]. We had fifteen ... six-inch guns, we had eight five-inch guns, and then, about ... thirty .40 mm [guns], and all of those have to be greased, and oiled, and taken care of. So, it takes a long time. I was running that thing and, boy, it was a pain in the neck.

KP: Many people were leaving the Navy at the time.

DK: Oh, yeah, yeah. ... Most of the fellahs who were radar experts and things like that, they flew quickly. They wanted to get back to the job they had, or schooling that they wanted, so, they scrambled as fast as they could. You had to have points, though, to get out.

KP: The men who had been in battle must have left rather quickly.

DK: Well, I would say that three-quarters of them were transferred off [of] the ship before, when we rebuilt the ship.

KP: It sounds like the transition with the new crew worked out fairly well.

DK: I was not in a position to judge. I don't know whether ... we did well or we did terrible.

KP: Was there a conflict between the "old timers" and the ship's new complement?

DK: No, no, not that I am aware of.

CH: Soon after you went through the training process, you were on the other side of the process as a teacher. What was it like to go from being a student to being a teacher?

DK: Well, I enjoyed the teaching part very much. ... I don't know. I ... can't answer that truthfully, only from my own experience, yeah.

CH: You enjoyed teaching.

DK: Yeah, I did.

CH: How effective did you feel the curriculum was?

DK: Most of the teaching that I did was confined to that ship, this and that, and so forth, but, [they were] mostly practical things on the ship, and that was rote. I mean, once you did it and you knew it, it wasn't very difficult.

KP: Did you consider staying in the Navy?

DK: Yeah, I did. Caroline, my first wife, who was not my wife at the time, she wanted me to stay in; she liked the uniform. [laughter] Yeah, but, I thought it over very carefully. I said, "I haven't finished college yet. I'm not married. You know, there's a lot of things that I [want to do]." ... I'm sure I was wrong, but, I never thought [that] the Navy was intellectually up there, that there were other things I could do, and be more successful, and not be regimented, ... and that, maybe, I could make more money, too.

CH: Were you dating her at the time?

DK: What?

CH: You were dating her during the war and she wanted you to stay in the Navy.

DK: Well, she thought it over, too, and she didn't think it was such a good idea.

KP: It sounds as if she loved going out on dates with you in your uniform.

DK: Yeah, I think so.

KP: When did you learn about the GI Bill? College had been difficult for you, financially, before the war.

DK: Yeah, when we were ushered out. When we were relieved of our duties, they went over all that stuff with us, what you could [do, the] GI Bill, and ... [the] other rights you had, insurance, things like that. So, there was a ... de-commissioning process.

KP: Your brother was also in the Navy at the time. How often did you write to each other?

DK: Frequently. I'll show you some pictures I sent him. He wrote [and] drew on them.

CH: Did the Navy offer you a promotion?

DK: Well, let's see, they left that kind of up in the air. You might ... have gotten something, if you played your cards right; maybe you wouldn't. It was that carrot type [of] thing.

KP: You did decide to stay in the reserves.

DK: Yeah, for awhile. I took that one cruise, ... but, to tell you the truth, I was going to join the Perth Amboy Naval Reserve Unit, and we had an election in the fraternity house, and I was elected president of the house, and the ... meeting night was the same night as this reserve thing. So, I decided to be president of the house instead of being in the reserve. ... Now, I'm glad I did, because that Perth Amboy unit was the first one that was called up in the Korean War.

KP: If you had stayed ...

DK: If I had stayed in there, I'd ... have gone to Korea on a dinky little DE that they had. So, I decided to pass up that opportunity.

CH: What was it like to be the president of the fraternity?

DK: Did I say president? I'm sorry, I was vice-president of the fraternity. ... I don't know, you know how those things are; you either are or you aren't. You take on the responsibilities of being vice-president. I ... don't know what to say about some of those questions. It happened, it happened.

KP: You had been an officer in command of roughly sixty people. You had many responsibilities and a nice uniform. What was it like to be a college student again?

DK: Great. I didn't mind abandoning the uniform at all. In fact, after the war, ... if you wore the uniform, you were kinda looked on as braggy, at least that was the result [that] I ... felt. Get out

as fast as you could, get into civilian clothes. You were more of a regular guy. ... Rank didn't matter anymore. You could be a private and talk to a general as a civilian.

KP: What was it like to be with so many returning veterans on campus? Did anyone discuss the war?

DK: I ... would say that most fellows did not talk about the war. I think this is unique that you're able to bring ... them out to talk about it, because I don't think that most of them would have talked about it in '46 and '47.

CH: Why?

DK: It's a very private thing. You have survived. ... I mean, people think you're bragging if you say, "I survived the war." So did he, so did he, so did he, so what? and wearing battle decorations and things like that especially did not go over big with fellows. They wanted to be students.

KP: From reading the *Targum*, we have noticed that there was a pretty active social life for the students.

DK: Yeah.

KP: The fraternities were very active and, also, there was the Military Ball, the Junior Ball, the Senior Ball, and so on. Did you attend any of these affairs?

DK: Yeah. ... Being a part of a fraternity, most of the parties [that] I went to were fraternity related, but, since my brother was doing some photography work to earn a little money after the war, why, we went to some of the things so [that] he could take a picture. ... After the war was not the same as before the war. Everybody was more mature and I was going [out] pretty steadily with a gal who became my wife, so, she was my date most of the time. Before the war, you know, you have one ... date one weekend, and another date another weekend, and so forth, and so on, and dating your future wife was a little different than dating the other girls.

CH: Did you feel that the campus was more mature after the war?

DK: Yeah, very much so. ... My brother, for example, he was originally Class of '42. He got out in '49, so, he certainly wasn't the fellow in '38 that he was in '46, after the war [and] so forth, what he'd seen, where he'd been. So, I think there was a great difference after the war. For example, we used to go to fraternity parties, and, as the party got long, and into the evening, and later, and so forth, what did you do, you know, if you didn't drink, or didn't want to drink, or something like that? So, ... one of the ... fellows in the house and the girl he was going with, ... they liked to play bridge, so, we retired to the library and played bridge.

CH: Was there a lot of drinking in the fraternities at that time?

DK: No. ... Before the war, we didn't have a bar in that fraternity house and, as I say, there was no liquor supposed to be in the house, either. After the war, there was a bar and you got a lot of these guys who had been in the Army, and so forth, and were used to that sort of thing. So, it was ... terrible. They even desecrated the fraternity's room, ... where we met, you know, the meeting room, and they opened it up to anybody who wanted it and put a bar in there. Yeah, it was infamous, as far as I was concerned.

CH: You viewed that as a bad thing.

DK: Yeah. I still think it's a bad thing.

CH: Before the war, it was not a factor.

DK: No, we didn't even have it in the house. ...

CH: Did you see this kind of activity often?

DK: Yeah, I think so, too. I think it would be a much healthier atmosphere. Get the chapel services back, too, not only Kirkpatrick, but, there's a lot more people now; they wouldn't all fit in Kirkpatrick. So, you set up some chapels around and have some regular services. I think it's very important for people's well-being ... to have that.

KP: Do you remember any of your professors from when you came back to Rutgers?

DK: I can honestly say [that] I don't remember. They didn't make that much [of an] impression on me.

KP: Did you play baseball?

DK: I went out for the team, and Frank Burns was there, and the coach said, "You stick it out and we'll get you a letter." Well, I already had a letter, so, what'd I need another one for? and so, when it was obvious that ... Frank Burns was going to be the darling of the team, I ... was wasting my time. So, I could play Sunday ball down here, which I did, and it was kind of semi-pro ball, Jersey Shore League, and that was about all I could handle, anyway.

CH: Were you taking classes at that time?

DK: Yeah.

KP: What kind of career did you want at that time?

DK: Well, I wanted a secure job, not like today, where people have three or four jobs and seem to go from one to the other without any trouble. I wanted a secure job and one thing I didn't want was to work in my father's business, a security business, because I thought that was about

as risky as you could get. So, I went to work for Public Service Electric and Gas, a nice steady job, almost bored me to death.

CH: Which job was more boring, the Navy or PSE&G?

DK: Yeah, well, they ... were well-intentioned, but, there was no advancement. I was one of thirteen cadets, as they called them, went to work for them, and I was number eleven in the line, and there was a three-year course, and, by the time I'd finished two years, I started to think where I wanted to be in the company, and so, they asked me what I wanted to do, and I said, "Well, I'd like to work in the vice-president of finance's office." "Oh, that's impossible." "Why is it impossible?" "It's just impossible." [laughter] So, they said, "What's your second choice?" I said, "Well, I'd work in the treasurer's department." I look in the treasurer's department, and Mr. Van (Littlesworth?), or whatever his name was, was about seventy-five years old, and I thought that was a good place to get started. So, they said, "Oh, that's impossible." So, I said, "Well, you tell me, where am I gonna go?" [They] said, "Well, you'll probably go to the vice-president in charge of commercial offices," and there were already ten of the eleven guys and me there, and they were doing things like following up suggestions on how to keep dogs from biting ... meter men. So, I ... thought to myself, "Boy, this is getting nowhere fast and I'm already ... two years behind," and so, ... I guess I made myself kinda disagreeable, because they fired me. It seems so stupid to me to spend two years, two-and-a-half years, I guess it was, on my training, and then, to fire me, but, then, I thought to myself, "What do I do now?" and I was looking in the *New York Times*, and I saw an ad that said, "Junior Public Utilities Analyst," and I said to myself, "What's an analyst?" ... I said, "At least I have some experience in public utilities." So, I answered the ad and the ... man in the placement office said, "Oh, ... we've sent people over there with doctor's degrees and Masters degrees and you don't have a chance." I said, "Well, why don't you try me?" I said, "Have you ever sent anybody over there with practical experience in the public utility industry?" "No." "Well, why don't you call them up?" So, he called them up and made an appointment for me, and I went over, and I got the job, with Kidder-Peabody. I still didn't know what a public utility analyst was, [laughter] but, I seemed to fit in like a glove. The fellow says, "I don't know why I am hiring you, maybe it's the color of your hair." [laughter]

CH: What did you say to that?

DK: I said, "Anything is all right with me," [laughter] the soles of my feet. Anyway, it turned into a thirty-seven-year ... career. I became vice-president of Kidder-Peabody, a stockholder, and then, GE bought us out. ... I had the house, but, ... now, I can afford it.

KP: You initially started out as a utilities ...

DK: ... Analyst.

KP: What did that job entail?

DK: I analyzed utilities. [laughter] No, you take the balance sheets and the income statements, and you decide which utility is the most attractive, and then, you recommend it to your salesmen,

and they, in turn, talked to the customers and said, “Well, our analyst says that Consolidated Edison is the most attractive utility.”

CH: Are you talking about stocks?

DK: Yeah, and bonds, and then, they wanted an over-the-counter trader in public utility stocks, so, they asked me if I’d like to do that. So, I became a trader, and then, after I’d done that [for] about three years, I saw an opportunity to do refunding on a lot of utility securities, and so, I told [the] managing partner about this, and, ... surprisingly, he said, “Why don’t you do it?” So, I said, “Well, okay.” So, I went into corporate finance and spent about three years there. Then, I’m recommending all of these stocks and going to lunch with the salesmen, having them call me up and say, “Gee, that was great. I just got an order for 10,000 shares,” or something like that, “from an institution,” and he gets the commission on that and I get my piddling, little salary. ... I thought, “Boy, this is the wrong place to be. I’m going into sales.” So, I went into becoming an ... institutional salesman, an individual salesman, and ... I spent more in taxes than I thought I’d ever make. Then, I had to retire. I didn’t have to, but, I was tired of commuting, boy.

KP: You commuted ...

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

DK: ... Read a paper, read a letter, write something, go to sleep, you can do all kinds of things.

CH: That sounds like the train ads that they run today.

DK: Yeah, yeah. Well, it used to be nice, commuting. We used to commute to Jersey City on the Jersey Central and take the ferry boat across, but, they put this (all dean?) plan in, which means you take a train to Newark, and you get off, and you take the PATH tube over, and that PATH tube is for the birds. I mean, ... I rarely got a seat, and you’re standing next to people with their arms up in the air, and it was disgusting sometimes. Not everybody is as clean as we are. [laughter] Yeah, anyway, I tried to set up an office here in Red Bank, but, it was a time when branch offices weren’t doing so well. The board turned me down.

KP: It sounds as if you enjoyed your career at Kidder Peabody a great deal.

DK: Yeah, I did. It was a wonderful firm to work for and it was just like a family. These fellows, these partners, were unbelievably generous. I don’t mean that they compensated you for a lot, but, we had a trader, ... he was in his thirties, and he suddenly went blind, and he had a wife and two kids, and, you know, it looked like the end of the line for them. The partnership just took him under their wing, paid for his kids’ education, supported him, and he just died about three years ago, and they did this for thirty years or so, and business is not like that anymore. It was like a family. Another fellow, ... what happened [was], his wife got hit by a car, I think, or something like that, and he ran ... up some bills, medical bills, like two or three hundred thousand dollars, ... and he called up the treasurer one day and said, “I’m ... broke. I can’t afford [her treatment] anymore,” and the treasurer said, “How much do you owe?” He said, “Two hundred

and forty thousand dollars,” or something like that. He said, “It’ll be in your account tomorrow.” Now, that’s really working for a firm that has their employees at heart, and, therefore, I ... was not a recipient of anything like that, but, such generosity and such high thinking appeals to me.

KP: You must have felt a certain sense of security, that if you ran into some problems, there would be some understanding.

DK: Yeah. Well, fortunately, I never had to make use of that, but, I ... think [that] ... you can’t find that in a big corporation today, because what you do for one, you have to do for the other, and the demands [are too great], and I don’t think the employees have the same attitude, you know, toward it. They’d take advantage of something like that.

KP: You have three children.

DK: Well, I have them as stepchildren. Caroline and I had no children, and I married Helen, and she had three children, and, now, she has two grandchildren. I’m sorry she’s not here today for you to talk to her. She took one of the grandchildren to New York, on a day like this, [to] ... see the tree and the Christmas show. Yeah, it’s this afternoon. What did you want to know about them?

KP: Did any of them serve in the military?

DK: They’re too young. Helen’s husband was in the Navy and the children weren’t born until, the first one, 1948, so, they didn’t come [in]to any ... time coincidence. They weren’t old enough.

KP: What was your opinion, at the time, about the Korean War?

DK: Well ...

KP: You almost made it over to Korea.

DK: Yeah, I almost did. I thought that was a nasty war and I felt so sorry for those Marines, for example, who got trapped up ... [at the] Chosin Reservoir. They just fought ... their way through the Pacific, and they get called back for Korea, and they survived the Pacific War, and, “Boom,” they’re dead in the Korean War. I ... thought it was terribly unjust and I blame Harry Truman for that war, because he withdrew troops from there, and, as soon as you withdrew your troops, the North Koreans, “Whoosh,” right in, and people think Truman was great, but, I think he made a lot of mistakes.

KP: How did you feel about the Vietnam War?

DK: First of all, I was very patriotic about it. [I] thought these guys going to Canada, and so forth, were unpatriotic, ... [but], the more I realized why the Vietnam War was there, at least this is what I’ve read, that John Kennedy was so insulted that Khrushchev treated him the way he did

in Vienna that he looked around the world for some place to get even and he came up with Vietnam, and so, he put some troops in there, advisors, and, gradually, it got out of hand, and, when I realized why we were in Vietnam, that it was purely a political thing, I became very much against it, and I think the guys who served there got cheated.

CH: How did you feel about the United States's involvement in the Gulf War?

DK: Well, I think it was a good war, if there is such a thing. I don't think any war is good, but, I think putting Hussein in his place was right, and the only thing I think we made a mistake [in] was, we didn't get rid of him. Now, we're reaping the whirlwind and ... I don't think we're gonna get the support that we had before, the United Nations. Even though the United Nations passed it, why, there's too many other interests. Russia signed an oil contract with them, France wants to sign an oil contract, and only the British are gonna support us. ... First thing you know, it's going to become a US war and ... we're going to be accused by the ... dictator ... of genocide, because he's putting all these people [out] as human shields. We drop one bomb and, boy, the whole world opinion of us is going to be down the drain. ... I don't know how they could have saved it, except [to] get rid of, what's his name?

CH: Saddam Hussein.

DK: Saddam Hussein, yeah. That's the only way I can [think of]. I'm not in favor of killing anybody, but, you [have] got to get rid of him somehow.

KP: You also took some graduate classes at NYU on the GI Bill.

DK: Oh, yeah, graduate school. Yeah, I was trying to get a Masters. Yeah, I ... applied under the GI Bill ... [at] Chicago, and [the] Wharton School, and Columbia, and things like that, at Harvard, and I went to see some of these people and said, "What are my chances?" and they said, "Were you in the top ten percent of your class?" I said, "I was in my senior year, but, not before that." I was working so much, and so forth, and they said, "Well, if you're not in the top ten percent of your class all four years, forget it, you'll never get in." So, I went to NYU, because I could go nights, and it was right around the corner from where I worked, and I was working on a Masters. ... I got about three-quarters of the way through, but, I was away so much during that period of time [that] I missed class, and I missed tests and exams, and things like that, and I said, "This is just too difficult and I'm trying to have a home life," but, I must say, it saved me from getting killed. ... [Do] you remember that train wreck we had in Woodbridge?

KP: Yes.

DK: The Pennsylvania Railroad.

KP: Yeah.

DK: Yeah, well, I would have been on that train, but, I went to class, and I said to myself, "I don't want to go to class. I want to go home, [I'm] exhausted." So, I said, "Well, I'd better go."

I had missed a lot, so, I went, and, if I hadn't done that, I would have gotten on that train, and I would have sat in the third car, because it was the non-smoking car, and that's the one that got the worst.

KP: Maybe I should tell my students that story.

DK: Yeah, [laughter] I suppose, a life was saved.

KP: "A life was saved."

DK: Do you know Pete (Cartmel?)?

CH: I do not think so.

DK: You don't? He used to be the president of [the] Fidelity Union Trust Company. He lives over by the Rumson Golf Club.

CH: I might know him.

DK: Yeah, he's a graduate of [the Class of] 1943, a Rutgers graduate, and he was on that train. He broke his ankle, but, he survived.

KP: You never joined any veterans' organizations.

DK: Oh, ... I'm afraid, erroneously, my opinion of [them was low]. I ... knew about the American Legion. ... At the time, I was a kid. I wasn't impressed with what the American Legion stood for and I just never decided to join any ... veterans' organization.

KP: Have you attended any ship reunions?

DK: Yeah, I went to the reunion of the *Savannah* in 1993, which was the fiftieth anniversary of the bombing, and Helen and I had a nice time.

KP: What was it like to see people that you had not seen in fifty years?

DK: Tell you the truth, I didn't see but two or three people [that] I knew. I knew Chaplain Smart. I knew a fellow by the name of (Womganz?), one of our pilots that I knew, and they were all officers, and ... those were the only ones I knew, and I didn't know any of the enlisted men, so, that was the extent of my participation. I haven't been back since.

KP: Did you stay in touch with anyone after you got out of the service?

DK: Yeah, a fellow who was my roommate on the ship until he died and I kept in touch with his wife after he died, too. There's a fellow over here who went to ... Monmouth College, what's his name? I didn't even know he was on the ship 'til after the war was over, but, he was the librarian

at Monmouth College, Monmouth University. He died, too. ... Yeah, that's right, I knew him from high school. He was in my sister's class and I knew him after the war. In fact, we were over at a party at Monmouth College, and he came up to me, and he said, "I hear you were on the *Savannah*," and I said, "Yes, I was." We went on from there.

KP: Do you know of any movie or novel that adequately reflects your experiences in the Navy?

DK: I think it was unique. I don't think anybody would want to make a ... movie out of that.

KP: What about *Mr. Roberts*?

DK: No, that was exaggerated. Most movies are. The profanity that is in *Mr. Roberts* was not quite as bad as that in the Navy, a four-letter word here and there, but, I thought that was extreme. Most of the fellows in the Navy that I was associated with, at least on the officer level, were pretty decent guys. They were mostly college people and either Annapolis or reserve and they had some ... intellectual exposure.

KP: I remember your speech at the Old Guard Dinner very distinctly.

DK: Yeah.

KP: You have stayed active with Rutgers. Rutgers was an important part of your life.

DK: Well, as I said at the time, I ... am very grateful to Rutgers. It gave me an opportunity, it gave me a college education that I would not otherwise have had, and all my future activity, my economic situation and all the rest, was as ... a result of that one little word, "Yes, you can come." After that, it was up to me, but, I think more people ought to be thankful for their college education. You don't realize ... what you've got ... unless you don't have it.

CH: You have lived in this house for fifty years. How have you seen this area change and develop?

DK: It's getting to be very disappointing, and very crowded, and very traffic-wise, and Monmouth County is such a beautiful area that I can't blame everybody for wanting to live here, but, when you've been here longer than that, you didn't have six or eight power boats and jet skis and things [on the river]. We can't sit out here on a Sunday afternoon and be quiet, because there's yelling, and screaming, and power boats, "Vroom," going by, and it's not the place it was before.

KP: You grew up in a well populated shore community, whereas the rest of Monmouth County was mostly farmland.

DK: That's right, that's right. I was out with Jack yesterday. We went to his house, and picked him up, and went to the game, and all [of] that area out behind Freehold was ... potato country. It was. It was all farms, and, now, it's gas stations, and shopping centers, and billboards, and it's

like ... suburban New York. Being a Monmouth County, practically, native, I hate to see it happen. You take an acre-and-a-quarter of ground like this and the first thing you know, if I sell the place or something like that, there'll be three houses on it here, especially riverfront [property]. You know, people are buying a lot of riverfront property and tearing the house down and building a new one. Look at that one across the river from us. You see that huge one? ... It's not on ... too small [of] a piece of property, but, it's such a big house, it used the whole lot.

KP: You still like to sail.

DK: Yeah, I like to play baseball and, when I thought the possibilities, the future possibilities, were diminished, why, I went to sailing. ... I was just going to say [that] I've been sailing since I was fifteen years old, well, since I was eight years old, actually. I learned to sail and our Shrewsbury Sailing Yacht Club, you know, I joined that in 1938.

KP: You are an "old timer."

DK: Yeah, a life member. They did me that service. I don't have to pay dues any more.

CH: I went sailing there about five years ago.

DK: Did you? good. Well, it's a great sport and we're encouraging our granddaughter to take lessons, which she has been doing, but, it's a sport that stays with you forever, as long as you're physically able to crawl in and out of a boat. [laughter] ... She's taking it. I think she'll do it.

KP: Is there anything that we forgot to ask you about?

DK: Yeah, you ... forgot to ask me a lot of things, but, I don't want to answer them. [laughter]

CH: Is there anything that you would like to divulge?

DK: Well, it's kind of a confessional. I don't think I've ever reviewed my past quite so thoroughly.

KP: It is always interesting for my students and me to see how someone's life unfolds.

DK: Well, all I can say about the students [is], I hope they apply themselves to the extent of their ability, ... especially in business. You ... always work too hard, ... but, you'd be surprised at the results.

KP: That might be a good place to end.

DK: Stop.

KP: Thank you very much.

DK: You're very welcome. ...

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

Reviewed by Carmen Godwin 3/2/98

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 4/14/01

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 2/3/03

Reviewed by Clifford P. Kingston 3/12/03