

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH JAMES R. KOEHLER

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

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

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Sandra Stewart Holyoak: This begins an interview on May 15, 2008, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with James "Jim" R. Koehler, from Albuquerque, New Mexico. Thank you so much for coming in early today. I know you have got this big reunion, the fiftieth year.

James R. Koehler: Fiftieth reunion, that's correct

SH: I really appreciate your coming in. This is Sandra Stewart Holyoak. Just for the record, Mr. Koehler, please state when and where you were born?

JK: ... Actually, I was born in Englewood, New Jersey, in Englewood Hospital, and that was on December 19, 1936. I actually lived in Fort Lee, the Coytesville Section of Fort Lee, New Jersey, ... and that's my hometown, but Englewood was the nearest hospital, basically.

SH: Okay.

JK: So, that's why I was born there.

SH: Okay, fair enough. If you would please, talk a little more about your father; tell me what his name was and a bit about his background.

JK: My father was William Koehler, Jr., no middle ... name. He was born in 1902, November 6th, I believe it was, 1902. He grew up in Fort Lee, lived there all of his life, and, actually, had to drop out of school when he was fifteen. He worked for the General Electric Company, winding armatures, at first, in New York City. He later went to night school, finished eight years of night school, finishing up high school, and then, he went to Pratt Institute and finished up a two-year degree in what was then called an industrial electrical engineering degree. ... He stayed on with the General Electric Company and worked with them for the rest of his career, retired after forty-seven-and-a-half years, and, six months later, unfortunately, he died. He had had some heart trouble, and it's something that runs in the family, I might add. I've had a heart attack, I had one in 1999, but I'm still moving, you see.

SH: [laughter] I was going to say, you look great, just for the record.

JK: Yes, yes.

SH: May I ask, did your father ever say why he dropped out of high school? This would have been in 1917, correct?

JK: Yes. About then, yes; why he dropped out, I just [assume it was] probably a matter of money. The family wasn't exactly; well, they weren't that bad off. The families were both, his father and mother were both immigrants, from Germany, and they actually met over here and got married, and then, ... he was born in New York City. Then, they moved to New Jersey in 1905, in Fort Lee, and my grandfather bought this plot of land, along with some other folks there. ... So, he was not only the only child, but he had a brother who was born prior to his birth who died, ... then, he was born, and, in fact, he had the same name as his dead brother, you know. So, he

was the only child, and he was treated accordingly, I suppose. On the other hand, it was a rather strict upbringing, German upbringing, and all that, that type of thing.

SH: I had wondered if the cause of your father dropping out had been related to the anti-German sentiment at that time, because of World War I. Did he ever talk about that?

JK: Well, there was some; my mother told me some things about it around the time of World War II. Among other things, my father got into politics in Fort Lee.

SH: Did he?

JK: Oh, yes, oh, yes. He was a councilman. He ended up ... spending over twelve years as a councilman in Fort Lee, New Jersey, but my mother told me that some of his political enemies sometimes hinted at, you know, the fact that his parents were German. So, there was, well, there might have been ...

SH: This was during the 1940s.

JK: Yes, yes, [they would say things like] this might have been a Nazi connection, which, of course, there wasn't, but, anyway, yes, and, in fact, they came over in the 1890s, I think. ... It's kind of interesting, because, when I was growing up, we didn't even know. I didn't know too much about the families, although we had family reunions, ... but most of the relatives that we went to see were on ... my grandmother's side, and I knew that he had gone ... back to Germany during the years of inflation, big inflation in Germany. That was after World War I, and between then and when Hitler came in, and one of my father's cousins said that, yes, he remembered when he came over, oh, my grandfather had all this money, because the American dollar, you know, was extremely [valuable], you know. Well, it was worth a lot of *marks*, and it was really terrible. The inflation was bad then, very bad, but, anyway, he lived there, and, I mean, they went back and viewed the [country] and visited people, ... but I never really knew much about my grandfather, and I could go on and on about that. I've even written about that. ...

SH: That is wonderful.

JK: Oh, yes, oh, sure. ... We went to Germany in 1985, and we went to my grandfather's hometown, and we tracked down, you know, we went to the *rathaus*, that's the government place, and they steered us to the local historian, the church historian. So, we went there, and he spoke only German, which was kind of interesting, because my two children both took German in high school and my daughter was a whiz in German. I mean, she had even won a special trip to Germany, sponsored by ... the American Association of Teachers of German, and they send about seventy kids a year, at the time, over to spend a month living with a German family, in; this is in the Federal Republic of Germany, [West Germany]. This is before they merged, and so, anyway, she was very, very good. ... Anyway, while the rest of the family ... waited outside in a van, my two children and I went in to talk to this fellow, and here was my eighteen-year-old daughter translating, you know, between myself [and the German historian], and my son was there, sitting awed, saying, "Yes, this is neat," [laughter] but she translated the whole thing. ...

Then, the fellow, I made arrangements for this fellow to send me some of the heritage, some of his [my grandfather's] heritage, and he did that.

SH: I am so glad that you have done that. That is wonderful.

JK: Yes, that was interesting. Later on, and many years later, we got hold of Family Tree Maker, which is a genealogical [computer software] program, and I put a lot of this stuff that I had [into it], and I had a lot of genealogical stuff from my mother, too. ...

SH: Let us talk about your mother.

JK: Yes, absolutely.

SH: Tell me what her name is, what she did and where she was from.

JK: Well, her name was Louisa Rosalind Holmes, was born in Bergenfield, New Jersey, and she was born on June 6, 1901. She was actually older than my father, and ... she was the oldest of five children, three girls, two boys, and my grandfather was a farmer, practically all his life. ... In fact, [as] long as I knew him, he and my grandmother lived on ... two-and-five-sixths acres of land, with a chicken farm on [it], up to a thousand chickens, six hundred to a thousand chickens, and we, as children, used to go up and help out, and stuff like that, too. ... Anyway, my mother, it's kind of interesting, in World War I, she met a fellow from Atlanta, Georgia. He was a soldier at the time, and she was eighteen, and I don't know how old he was, but, you know, something like that. ... They got engaged, and he went to war and he got gassed, apparently, but he came back, and then, he was ill. So, instead of them getting married right away, ... he said, "Well, I'm going to go back to my mother in Georgia and recover." ... He went back to his mother in Georgia and recovered, and my mother being [that] she was a great correspond-er, wrote a lot of things, and wrote letters to him, and, after awhile, the letters stopped coming back. So, I think this went on, and Lord knows I've heard as long as ten years, but I don't know, but, anyway, she kept faithfully writing letters and never got anything. So, finally, she said, "Well, that's enough of this," and she met my father at a dance at a church, and so, they got married. Well, flash forward about, oh, another; well, this happened in the 1990s, some time. ... We went to my uncle's fiftieth wedding anniversary, and my aunt, my mother's youngest sister, was riding back with us, and we got [to] talking about ... the situation, and she said, "Well," she says, "you know something, ... your mother never knew this," but two weeks before she and my father got married, their mother received a letter from this fellow who my mother had been engaged with, and this was, you know, ten years afterwards, or eleven years, and this letter said, "Oh, Mrs. Holmes, I'm so sorry, a terrible thing happened. My mother died and I was looking through her things and I found, in a box, a bunch of letters," and they were all from your mother, "from Louisa, and so, I didn't know what they were all about. They hadn't been opened," and he opened them, you know, put them in chronological order, opened them and read them all. ... He realized that his mother had intercepted all of my mother's letters and had hid them, from him, because she didn't approve of my mother, you know, some Yankee girl from [the North], eighteen years old, didn't approve of my mother, and she wanted him to think that she had forgotten him, which he had, and he never married by the way, but he said, "But, do you think that I would have a chance to getting back with Louisa at this time?" So, anyway, my aunt and

... my grandmother knew about this, and ... my grandmother turned to her, she said, "Now, Julia," she says, "these are these [letters], you know. This is the story." She says, "Now, Louisa's not going to hear about this at all," [she] said, "She's gone through a lot and she met a fine fellow and this wedding is going to go on. She's never going to hear about it." [laughter] ... This was a small house wedding. ... At that time, they would say, "If anybody knows a reason why not..." you know, and my Aunt Julia said, she said, [imitating her voice], "When they asked that question, I felt terrible, because I knew this story."

SH: [laughter] Oh, my, what a wonderful story, though.

JK: Yes, oh, gosh, yes. I even wrote that up, too, by the way. I write essays, see, just to keep my hand in it. ... Then, my aunt turns to me, to us, and says, "And you're hearing it from the horse's mouth. This really happened," you know. So, anyway, that was the story of ... my mother, but, anyway, she and my father married and they were married for thirty-five years, until my father died in 1966, and then, my mother ... lived for thirteen more years and died in 1979.

SH: Had your mother gone to any sort of college or high school?

JK: No, no. In fact, she didn't finish high school, either, which was not unusual, I mean, yes.

SH: Right, not at that time.

JK: No, I was surprised. One time, I saw a figure that said, prior to World War II, I think only twenty-five to twenty-seven percent of people finished high school.

SH: And even less for women.

JK: ... That may be, yes. In fact, my mother-in-law didn't finish high school, either, and that was out in Topeka, Kansas. Yes, that's probably true. ...

SH: Did she go to work?

JK: Yes, yes. She worked for, I guess it was Prentice Hall, in New York City, at the time, or one of those publishing companies, and she worked for them for a number of years. I remember, she had this old, you know, fountain pen, and she kept it for forever, but it was one, I guess, that they gave to her to use at work, you know, and so, anyway, that was pretty much her story. The whole Holmes Family had a rather interesting [story]; well, I had a good heritage from them actually. They were good, solid folks. My grandfather ... lived to the age of ninety-three, died in 1970.

SH: Wow.

JK: My grandmother had died in 1962, and I remember because I'd gotten out of the Air Force then, I was out in California, and I received a letter. That was interesting, by the way. Back then, you know, my parents went through the Depression, obviously, although they were very fortunate; my father worked. He never lost a job. ...

SH: Really?

JK: Oh, yes. Well, yes, he was an engineer, and he always had a job, right through the Depression, and all that kind of stuff.

SH: With that same company?

JK: Oh, yes, General Electric Company. He retired, but, you know, there was that Depression mentality at the time. I mean, for instance, people never made phone calls, I mean, never made long distance phone calls, oh, heavens, [laughter] but they wrote a lot, and so, anyway, we wrote. We used to write back and forth, and that's pretty much how we communicated, but, I mean, here I was, I was in the Air Force, I was twenty-five years old, it's 1962. The war was over and all that. Of course, I guess they didn't have my phone number at the time, but, anyway, they sent some mail, you know, everything by mail. In fact, my father had a heart attack in '59, while I was in the Air Force, and no phone calls, just wrote letters, and my mother wrote three letters, three days in a row, and told about it, but, anyway, in '62, when my grandfather died, I received these letters and I went to the phone and called them up. ... I was talking to them, "I'm sorry," this, that and the other thing, and, characteristically, my father said, "Well, you know, this phone call's costing you money." I said, "Forget about it," I said, "I want to talk to you now," ... but that was typical.

SH: Yes, definitely.

JK: This was the classical Depression mentality, and there's still parts of it in me, you know.

SH: I think so, yes.

JK: Oh, sure.

SH: Those of us that were raised under it cannot escape it. [laughter]

JK: Oh, yes, yes. I had a brother, too, by the way, yes.

SH: Okay. I was just going to ask about him. Was he older or younger?

JK: Yes, older, four years older. Yes, now, my brother, by the way, is also a Rutgers graduate.

SH: Really?

JK: Yes. We were just discussing; I was discussing this with my cousin. We were with my cousin last night, and we'll be there tonight [for the Class of 1958's induction into the Rutgers Old Guard] and we're coming down for the [reunion] events tomorrow, but, anyway, my brother was born in November, I was born in December, but the interesting thing about that is, since he was born in November, he was able to start school a year earlier, see, then. So, we were five years apart in school, and he started school, and we didn't have kindergarten, so, he started

school [at Rutgers] when he was sixteen, and I started school when I was seventeen. No, ... oh, Lord, let's back off on it; he started school when he was four-and-a-half and I started when I was five-and-a-half, see, but, anyway, Bill got out of high school when he was sixteen and he got out of Rutgers, with a degree in business administration, when he was sixteen and I ...

SH: Your brother graduated high school at sixteen, started at Rutgers when he was sixteen, and he received his degree when he was ...

JK: Twenty.

SH: Twenty, okay. [laughter]

JK: Yes, all right. ... My mouth goes ahead of me, sometimes. [laughter] Yes, he got his degree in business administration at Rutgers when he was twenty, and I, of course, started when I was seventeen at Rutgers and graduated when I was twenty-one, and, yes, with an engineering degree. ... The interesting thing there is, Bill went through Air Force ROTC and he went into the Air Force for two years, and I went in and I couldn't fly, because my vision wasn't good. ... I didn't have any plans for staying in anyway, but, at that time, if you were in non-flying, you could be in for three years, and, if you're flying, you had to be in for five years. So, I went into the Air Force, through Air Force ROTC, also, and, of course, that's the main reason why I'm at the Rutgers Oral History Archives, [laughter] you know, yes.

SH: Let us take this back a little bit.

JK: Sure.

SH: Talk about growing up in Fort Lee, where you lived.

JK: Yes.

SH: What are some of your earliest memories?

JK: Well, if you want to get down to earliest memories, I think I remember when I was born, and a lot of people have laughed at this and they say, "No, no, it can't be," and maybe they're right, but all I remember, the very earliest memory I have, was literally not being able to see well and looking around. It was a big, white room, and all sorts of hustle and bustle and people, and being handled, or something like that. ...

SH: What a wonderful thought.

JK: Oh, yes, yes. Well, you know, some people have these things, but other people say, "No, heaven's sakes, people have these things and they really have them when they were five years old. They don't remember it," but, no, I don't think so. ... My memory goes back a long way. I can remember ... when several things happened. Now, one of the most traumatic things that happened [was], we used to go out, once a week or so, to Hackensack to do some shopping. They didn't have real supermarkets, not the way we have here, but we went out to a place called,

I think they called it (Packard's?). ... It was a wholesale grocery store, maybe it was retail, but it was a big grocery store, and we'd go out there, and so, I was the kid, they put me in the wagon and pushed me around, you know, and all that. ... I remember quite clearly, one time, I was there and my mother would leave her purse with me, and I still remember sitting there and I was off from the rest of the family, and I still remember this woman walked up to me, grabbed the purse, and walked away, and I didn't know what was going on. You know, I mean, I was thinking, "Well, gee, what's going on? What's going on?" and then, my mother came around, and she'd been looking at the fish counter, she said, "Oh, Jimmy, look at the fish, look at the fish." She said, "Where's my purse, Jimmy?" and I said, "The yadee [lady] took it," [laughter] you know. "Jimmy, where's the purse? Where's the [purse]?" you know, and this goes on and on. Well, it got to them, finally, that this "yadee" [lady] had come along [laughter] and took her purse, and it was very fortunate, because she said there was maybe fifty cents in it. Of course, you know, that's a little more [than] now, but, you know, so, there was only fifty cents in it. ... For some reason, ... my father had given her, oh, a greater amount of money, and she just happened not to have it in her purse, but, anyway, of course, we reported the thing, or they reported it, and, in fact, the next day, my father went over and looked around the store, and he actually caught a purse snatcher there, you know, and turned her into the store, but it wasn't the same one, but that was kind of a traumatic event, you know.

SH: Yes.

JK: And then, when we were growing up, oh, handy things to remember, ... the first, oh, eight or so years, we used to go out for a summer vacation [at a] place called Lake Swannanoa, which is, you know, I don't remember the town it was near, but it was, oh, a few miles west of where we lived. Of course, it seemed like a long distance then, but, you know, ... I guess it was longer, because you didn't have I-80, you didn't have superhighways, but, anyway, that was kind of fun, you know, the two weeks we spent there. ... Then, after that, we did various other things, including going up to the Adirondacks, a place called Camp of the Woods, around Speculator, New York. ...

SH: Did you go with the family? Were these trips just you and your brother?

JK: Oh, no, with the family.

SH: The whole family.

JK: We always went with the family. Then, we started traveling and did lots of stuff like that. In '48, we went and toured New York State; no, wait, ... yes, that was '48. My grandmother; growing up, I lived, or we lived, in the same house with my grandparents.

SH: Your father's family?

JK: My father's family, yes, and then, on every Sunday, we would go, I mean, regularly, we would go visit my mother's family, out on the farm, you know, ... but, anyway, we grew up with my grandparents. So, there was six of us around the table and all that, and the reason we ended up living with them [was], my father, as I say, was very close to his family, and, anyway, when

they got married, they actually went to Leonia, New Jersey, and lived in an apartment. A year-and-a-half later, the word came down; they got married, by the way, in 1930. ... Word came down that, oh, his mother was very ill and ... she wasn't expected to live very long. So, in 1932, or maybe early '33, my brother was born then. He was born in '32, November 22nd, ... same day that Kennedy got killed, I mean, not the same year, but the same day that Kennedy got killed, and so, they moved in with my grandparents, and, anyway, my grandmother didn't die until 1948, of a heart attack at the age of eighty. ... So, anyway, that year, we went and toured New York State and took my grandfather with us, and then, the following year, in spring, I remember, I was sick that day, and, anyway, it was a nasty day. ... For some reason, my grandfather started talking to my mother, who was his daughter-in-law, and he told stories about his [life], about where he was born and brought up. He'd never discussed it before, never discussed it, and so, she remembered a number of these things, and you know he died of a heart attack that night? I mean, you know, this is coincidence, probably, but it was something. In fact, both of them had died of heart attacks, right in the house, and I was there, and that was very traumatic, because ...

SH: It had to have been.

JK: Oh, yes, I mean, I could hear them scream, I mean, literally screaming, and, oh, I mean, as a kid, I was traumatized. It was terrible, but, anyway, that was, more or less, the situation. ...

SH: What about the church? Were you involved in the church at all?

JK: Yes. ... This goes back to my father's association with the church. He was alone, you know, ... so-to-speak, and, frankly, ... as people would say now, he didn't [have] much of a childhood, because he actually started working when he was nine years old. He would help deliver milk, and he talked about running behind the wagon in the snow, and all this kind of stuff. ... Lord knows how few times he did that, but, anyway, "Run behind the wagon in the snow," milk wagon, you know, [laughter] and, anyway, but he was sort of alone. Anyway, the local minister at the Dutch Reformed church there, I'm not sure how they got connected up with him, but my grandmother and grandfather never went to church, but they wanted him to go, see. ... The minister took a liking to him, and he was actually there for over twenty years; I mean, the minister was. He was an interesting fellow. ... At that time, there were three churches in town, and so, all of the [clergy, the] Catholic priest and the two ministers'd get together, and they were friendly and all that, ... but, anyway, they had some interesting things. My father'd say, like, Reverend (Kelder?), that was the Dutch Reformed minister, would say, he says, "Yes," he says, "you know, I didn't drink until I was fifty," he says, "and you know," he says, "anybody who drinks before they're fifty is crazy, [laughter] but, if they don't drink after they're fifty, they're crazy, too." [laughter] You know, so, I mean, that was one of the things, and then, the Catholic priest, oh, my gosh, he said, he had a story they tell; [to Sandra] are you Catholic?

SH: No, sir.

JK: Oh, good, 'ole Jim, [laughter] you can call me good, 'ole Jim, but, anyway, he had a saying, he always told these, his buddies there, he says, "Well, you know," he says, "I was actually born a Protestant and all that. I grew up and went to school," maybe he went in the war, I don't know, he says he got out and he said, he looked around for a bit, he said, "What would be the best

paying job he could get?" and he said, "I'll be a Catholic priest." [laughter] Now, I mean, you know, there's probably a little bit of levity in there.

SH: I am sure.

JK: But, these [are] stories, you know, that you hear.

SH: Wonderful stories.

JK: Well, yes, I mean, well, this is people, you know.

SH: Right.

JK: There's so many stories, people stories, I could go through.

SH: Did your father really become a member of the Dutch Reformed Church?

JK: ... He not only became a member of the Church, but he was on the consistory, which is, like, the ruling body, I guess. I guess he was an elder, he was a church treasurer, and he was all of this until he died, you know, and, yes, the church meant an awful lot to him.

SH: Was that the same church that your mother went to as well?

JK: Oh, well, yes, after they got married, yes, but, I mean, prior to that, she had gone to the [Presbyterian Church]. My grandfather was in the Presbyterian Church and the whole family was, but, actually, it was kind of interesting, because, I guess, they used to do adult baptism, I believe, in the Presbyterian Church, and my mother told me once that ... she and her father got baptized at the same time, and so, anyway, but that was kind of different, because, in the Dutch Reformed Church, they had infant baptism, and then, later on, Confirmation, see, when you're a teenager. ... I went through that whole thing, and, after I went to college, I drifted away from it, and, anyway, ... I got married, well, that'll probably come out later, but, I mean, the woman, my wife now, is a member of a church called the Church of Christ. ... The history of that church goes back to a fellow named Alexander Campbell, and, if you want to get into that aspect, there was a fellow named Barton Stone [who] was involved in that, and the Church of Christ is quite strong, if you will, out West and in the South, same as the Baptists and all that. ... She is a very strong Christian, and, anyway, well, ... [for] some reason, we managed to come to an agreement on how to live together, and we've been happily married, I'm happy to say, for, well, it'll be forty-six years this year.

SH: Congratulations, that is wonderful.

JK: Yes. Well, you know, she's a wonderful woman, and I consider myself lucky, you know, and we've had two wonderful children, which has been very nice.

SH: We can talk a little bit about them as well. Let us talk about your education in Fort Lee. Did you go to public school?

JK: Oh, yes, [in] Fort Lee, I went to Coytesville. Well, the Fort Lee school system had several grammar schools feeding the junior/senior high school, and so, the school that I went to [was] in Coytesville, Coytesville School Number 3. Let's see, ... the point that I'm eventually getting to is, I went three-and-a-half years, and then, the school was condemned, because ... they had to fix it up. So, they bussed us down to the school in Palisades, New Jersey, and I finished out through sixth grade down there. So, it was three-and-a-half years in Coytesville School Number 3, and then, Palisades School Number 4, I believe it was. I finished up then the last two-and-a-half years there. ... Probably, the most memorable teacher we had there was our sixth grade teacher, who was the first male teacher that we had, which [was] not surprisingly, because the war, you know, cut down the number of male teachers around. So, I served there. So, I was there, as I say, I got out at sixth grade, but the thing that I remember about him is that he had so many students who would come back, you know, from the various [classes that had gone on] to high school, and they'd come in, just talk to him and chat with him, you know. So, he made quite an impression on a lot of people, but he introduced us to so many things. He would read to us, you know, which was nice, and just it was a very nice educational experience, as much as education can be. ... Then, I went to junior/senior high school, Fort Lee Junior/Senior High School, and the junior high school was, actually, ... seventh and eighth grade, and then, senior high school was ninth through graduation, and then, after that, I looked around for a place to go to school, because my parents, of course, wanted me to go to college, as they wanted Bill to.

SH: That was something they expected.

JK: They were hoping to.

SH: Your brother had already started at Rutgers.

JK: Oh, yes, oh, yes. Well, in fact, when I graduated from high school, he had graduated the year before, from Rutgers.

SH: That is right.

JK: Yes, and so, I didn't know what I was going to do, and the guidance counselor said, "Well, you know, you have this background, you have good math skills and that," and my father was anxious for me to go to engineering school and I just [said], "Oh, yes, sure, I'll go to engineering school," [laughter] ... but, with Bill, my brother, he really didn't know what he wanted to do and my father was concerned. Then, he came down and they talked to the counselor who was here at Rutgers. He says, "Oh, that's nothing unusual. We have people down here all the time with no idea what they want to do." [laughter] So, they suggested business administration. He said, "All right," and, of course, he did well. My brother's quite a fellow. He [earned] very good grades, and, you know, all through, ... grade school, grammar school, high school, even though he was a year younger, at least, than the rest of the kids, socially, very adept fellow, just a wonderful big brother, you know.

SH: That is good to hear.

JK: Oh, yes, just a wonderful big brother, but, anyway, he went through. ...

SH: Did you ever come down to Rutgers to visit the campus, go to football games, or anything like that?

JK: No, no, let's see, I think we came down, maybe, once or twice, to pick him up or something, but he came home on weekends, yes. ... He had a girlfriend, and they were pretty tight. ... They actually went together from the time they got out of high school, for eight years, ... but he didn't marry her, see, and so, she finally said, "Well, enough of this," and she went out and she got married. ... He was in the Air Force and got out in '55, must have been '55, and then, he knocked around for a few years, and then, he got into a job, a mysterious job, in Washington. [laughter] ... Anyway, all we were told, "Well, who do you work for?" he said, "Well, I work for the Air Force." Well, to make a long story short, he actually went into the CIA, and that was in '56. He had knocked around a bit, worked for a surveyor and some other people in the meantime, but he was in CIA and he got out, he retired from them, in 1989, I think it was. ... Little did we know, but he had risen in the ranks of the CIA to a very high position, and I really can't tell you much of what he did, because he virtually never told me a thing about it, but, from other people I know who knew him, they would let me know some of these things about him, that I never knew. So, yes, Bill was just never [forthcoming]; he tended to be secretive about things.

SH: What a time period in our country's history.

JK: Yes, he was a true "cold warrior," actually. You have to understand that. I mean, this was the time when the Cold War was going on, and this was when all the stuff was done by the intelligence agencies.

SH: It is definitely true.

JK: Yes.

SH: To go back to your growing up, were you part of the Boy Scouts?

JK: Yes, yes. I was a Boy Scout for a number of years, not a very successful one, but I enjoyed the Boy Scouts, you know, the outdoor life and stuff like that, and what else? I don't know. What else were you wondering?

SH: Did you participate in any sort of athletics or any programs in your town?

JK: Like school activities and that? ... Well, in school activities, I had be drawn into things, like, the music teacher was worried about me, I think, partially, because I had taken a violin and, frankly, I didn't enjoy it, but ... he felt I should get involved in something. So, he got me into the junior high orchestra and, finally, after a year or so, I said, "Look," I said, "I just do not like this." I mean, I felt sorry for the guy, because this was his life and, ... you know, he certainly didn't feel too good, but, a few years later, he saw me standing there and we needed a color guard in the band, and he said, "Do you want to become a color guard?" Well, blah, blah, blah, and I said,

"Well, all right." Well, that was kind of nice, because you'd go to all the football games, [laughter] or you get in the parades and that, and it was fun, you know. You got in free, and you got [to] talking to the other kids and stuff like this, and it was something that was probably good for me, yes.

SH: Did you have a hobby?

JK: Photography.

SH: Was it?

JK: Yes, a little bit of a photographer, ... and hiking, camping, you know, and I rode bikes around with the kids, and, oh, gee.

SH: You talked about some of the family vacations. Did you ever go into New York City? Was that ever a destination for you?

JK: ... Oh, we'd go in it from time to time, but I never could warm up to the city. ... I have a love-hate relationship with the city. It's still the most vibrant city in the world, as far as I'm concerned, you know what I'm saying, but I never did particularly enjoy just going to the city to go to a show, or this, that and the other thing. My mother played cards with a bunch of sort of family members and that, and they'd go to different homes, you know, and so, I went in with her several times, when I was smaller, went downtown. I remember, we used to go downtown to get glasses, because there was a place in around Chambers [Street], Liberty Street, which is down, you know, in the old New York City, where they sold glasses for a pittance. ... Anyway, we used to go on down there and we'd get glasses at Louis M. Ente, was the name of these people, and I'll tell you, they sold glasses, they did the examination, sold glasses, for virtually nothing, and so, that was one of my memories of New York City. We used to go to the cemetery when we had family gatherings. See, a number of the German relatives on my grandmother's side ...

SH: This would be your father's mother.

JK: Yes, father's mother's side, my paternal grandmother's side, of course, lived in [and] around New York City, and a lot of them worked in the breweries, yes, because of the background there. ... Anyway, we would often have family reunions in the city, [at] various places, the Bronx or wherever, and so, anyway, we'd get together there. There was, on that side of the family, as far as kids went, well, there's my brother and I, and my cousin, Henry, who was, you know, one of my father's cousins. He was my father's cousin's only son, in fact, and we would get together ... at these gatherings and do things and stuff like that. He eventually ... went to William and Mary, studied accounting and ended up in what turned out to be a Fortune 500 Company in Atlanta, Georgia, as a comptroller and officer of the company, you know, lots of money, and, anyway, he still is down there. We've seen him a few times, you know, but, anyway, ... we'd go over to the city and we'd go to the cemeteries there, Woodlawn Cemetery, where these folks were buried, and, now, of course, I don't know if anybody goes back there. You know, I mean, maybe somebody in the family does, but we don't, obviously. We live in New Mexico, really.

SH: [laughter] Yes, that would be a bit of a hike. Did you do this around Memorial Day? Was that the traditional time?

JK: No, it would be like Thanksgiving, you know, the times when you had family gatherings.

SH: Okay.

JK: See, and that might have been on, I don't remember if we went Labor Day, but I remember Thanksgiving. Christmas, they'd always come to our house, partially because we were about the only ones who had children, you know, my parents. There was not a plethora of children of any of the members of the family.

SH: You have answered one of my next questions. [laughter]

JK: Yes, yes, right. Now, on my mother's side, there was, let's see, well, the five children in the family, of those folks, of the five, four of the children got married. ... Let's see, so, my mother had my brother and I, my Aunt Ruth, that's the third in the family, well, going from oldest to youngest, the second was my Uncle Herbert, who was ... born in 1903. My mother was born in 1901, he was born in 1903. He never married. He was a lifelong bachelor, with many stories to tell about his service time and all that, and then, my Aunt Ruth is born in 1905 and she had twins, and that's the cousin we're staying with now, and then, my Aunt Julia was born in 1911. She just died about two years ago, at the age of ninety-four, I think it was, and my Uncle Jim, the youngest, was born in 1915 and he died a number of years ago, at the age of eighty. He was in his eighties, basically, but my mother died in 1979 and she was seventy-eight at the time. My Uncle Herbert was the first to die; I think he died around seventy years old. My Aunt Ruth died at the age of ninety-four, almost, ninety-three, ninety-four, and my Uncle Jim, my Aunt Julia, as I say, died at the age of ninety-four, my uncle in his eighties. So, in some ways, they were a long-lived family.

SH: Yes, sounds like it.

JK: Yes, so, on the other hand, though, when you get to my father's side of the family, there's heart trouble in the family, and I've had ...

SK: You have talked about some of that.

JK: I have some of that, yes.

SH: You talked about your parents expecting you to go to college.

JK: Yes, right.

SH: Did they ever say why they expected you to go, or was this just something that they were working hard for?

JK: Oh, well, this was, you know, the old mentality, *the* mentality, and I don't knock it. I mean, education is the key to success and every parent wants their children to do better, and so, "Do better than us," and all that, and I was not adverse to it and I sort of felt the same way when my children grew up. I said, "You know, I don't really care what you do, but I do hope that you go to college," and they did, you know, yes.

SH: What do you remember about World War II? You were just a young guy, but you have just such a fabulous memory.

JK: Oh, yes.

SH: I just have to ask.

JK: Well, you know, it's kind of interesting you should say that, you should ask that question about World War II, because I don't. Like, a number of people who I went to school with remembered Pearl Harbor Day, like they were riding in a car, and then, they heard it announced that the bombs had dropped or something. Well, ... that didn't happen to me, and all I remember is ... my mother saying, in a worried voice to me, she says, "Now, ... we're going to have a war," and she'd lived through World War I, see, and, sure enough, we had a war. Now, I don't remember too much about the happenings, except that we were, of course, fighting the Germans and the Japanese. Now, I remember that, and, toward the end of the war, like, I remember when V-J, no, D-Day, occurred. It happened on my mother's birthday, in fact, June 6th, [1944], and I do remember the stories that we'd hear from the radio announcers about how pilots were shot down and tortured and killed and all the things like that. I don't remember a lot of the reports, which some people do, about saying, "Oh, yes, and we've lost so many planes, we've lost so many this [or that]." I don't remember that, but I do remember, we'd go out and play army, you know, all the kids.

SH: Did you?

JK: Oh, sure, all the kids, we'd play air force and army and navy, or whatever ... you felt like doing, you know, a lot of that, and, yes, I remember a lot of the patriotic songs you'd sing, and a lot of ... the feelings that were worked up, and listening to the, what they call now "old-time radio." A lot of the theme was the war, Hop Harrigan, and Tank Tinker was his buddy, and I don't know whether this rings a bell with you or not. [Editor's Note: Hop Harrigan was a popular children's character in comics, on the radio, on the ABC Blue Network, and in film serials during the war, often accompanied by his sidekick, Tank Tinker.]

SH: Yes. [laughter]

JK: And, yes, and Captain Midnight, and all these guys'd go to war. Of course, the one radio story that you never forget is the Lone Ranger. [laughter] I mean, that was fantastic. ...

SH: Did you go to the movies often as a young kid?

JK: Well, we did go to the movies. Oh, World War II, yes, okay, another big thing that I remember about the war, my father was an engineer for the General Electric Company. Now, he's born in 1902. So, when the war broke out, in 1941, of course, he was a married man with children and he worked for the General Electric Company and, as an engineer, he worked in the shipyards. ... In fact, he even told me one time [that] he doesn't think he could have gotten into the war effort even if he volunteered, because he was in what we'd call a critical industry now, and he said that he worked out of, well, I know he worked in, the shipyard in Kearny, New Jersey, but he also worked out of [the] Brooklyn Navy Yard, and he had a pass for Brooklyn Navy Yard. He said, "I have ... such a powerful pass." He could get in any time of the day or night, and so on, and, in fact, he even said that he went out on sea trials, yes, because they'd installed General Electric equipment, and he went out on sea trials and he said, "I probably had more sea time than a lot of Navy people." Well, of course, a lot of Navy people never went to sea, [laughter] so, that's just probably true, but I do remember, he was really convinced of how important his job was. Then, he was on the job and he had a misstep and he broke his ankle, or something like that. ... They put him in a cast, and he had to not work for about six weeks, and, wonder of it all, the world went on without him, you know, [laughter] but, anyway, that taught him something. He said, "Well, you know, okay, maybe the world can go on without me," and so on, like that, but, anyway, yes, he was very important.

SH: Do you remember anything about the rationing?

JK: Yes, oh, yes. Yes, I remember, we had to go down to the high school to get rationing things. Now, my father, because of his job, and he was driving all over, he had the best, you know, the highest amount of gas ration. He'd get as much gas, he had the highest amount of gas rationing, [as] he could get. Yes, the rationing I remember, sugar was low, and we'd do what we can to get substitutes for sugar, and one of the things, you'd get, I guess it was corn syrup, and you used that. ... Let's see, oh, yes, then, there was the headlight thing, have you heard about this? where people were told to paint, either paint or cover, the top of their headlights, you know, to keep the lights down, ... in case there was, you know, an air raid, or something like that, and we had air raids.

SH: This was practiced.

JK: Well, yes, yes. ...

SH: This was in school that you would have them.

JK: Well, I mean, not only that, but they'd run the sirens once in awhile, as I remember, maybe to test them or something like that, and then, they'd ... run the "all clear," or something like this. I think you're supposed to; I don't even remember specifically, but I remember that there were air raids like that. ... Those are the memories that I had of World War II. Yes, okay, I guess I can't go too much [further]. I remember the end of the war.

SH: Do you?

JK: Oh, sure, sure. ...

SH: You might have been, like, nine years old.

JK: Yes, yes, something like that, that was in, ... well, V-E Day was 1945, and I was born in 1936, so, I wasn't quite nine, see, because I was nine in December, ... but I remember, V-E Day was announced. Oh, gee, that was great. You know, everybody was happy, and then, later on, that was in May, I believe it was, and, in August, I remember, on *Captain Midnight*, they threw in this segment where they mentioned [in a really animated voice], "Oh, oh, Americans have dropped a bomb on Japan, the atomic bomb," and, anyway, so, I said, "Oh, well," you know, "atomic bomb, what's that?" and, lo and behold, it was true, a few days later. In fact, that had happened, we were in New Jersey when we heard about the atomic bombs being dropped, and then, we went on vacation, we were in Maryland, when the war was officially over. ... We were visiting relatives down there, and, I remember, they had a bell on their property, and I remember going out and ringing the bell, and you could hear, this was out on a farm, but you could hear, all around you, noise and stuff, like people celebrating. It was fantastic, you know.

SH: That is a great memory, yes.

JK: Well, oh, yes, yes, ... that was quite a thing, and, you know, later on, the interesting thing about it was that the atomic bomb, of course, ushered in the atomic age ... I have often said. I have often said, so many times, ... the best thing that happened for the nuclear age was the atomic bomb, because, you know, all the research in that brought the nuclear industry about, and the potential, but the worst thing that happened to it was the atomic bomb, because of the fear that it ... brought around the people. ... From 1970 to, I retired in, at the end of 1996, I worked at the Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory, as a nuclear reactor designer, and, in those days, of course, there was still an awful lot of fear and stuff like that, about, "Oh, gosh, nuclear energy, it's terrible, you know, and unhealthy," and so on, like that. ... As a result of that, the potential to build and tap nuclear energy was given a big setback. Now, a lot of people would say, "Well, it deserves to be. We should never develop it," [and] so on, like that, but, of course, ... you know, I was a nuclear reactor designer, so, I had a different viewpoint on it, but the thing is, though, I'm finding now, now that the energy crisis is coming on, and I think people are getting older and the older people are dying off, ... the people who were really afraid of [it], and the activists, are beginning to, you know, their fervor is going away, and I suspect that we're going to start getting back into ... the development of nuclear energy, and partially because other countries are doing it. Now, France has been developing nuclear energy for years, I mean, twenty, thirty years, and even Japan is doing it, and, of course, they were the country that was most affected, why, the only country that's been subjected to an atomic bomb. So, I think that's going to come around, and, frankly, I don't know what your personal opinions are on that, but there's been a lot of hysteria about it and a lot of people coming to conclusions that are, in my view, not valid. ...

SH: You had to have been one of those children who were taught to get under your desk, and the Civil Defense emblems and the others.

JK: Yes.

SH: You have to remember the people who built, what were they called, the shelters?

JK: Yes, well, shelter chiefs, or something like that.

SH: Yes.

JK: Well, you know, surely. ...

SH: Did you have that?

JK: No, we didn't have it in school. ... No, we really didn't have much of that, no. I mean, I don't remember it [happening] to us. Now, on the other hand, when my wife, either my wife or my aunt, did some teaching, ... they were talking about drops, where, if you got this alarm, you're supposed to drop down a certain way, and maybe go under the desk, or something. No, we didn't. I do not remember that at all, nothing, and I got out of high school in '54, and, anyway, I don't remember that at all, but, yes, I do remember the Civil Defense Corps coming up. ... The shop teacher, in fact, ... as part of the thing, helped make these batons that the shelter people, the Civil Defense people, would carry around with them as weapons, cudgels, if you will. Yes, so, they were doing that while I was in high school, but, really, I don't remember too much of that. It just didn't affect me that much, no, and hiding under desks, no. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: Yes, thank you for that break. We need to go back and talk about when you first came to Rutgers. We had been talking about the Civil Defense program and the fact that you figured that was something you were not aware of.

JK: Yes, that's right, yes. Incidentally, I wanted to throw in some history, that you never asked about my mother's family, but, actually, ... some of her relatives, ... they were French Huguenots, came to the United States in 1663.

SH: Really?

JK: Yes, and then, when they came here, they joined the Dutch Reformed Church, incidentally, because there weren't many Huguenot Church [institutions] here. ... There's an interesting story about that, down in Albuquerque. ... There was a young neighbor across the street from me and he came over and was chatting with us once and he was talking about it, his background. ... He says, "Yes," he says, "my relatives came to the United States in 1661. They came to New Amsterdam on a ship called the *Bontekoe*," and I got up, I ran back to my genealogy stuff, and there is a genealogy of the Demarest Family, which is part of, you know, the (Holmes?) Family background, and it was written by a fellow from the [New Brunswick Theological] Seminary here, by the way, named Demarest, in 1886. ... It goes back [through] the generations of the family, which I put in the Family Tree Maker, but, anyway, sure enough, I looked it up and I showed it to the guy, that our relatives had come in 1663, on the *Bontekoe*, to New Amsterdam, and this guy said, "Yes," he said, "well, my relatives founded the first brewery in New Amsterdam. Probably, your relatives drank some of the beer from ... my relatives' brewery;" okay, well, moving along.

SH: I think that is a fascinating story. Did that have any connection to why you came to Rutgers, because it was a Dutch Reformed school?

JK: No, no. It was Rutgers as *the* State University of New Jersey, by the way, the only state university that is called, like, "Rutgers," you know, it doesn't have a [state name]; well, that isn't entirely true. Well, all right, it's the only state that does not have a university called the "University of New Jersey" or "New Jersey State," the only state in the United States. Now, there are other state universities [without the state name in their name], ... like, Purdue is a state university, I didn't realize that, either, but, often, I've talked about, "Oh, yes, I went to Rutgers," and they think private school, but I said, "No, a lot of people don't realize it's a state university." In fact, when my brother went here, ... in '49, he was told that it was cheaper to go to Penn State as a non-resident than it was to go to Rutgers University as a New Jersey resident. That's what he was told.

SH: Really?

JK: That's what he was told.

SH: Really? I have never heard that. That is amazing, because that is one of the things that the World War II generation alumni are coming to speak to our seminar about.

JK: Yes.

SH: They regale the students with the cost of their education, what they paid for a semester or year, but there was a Demarest who many people of that generation, the 1930s and 1940s, talk about. He had a speech impediment where he had a whistle, whether it was caused by his teeth or something else, but they called him "Whistling Willie" Demarest. [Editor's Note: Dr. William Henry Steele Demarest was the eleventh President of Rutgers University (then College).]

JK: ... Oh, really, yes? When you said "Willie," I thought of "Silent Willie."

SH: William the Silent, [a statue of William I, Prince of Orange, situated on Voorhees Mall on Rutgers University's New Brunswick Campus].

JK: Yes, yes.

SH: Two different things.

JK: Yes, two different things, yes.

SH: Interesting that that name pops up again.

JK: Yes, anyway, going back. ...

SH: Talk about your high school. You talked about being in the color guard and not really knowing where you wanted to go or what you wanted to do. What other institutions did you look at besides Rutgers?

JK: Yes. I didn't actually. My father had mentioned Stevens University [Stevens Institute of Technology] was a fine school, and it certainly is. ... At the time, now, he was told, this was interesting, he came down to Rutgers with my brother and he was talking about engineering and stuff like that. ... They said, "Oh, yes," they said, "we actually admit fewer people into the Rutgers College of Engineering than they do at Stevens." ... I don't know whether people [who] were turned away from Rutgers went to Stevens, but he said that kind of surprised him, because he, working in the engineering field, said Stevens had a very fine reputation, and it still does, you know. Well, I assume it still does, and he said, "Well, why is that?" He [the Rutgers engineering administrator] said, "Well," he said, "the truth is, we have such a small engineering school that we could be more picky," which is interesting, since it's a state university. In fact, my engineering class, when I graduated, I believe there were 118 of us total, of all the engineers, I mean, you know, [including] mechanical, electrical, agricultural, ceramic, civil and industrial. I think that was all that they were.

SH: Which engineering course did you take?

JK: Mechanical engineering.

SH: Was there a reason for that?

JK: Well, an "engineer's engineer" is a mechanical engineer, ... part of the original group.

SH: Okay.

JK: Yes, yes, that was it. I don't know, it just struck me.

SH: What jobs did you have in high school? Did you have to earn any money to prepare to come to college?

JK: No. My father said, "I'll pay your way, all the way," and that was a nice aspect of it. The only jobs I ever did was, I worked at my grandfather's farm, and, you know, that was, well, [if] you want to work three days a week, you worked three days a week, or whatever, like that, but I learned a lot, a lot about working on a farm, or a chicken farm, you know. ... It had its enjoyable moments, it had its hard moments, you know, but it was a good thing, and we helped my grandfather out.

SH: When your brother was going to college here at Rutgers, at that time, the Korean War was going on. Was that a concern in the family? Did they talk about it at all?

JK: Well, we talked about it, of course, and, you know, it started in 1950, as I remember about it, late August or early September 1950, and, sure, we were aware of the Korean War and all that. [Editor's Note: The Korean War began on June 25, 1950.] It was going to be over in six

months, and then, the Chinese got into it and that changed that, but, since Bill was; see, that was part of the reason for staying in ROTC, is you got a deferment, and the feeling that we had was, "Well, if you're going to go in anyway," of course, the draft was on then, the feeling was, "As long as you're going in, you might just as well go in as an officer, rather than an enlisted man." ... Bill, his first two years was in Army ROTC, but he thought, "Well, the Air Force might be a better deal to get into," and so, he got into it and got out and went into the service. In my case, you know, I just followed along, except I went right into [the] Air Force ROTC and finished it through.

SH: ROTC was still mandatory when you came here.

JK: ROTC was mandatory, whether it was Army or Air Force, yes.

SH: Why did you choose the Air Force over the Army?

JK: Because I figured I'd go into the Air Force, and so, why not go into the Air Force ROTC?

SH: You really knew that that was the service you wanted to be in.

JK: Oh, yes, sure.

SH: It was just assumed that you would be in the service at some point.

JK: Yes, right. Incidentally, a little aside on that, when I got out of the service, I found out; of course, understand, I was an engineer and I'd gotten into industry. I always, practically always, worked in defense-related industries and I found out, why, there were lots of people, engineers, working there who never served and never would have to worry about it, because they always had critical industry deferments, I later learned. Now, if I had known that ahead of time, would I have not gone into ROTC? I don't know. I always had a patriotic thing, carried over from World War II, you know, and the excitement and all that kind of stuff.

SH: On the more practical side, how difficult was it to be an engineering student and still find time for ROTC? Was it hard, because, then, you went on to Advanced ROTC?

JK: ... Yes. I don't remember it being a problem. I mean, this was what you did, you know, just like, for instance, as I pointed out, I think in my write-up on this Rutgers University stuff, I mean, I had to take 156 credits in four years, ... figuring that averaged out, I believe, to nineteen-and-a-half credits per semester, but that was what everybody did. I mean, [if] you wanted to be an engineer, that's what you did. So, I just did it, and, I mean, that was the way most of us felt, you know. We just [felt], "Well, that was what you did," and I didn't realize it, but most people who go through, I think it was true then, also, all they had to get was 120 credits to get a bachelor's degree. Well, I had 156, which is thirty-six more, you know, and, later on, when I went for my master's degree at University of Nevada, Reno, that was '62 to '63, why, the people out there were talking, they said, "Why, we have to get more credits than the normal student. We have to get 144 to get a [degree]." I said, "Well, gee, I had to get 156," but, you know, oh, you could quibble about it. Maybe it was the way they counted credits or something like that.

SH: What were some of your first memories of being here at Rutgers?

JK: Well, of course, the, well, just being there on your own for a change. You know, you're out from under the parents, you had the freedom. I mean, the men could come and go as they pleased, any time of the day or night, and stuff like that, ... meeting all your comrades, who you remember years later and stuff like that.

SH: Did other students from your high school come to Rutgers?

JK: Yes. ... There were four of us who came. ... This was my high school class. One of them, I was going to room with, but we ended up, he was on one side of Demarest Hall, on one side of the hall at Demarest Hall, with another roommate, I was across, right across, the hall from them, and so, we didn't room together, but we were close. Another was a fellow whose father was a physician and he was coming here to go to premed, and then, there was another fellow, who was one of the brightest kids in our class, and he came down here and he was studying something else. I don't remember what. So, what happened? Well, the fellow who I was going to room with got into the partying scene and he flunked out after a year-and-a-half, and I don't know that he ever finished college. He might have, but he's back in Fort Lee and he and his brothers went into the trucking business, buying and selling trucks. The other fellow, whose father was a physician, didn't do well grade-wise. He ended up with a very low average and he couldn't have gotten into medical school with that. So, from what I heard, his father sent him to school over in France to study, you know, so [that] he could get into medical school. I don't believe he ever got into medical school, but, you know, for the high school reunions, he lives up there and sees people. The other fellow is kind of too bad. I still remember him, because ... he came to the United States after World War II and he walked into our fifth grade class and he couldn't speak English, and he was wearing some drab clothes with the typical, I forgot what kind of hat you'd call it, but what you'd think of a displaced person from Germany wearing, but he was quite smart, very, very smart, and he'd do good in math and science and everything that I was [good at], and stuff like that. ... He, unfortunately, didn't have the money to continue. His grade point average was very high, but, after a year-and-a-half, he had to drop out and he went into the Navy, became a Navy aviator, and finished out a career as a Navy aviator, and, also, did other things in the Navy. So, he had a very successful life afterwards, but, of the four of us, I was the only one who graduated from Rutgers after four years, and probably the only one who graduated with a degree after four years. I don't know. ...

SH: You were housed at Demarest.

JK: [I was in] Demarest Hall the first year. The other three years, ... I lived in Ford Hall.

SH: Were your roommates at Ford engineers?

JK: No, no. ... My roommates at Ford Hall, my first year, I had two roommates who were ag [agricultural] students, another roommate who was in education, and, unfortunately, well, okay, he stayed in education, but the poor fellow was ill-suited to education. I mean, you know, he was certainly bright enough to get a degree, but he was so withdrawn, literally withdrawn, that,

finally, when he got to senior year, he went through student teaching and he flunked student teaching, in your senior year, ... which was sad, but nobody counseled him otherwise, which, I think, is sad. The other two guys, the two ag students, one of them, they eventually switched over to agricultural economics, from regular ag programs, and one of them did very, very well in school and he ended up getting a master's degree and working for the government, Department of Agriculture, or something. ... A strange thing that happened, I've contacted him [in] the past few years, but he said, in 1963; ... now, remember, ... we got out in ...

SH: 1958

JK: '58, that's correct. ... Somewhere in the '60s, maybe '69, something like that, but ... he claims he got into something in Washington, DC, and he became a "whistleblower" and he never worked after that, he said. He still lives here in New Jersey, but, as far as I know, he never worked after that. His wife worked for McGraw-Hill and had a pretty good job, and I won't mention names, but he wrote a book, who he published through my same publisher, in fact, ... a book on philosophy and spirituality, and I'm not sure what all happened to him. The other guy stayed on, got a master's degree here [at Rutgers University], and he disappeared. ... I found out, recently, in contacting the first student, you know, the whistleblower type of thing. We decided to track him down and ... Cliff Ellis checked it out in the alumni bulletin and, apparently, this guy died in 1989, I think it was, at the age of fifty-one. Well, anyway, at the age of fifty-one, he died, I don't remember the year, and then, the withdrawn student, I said I think I found him on the Social Security Death Index. I believe he died in 2003. ... Okay, so, anyway, that was my sophomore year. Then, my junior year, the teacher guy, he and I; see, you had the suites in Ford Hall, you know, you had two side rooms and a big room. Well, this fellow and I shared the big room, and then, one of the preceptors was in one of the rooms, and it was another guy in the other one, and so, that went through my junior year. Then, in my senior year, I did room in one of the two-man suites. I did room with an electrical engineering student and we got through that year. ...

SH: Is it true that someone who was in the engineering program needed a good roommate with good study habits?

JK: [laughter] Well, ... maybe so, I don't know, but, anyway, I don't know, I seemed to get by. I wasn't out to get the top grades. I mean, I just wanted to get through and I was fortunate [that] I got through, after four years, without failing anything. ... I was a member of the mechanical engineering honor fraternity, [Pi Tau Sigma]. ... In writing this up, I also was one of the managing editors for *The Rutgers Engineer*, which, at that time, was a student engineering magazine. ...

SH: Was that just starting or had it been ongoing?

JK: That had been ongoing. ... Anyway, at the time, the editor-in-chief, who did most of the work, of course, was a fellow named Kosta Tsipis, and Kosta went on; he was an electrical engineering student, but he also always wanted to be a physicist. So, as soon as we graduated, he went to go to graduate school in physics here, and I don't remember if he got a master's degree here or not, but he eventually went on to Columbia University, got his PhD, and then, went to

MIT and he taught. He's now retired, but, at MIT, when you retire, ... you could also teach and I guess he must [have taught]; maybe he isn't teaching now, but he was also a consultant for the Greek government. He was from Greece. He was a Fulbright Fellowship fellow and he and I were quite friendly through the years. [Editor's Note: The Fulbright Program allows scholars to conduct their studies or research outside of their home country.] ... Anyway, it's kind of funny, I never was interested in joining a fraternity or anything like that, but he belonged to this fraternity. I couldn't tell you the Greek letters for it, but they called it "the Zoo," and they had no restrictions [about] who could join it and they didn't have fraternity hazing or anything like that. ... He tried to get my roommate, my senior year roommate, and I to join. We weren't interested, but, well, we went over and, once in awhile, I'd go talk to those guys. ...

SH: Was there a freshman initiation?

JK: Well, sort of, yes.

SH: Did you have to wear dinks, [small hats with a student's class number on it]?

JK: Oh, yes, we had the hats and you had to go through these freshman rules, and, of course, then, there was, and I wrote this up in it, but, anyway, the thing about it was, ... they had this contest where the sophomore and the freshmen [classes], you know, were to compete. ... I don't know whether it's true, but we were probably the only freshman class who lost this thing. [laughter] We had to keep up these rules for a while later, and they had said, in the write-up, "Well, usually, the freshmen win. The sophomores rarely win." Well, by gosh, the sophomores beat us [in] two out of three events, and so, you know, that was memorable. You asked about memorable stuff, too. During freshman orientation week, we went to the engineering auditorium and Dean [Elmer C.] Easton, who was the bachelor dean at that time, [got up to speak]. He was well-recognized. He had received "teacher of the year" and all that kind of stuff, but, anyway, ... I still remember, he got up there and he said, "Well, take a good look around you, because only three out of eight of you will graduate with degrees in engineering, oh, maybe after four years, but [not] with degrees in engineering." ... Of course, we didn't believe [him]. "Hey, you know, we were smart. Other people, this would happen to, not us. We'd all get through." Well, after the first semester, you saw people dropping out like mad, or switching, you know, switching majors. ... So, he was probably more correct, but I later found out, ... from other people, that no matter what school you went to, engineering school, they'd tell you the same thing, except ...

SH: Sometimes, the numbers are just a little bit different, though

JK: Yes, yes. One guy said, "Look at the guy in front of you, to both sides and behind you, because only one of you will probably graduate with a degree in engineering." That's one out of five, and we said three out of eight, you know, but, oh, yes, I mean, it took its toll.

SH: It is a tough program.

JK: It took its toll, and I've heard some people say that, in some schools, ... engineering's the toughest program that they have, but I'll tell you, for a four-year degree, it's a pretty good degree, because you can go out, typically, and get a very good starting salary. ...

SH: How did you become interested in writing for the engineering magazine? How often was it published?

JK: How it was published? How often was it published? It was, I believe, four times a year. How did I get interested in writing? ... Well, for one thing, I think I could always write pretty well, and my freshman composition teacher felt that I could write pretty well, and I didn't discourage him from that viewpoint. [laughter] ... Anyway, time went on and I said, "Well, gee, that sounds like a fun thing to do." ... Oh, I wrote a number of articles, ... because I was really into it. I guess the end of my junior year, and then, for the full senior year, ... I know I wrote at least three articles, maybe more. ... Then, of course, you helped put the magazine together and stuff like that. ... Anyway, that, at the time, was a student magazine, and so, with the passage of time, flash forward to the year about 2000, or something like that, I suddenly received this slick magazine in the mail. I said, "Oh, this is great, *The Rutgers Engineer* is sending me a copy, for some reason." ... Then, I read it and I realized this was not a student publication. So, I got on the web and got the email message and I promptly, you know, sent emails to the dean here, and whoever. I said, "Hey, what's going on? What happened to the student publication?" and they came back to me and they said, "Well," they said, "Gee, we didn't even know there was ever a student publication called *The Rutgers Engineer*." ... Then, I contacted Kosta and we contacted a group of us all, and they all converged on the University. ... I guess they were taken aback. They had just decided that they should try to publish [it] just to try to publicize the program, see.

SH: I see. [laughter]

JK: So, you know, but, yes, there actually was a student publication, *The Rutgers Engineer*. ... It was tough getting people to write articles and that, but we would go out and beat the bushes and try to talk people into it. ... My roommate ... was very interested in computers at the time, my senior year roommate, and he wrote an article on computers, and, yes, it was an interesting time.

SH: The technology changes that occurred after you graduated, from 1958 to the present day, must have been amazing to see. The progression from the early computers that your roommate wrote about to what we have today must have been incredible to see.

JK: Oh, yes, yes. I mean, I still remember the first computer at all that I dealt with here was an analog computer that had about two integrators on it. Now, I mean, that's nothing.

SH: Right.

JK: Yes, and we used it as a lab project. ... The Electrical Engineering Department got a big analog computer in that had, maybe, twenty integrators on it, or something like it, and it was a bigger, more impressive device and, boy, I mean, that was heavy stuff. ... I don't think we even had a digital computer at the time, here at Rutgers. ...

SH: Did you have a slide rule?

JK: Oh, yes, sure.

SH: Did you use a calculator?

JK: Slide rule. Oh, no, calculators didn't really come in until, and I can tell you about when, 1970 or '71, the early '70s. ... I remember, very well, I remember that. Now, I'm talking about pocket calculators. They had Monroe calculators, they had Fridens, I mean, yes, I mean, those were around, the mechanical calculators, and, in fact, I used them when I was working in Arizona, in 1963 through '67, and they even started having a few electronic calculators. In fact, by the way, Xerox machines didn't come in until about then, too, the very early '60s. ... Boy, they were just great. Otherwise, we had these Thermofax copies, which fell apart after so many days. [laughter] You couldn't read them, you know, but we couldn't believe the Xerox copiers. ... Yes, we used slide rules, and a little bit of interest on that, ... all the engineers had these slide rules, which they carried in these leather cases, you know, and these were about, ... what? fourteen inches long, something like that. ... One day, we came into the Engineering Building; we hear this noise and a group of people hanging around this guy. ... This guy had a special machine in which he would engrave your name on anything you wanted to, but, typically, on your slide rules. ... So, for, I think, a quarter, yes, we walked up to them and they said, "Yes, I'd like to have my name engraved on the slide rule," and he'd set up a template with your name ... and he'd take your slide rule, put it into this machine and start his machine and the machine'd go and it'd tick away and it'd eat into this piece of your slide rule. ... Then, he'd take, like, a crayon, or something like that, or a red crayon, and he'd rub it in and there was your name, "James Koehler," in red. ... A lot of guys did this. So, anyway, years later, about 1963, or something like that, when I was working for the Garrett Corporation, [an aviation research company], in Phoenix, Arizona, there was a fellow there who was from back East. He was originally from Hasbrouck Heights, I think, and he had his slide rule out and he had his name engraved in it. ... He had gone to, I don't know, Lehigh or Drexel or, you know, one of those schools. I said, "Gee whiz," I said, "you got your name engraved on that. How'd you get that done?" He says, "Oh," he said, "there was a hobo who came around and he set up in the engineering building with his machine [laughter] and he would engrave your thing on for a quarter." ... I think the same guy went around to every engineering school, he'd set up in the engineering building and, at a quarter a pop, he'd engrave their names in slide rules, or whatever they wanted, on their glasses, you know.

SH: Really?

JK: Well, I mean, you know, anything. So, yes, ... a lot of engineers from that period of time had these slide rules with their names engraved on them.

SH: You have to do some investigating and identify this poor guy

JK: Oh, the guy's probably passed on by now, good gosh, yes, yes, but that was a little bit of things from the times.

SH: What activities do you remember being involved in at Rutgers? Did you often go home for the weekend?

JK: No, I tried to stay down here [in New Brunswick, New Jersey], about, maybe, a month at a time, something like that. I was in wrestling for [awhile]. I started out, my first year, I did a little bit [of competitive shooting]. I got into the rifle and pistol, no, the rifle club, but it was more sterile than I liked. You go down to the range and shoot. It was kind of sterile. In my sophomore year, I thought I'd like to try wrestling. I'd never tried wrestling. So, I went up to the coach and said, "Hey, I'd like to join the wrestling team." He says, "Well, have you ever wrestled before?" I said, "No." [laughter] He said, "Okay, well, go check out your gear," and so, I was with it for, oh, about two years, a year-and-a-half, and I walked away with a cauliflower ear that, I mean, never completely, you know, went down. ... Also, I had a habit of getting academic warnings every semester. In fact, every semester but one, while I was here, I got academic warnings, ... but I managed to muddle through, you know. ... I don't know, and, at that time, I had my usual three warnings or whatever like that. So, anyway, and then, with the cauliflower ear and that, I decided to drop out, but it was good. I mean, it was an experience. It was a good experience. ...

SH: What possessed you to try out for wrestling?

JK: I just thought I could wrestle. [laughter] ... I could have done all right, I think, if I'd gotten into it early enough, I probably would have done pretty well. ... So, that was that. Some of the things I did like to do, ... I did go to the Rutgers University Lecture Series quite a bit, especially in my freshman year, especially. ... I still remember the things that we saw. The first guy that we saw was an archeologist from Egypt, an Egyptologist. Then, there was a UN Ambassador that came, and I saw Robert Frost there. Two years in a row, I saw Robert Frost, and ... that was a really meaningful thing. I still remember hearing the man himself, you know, read his own poetry. That was fantastic, and then, of course, there was the Kinsey incident. Alfred Kinsey, the famous "sexologist," if you will, as you probably know, historically, he published his book on the sexual habits of American males [*Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*] in 1948 and the sexual habits of American females [*Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*] in 1953. So, in 1954 or '55, ... and he died in '56, okay, he was one of the most well-known and, definitely, most controversial people ... probably in the world, definitely in the United States. ... Lo and behold, we used to hold these, by the way, these Rutgers University Lecture Series [events], at Kirkpatrick Chapel. ... Then, the fellow [the moderator] got up, he said, "Well, next month, we're going to hold the lecture series in the auditorium and Dr. Alfred Kinsey is going to be there." Well, I want to tell you, you'd be surprised [by] the number of people that turned out. I mean, the gymnasium was full. [laughter] It was packed. I don't know if they had standing room only, but it was packed. ... So, of course, they introduced the great man and he got up and he gave his talk. ... As I said, when I wrote this thing up for you, I said I don't remember exactly what he said exactly, but the big surprise was, when the moderator got up, he said, "Now, Dr. Kinsey will be happy to entertain any questions from the audience," and the great man [then] stood up, waiting there at the microphone, and this guy next to me said, "Well, somebody's got to ask a question," and, you know, nobody asked a single question. As I stand here, and I'm a witness of it, nobody asked Dr. Kinsey a question on his subject.

SH: Really?

JK: Absolutely, absolutely.

SH: Why do you think that is?

JK: Time of the times. I mean, people were very uptight about sexuality, even then. Of course, there was a book that they used to sell at Shelley's, well, Bookstore called *Love Without Fear: [How to Achieve Sex Happiness in Marriage]* by Eustace Chesser], and that was often called "The Freshman Handbook," because all the freshmen'd come in and buy it. I don't know if NJC [New Jersey College for Women], which became Douglass College that year, or the next year, I don't know if it sold over there, but it definitely sold here. [laughter] ... You know, I mean, the people's attitude towards sexuality was so different then.

SH: Do you remember who the moderator was?

JK: No, no. ... Well, he was whoever introduced people, no.

SH: Was this a professor that you recognized?

JK: No, no, I do not [recall].

SH: Were there mixers for you to get to know the women from NJC?

JK: To meet the girls? Well, yes, there would be dances over at NJC, Douglass College, whichever you call it. There were dances and stuff like that, and, of course, the guys'd go on over there, ... if you could get a ride over from somebody, like, I never had a car down here, ... or we'd walk over, whatever, you know. Yes, yes, we would go over and try to meet the girls, and some people, of course, were much more adept at it than we were. Of course, this was an all-male school.

SH: Right.

JK: ... Although you would find other students here, and the Engineering School did, my year, had three lady engineers, all three of whom graduated, by the way. Actually, I think one of them was ceramic engineering, the other was ceramics, but the curriculum was about the same, ceramics [and] ceramic engineering, and the other was an electrical engineering lady, and all three of them graduated, which was something, I mean, to have three of them [graduate], you know, at once. There weren't many girls in engineering at the time, not only here, but all over.

SH: Was chapel still mandatory when you were here at Rutgers?

JK: Yes, it was. Yes, it was. Freshman chapel was.

SH: It was called freshman chapel, okay.

JK: Yes, yes, but not beyond that.

SH: It was every week.

JK: Yes, every week. Every week, I forgot the day, but it was, yes, around noon, or something like that, and the dean who was in charge of it they called the "Green Dean," because he was the youngest dean and I guess this was the job that they gave it to him.

SH: Do you remember his name?

JK: I don't, but, anyway, ... he was obviously, you know, new and starting out. ... I remember him telling us how so many crooks had come into the dormitories and [would] steal stuff and [he was] warning us about it and [saying], "Be careful of this," and giving us dire warnings, as well he should. ... Yes, anyway, that was for everybody. ...

SH: Were these crooks from within the Rutgers community or were they supposedly from out in the town? Where did they think the crooks came from?

JK: Oh, where the crooks had come from? I don't know. I don't think they were in the Rutgers community, no. I assume they were saying the people had wandered in. I remember, one time, we were in Demarest Hall and walked down to the communal bathroom, ... where they had showers, and there were a couple guys in the showers and some of the guys said, "I don't know who those guys are in the showers. They just walked in off the streets, [and] took a shower." [laughter] Well, I don't know. I mean, I'll have to assume that. As far as social life goes; oh, by the way, one thing I do want to also point out about the lecture series, they had a lecture series over at Douglass College, too, and I remember, in one of my last two years I think it was, Margaret Mead was there, and I went to hear her. That was the second time I had heard her, by the way. When I was in high school, there was a fellow who was interested in anthropology and we used to go over to the Natural History Museum and she [Margaret Mead] was involved with them and she came and she talked there one time. ... We went over and she showed some of her movies that were taken when she [was in Samoa]. See, she was in Samoa for a number of years and she wrote at least one book, *Coming of Age in Samoa*, but she had movies that she had taken over there. ... She showed the movies and she narrated some of them and stuff like that, and Roger, my friend, wanted to go down and talk to her. ... So, we walked down, you know, and there was this other couple there and they were talking to her and we were sort of standing back. ... Then, the woman said, "Oh, I'm sure you boys'd like to talk to her," and Roger said, "Oh, no, no, no." [laughter] We were kind of shy about it, which was too bad, because it would have been nice to talk to the great woman, you know. ... You know, I didn't realize who she was, but, you know, thinking back on it, yes, that would have been [great]. That was a wonderful opportunity, just to see her and hear her. Yes, that was good.

SH: Did you do any traveling when you were at Rutgers? Did you go to any away games?

JK: Didn't go to away games, no. You mean traveling through the school?

SH: Yes.

JK: In ROTC, I remember, we drove down to McGuire Air Force Base one time and looked, you know, saw what was going on down there. That, you'd call that a field trip, I guess. Other than that, you know, I don't remember ever doing any traveling like that.

SH: What would you do between the semesters or in the summers?

JK: Okay, Summer of '55, which was the end of my freshman year, I started out the summer with an appendectomy, but I then got a job working for the US Geological Survey. They do mapping, and I ended up as a driver for the Geological Survey, with this cartologist [cartographer], and that was that summer. The second summer, between my sophomore and junior year, ... well, when I didn't have a regular job, I'd work at my grandfather's place, but I went to; there was, at the time, the General Electric Company had a management conference camp on Lake Ontario, by Henderson Bay, Lake Ontario. ... What they'd do is, they'd hire college students to come and work there as, you know, waiters, waitresses, busboys, stuff like that. So, I went up there. My father said, "Oh, maybe we could get you a job up there." Well, yes, I applied and got the job. It was kind of funny, because there was a case, while I was there, ... I was carrying some paperwork from point A to point B and I was waiting to see somebody and I happened to look at the paperwork. ... It was something, it said, "This applicant has a very good reputation." It might have been, you know, I mean, a very good recommendation, ... such that it might have been overblown, basically, you know. So, I mean, these people pretty much knew what was coming off, you know, but, anyway, I was surprised about that, but, you know, so, it happens. So, anyway, I ended up working as a dishwasher, and I'll tell you something, something happened there, because people don't realize it, but dishwashers work very hard, I mean physically hard. ... I'm carrying heavy dishes and buckets of cups. When I first started there, you know, you would have to carry a basket full of cups, we'll say, and I couldn't lift the sucker, [laughter] you know, when I first started, but, by the end of the summer, I'd put on something like ten or fifteen pounds. I mean, I was very, very skinny [before that], put on around ten to fifteen pounds. Most of it was muscle and I could literally, you know, carry these things like mad, and the food, I mean, ... work in the kitchen, and what it was is, we had an employees' cafeteria, then, we had the main dining hall, where all these folks came [to eat]. ... All these people, by the way, were General Electric vice-presidents, division chiefs, the head of General Electric'd show up and stuff like this. ... They'd come in for two-and-a-half day conferences, and so, you know, we had to feed them and, I mean, only the best food, stuff like that. So, I would get up in the morning, go over to the employees' cafeteria, eat breakfast. Then, I'd go work breakfast, and then, eat some more, a second breakfast, then, the same thing for lunch and the same thing for supper. So, I mean, I was putting on solid weight, and because of the exercise, you know. So, it did a lot for me and I met a lot of people, you know, people from Schenectady and places like that, and that went on for, I think it was six-and-a-half weeks. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: You spoke about working for the United States Geological Survey between your junior and senior years.

JK: Well, actually, that was between my freshman and sophomore year. ... Between my sophomore and junior year, I worked for the ... General Electric Company, yes.

SH: Okay, I had them switched around.

JK: Right, and then, between the junior and senior year, I was in ROTC, Air Force ROTC, summer camp in Rome, New York, and then, ... that kind of broke up the best part of the summer, but, then, two friends of mine and I decided to take a Western trip. So, we jumped in a car and headed west and drove west and ... went out through Colorado and Idaho and Montana, and I forgot where all, and came back east, went to Glacier National Park, Rocky Mountain National Park, a number of places like that.

SH: Did you go to Yellowstone Park?

JK: Yes. We went to Yellowstone that year, too. I had been out West in '51, ... with the family. See, we had a six-week trip all over the West, California, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, didn't get to Texas then, but that later came when I went in the Air Force, and across the northern tier and back. ...

SH: That is interesting.

JK: Yes, so, I had traveled quite a bit. Then, after I graduated ...

SH: Were the two friends that you traveled with from Rutgers?

JK: No. One was a fellow who grew up ... in my hometown, never went to college, ... but I hung around with him, and the other was our Scoutmaster, ... who was single, and so, we all traveled together and had various adventures and came back. ... Okay, then, okay, well, that pretty much ends that. ...

SH: Can you tell me more about the training that you had in Rome as part of the Advanced Air Force ROTC?

JK: Yes. It was four weeks and, basically, we lived in barracks. It was sort of a boot camp type of thing, but, mostly, what they did is, they'd take us around to the base, various parts of the base, and give us talks on it, and [say], "This is what we did here and this is what we did there and this is what the Air Force is like," and we also did drilling, you know, like, we'd march to this class and that class. We went up to Camp Drum, [Fort Drum, a military reservation in Jefferson County, New York], overnight, actually, ... where we went through marksmanship training, well, just familiarization with a carbine and a .45-[caliber] pistol, because we were all going to be officers. ... We also got some plane rides. I got my first plane ride [there]. I had two plane rides there, one in a C-45 [a US Air Force version of a Beech 18], the other in a ... KC-97 [Boeing KC-97 Stratotanker], I believe it was, C-97, basically, big aircraft, and part of the process [was], you know, you went through military training, you had to shape up and be inspected, this, that and the other thing. ... We also had athletic contests, you know, like, each company, we'll say, I forget what they call those companies, but, you know, would compete against the others. ... With a great deal of pride, I was on the basketball and volleyball team[s] and our part of the company never lost, never lost a competition. We always won, the

basketball, volleyball, and the real good athletes, [laughter] though, they put on the softball team, because, you know, you'd get points, depending on how many people were on the team, see. ... So, anyway, the funny thing was, we were leading everybody except that we all had a chance to get [on] a C-97 flight, and so, a lot of us got on that. So, the usual complement of people couldn't play softball that day and they lost the game. So, we came in second, but, you know, I mean, these are memories, but there [were] ... lots of things about it, like, ... you'd be marching around and you'd come up with your nonsense songs and all your marching songs. ... There were things that you remembered about, the little incidents that you remember, and you get to know all the people and their quirks. ...

SH: Did you know at that point that you would not be able to be a pilot?

JK: Yes, oh, sure. Well, my eyesight, yes, sure; I mean, that was clear. In fact, I was accepted into the program because I was an engineer, see. ... You had very few options, but either pilot or navigator or they took a few engineers, and they took, allegedly, one liberal art-type person, or something. I don't know, some of them, who you've probably interviewed, might have gone on about that. I don't know.

SH: No, not really.

JK: But, I knew what I could [do]. That was the way it was set up. We had a really interesting, well interesting; the fellow who was the professor of air science at the time, while I was there, they switched, and this was Colonel Walter S. Hammond, was the professor of air science. He was a colonel at age thirty-six, actually. He'd been in the Pentagon and all that. ... You know, you look back on people and you have different viewpoints; he was hopelessly arrogant, [laughter] but, you know, he was very sincere and he wanted people to do their best. ... He told us, he said, "We're not here to wash anybody out, but we're here to get you through," and he did, but he was interesting in that he would make things happen. Like, for instance, when we had our field day, he usually worked it out so [that] there was some kind of a display. ... Once, he got the Air Force Thunderbirds to fly at field day for us, and that was pretty good, and he'd get the ... national drum and bugle team, or something like that, there, and I had to hand it to him, the man got things done. He was a doer, you know, but, anyway, he was controversial and the big thing was, that he'd probably be remembered for, was the Arthur Godfrey situation. Arthur Godfrey, of course, was a big entertainer at that time and he was very interested in airpower and he was actually a Navy Reserve pilot and he was a civilian pilot, too. ... Anyway, Arthur Godfrey had appeared before a Congressional committee giving a presentation on airpower, which was read into the Congressional Record. Well, Colonel Hammond, not to try to pass up a chance for publicity, contacted Arthur Godfrey's people, I suppose, and said, "Hey, could Arthur come to Rutgers and give a talk?" and they said, "Yes, that'd be fine." Arthur decided that he would. Well, anyway, this was all right, but what had happened was that drill day was Tuesday and Arthur couldn't make it on Tuesday. So, they decided, "Well, maybe we can do it on some other day," and he said, "Yes, what about..." and I forgot what day of the week it was, but, anyway, Colonel Hammond went to the administration, said, "Hey, I've got Arthur Godfrey coming here. Do you think we could shift drill day with some other day?" and they said, "Oh, yes, I think we could do that, fine." ... So, they shifted drill day around, strictly so [that] Arthur could come and give a talk to the University and faculty. Well, things would have gone along

fine, except that there was a history professor who took issue with this, and he said, "Hey, we're kowtowing to the military and the publicity and all that kind of stuff," and he wrote a letter to [the] *Targum*, [the official student newspaper of Rutgers University]. *Targum* is still a newspaper, isn't it?

SH: Yes, it is.

JK: Okay, [he] wrote a letter to *Targum* saying, "This is a terrible thing, that they're kowtowing to the military," [and] so on, like this. Well, okay, up in arms comes the students who wanted to make points, or whatever, and writes a letter back to *Targum* and the professor writes a letter back, and this was going back and forth, [laughter] see, and soon ...

SH: Do you remember the professor's name?

JK: I don't, unfortunately, [Dr. Richard Schlatter], but, anyway, this was going back and forth, and soon, the local press got hold of it, then, the New York press, then, the national press, and all over the country, this gets, you know, blown up, you know, about how Arthur Godfrey was coming and Rutgers University was sacrificing its, you know, purity, basically, to put up with this egregious, you know, problem. ... So, anyway, this goes on, and then, just before the event occurred, now, our air science instructor was in talking to the Colonel and the Colonel told him, ... actually, he said, "We had big plans to advertise the fact that Arthur was coming here, in order to get people to come, but," he says, "with all that's happened with the professor starting this back and forth, we've got all the publicity we want." [laughter] ... He said, "So, after the event is over, I'm going to send a letter to the professor, thanking him for doing this for us," [laughter] but it's kind of funny, you know, and so, the event occurred and all that kind of stuff. ... Arthur, it was kind of interesting, because he came here, he was originally from Hasbrouck Heights, and he said, "You know," he said, "I want to tell you, it's rather meaningful, I come from Hasbrouck Heights, that I'm here at Rutgers University, because that meant a lot to me, you know, coming, a New Jersey boy and all this, being invited to the State University," and I don't know how much of that [was true or untrue]. [Editor's Note: Arthur Godfrey moved to Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey, in his adolescence.] [laughter] Well, it was a mix, probably.

SH: Who was the President of Rutgers University when you were here?

JK: Well, Jones was, Lewis Webster Jones, I think his name was, yes. Oh, by the way, you brought up the question of the Chanticleer [before]. Yes, when I got here, the Chanticleer was indeed the mascot. Lord knows I didn't know what a chanticleer was, and, at the football game, I saw this big chicken walking out in front of everybody. I said, "What on Earth is that big chicken doing out there?" and then, I found out that was our mascot, and, in fact, on the stationary that they had, there was a chanticleer on some of them, and then, I had some of that stationary. ... Well, anyway, as I was speaking to you before, ... I'm not sure when it turned over, but the question was, "We can do better than a big rooster."

SH: Did this start in the *Targum*? Is that where the discussion began?

JK: No, I don't think so. ... I'm not sure why it came up, but, anyway, so, people were trying to decide what [to replace it with], and so, somebody thought that a Scarlet Knight would be a nice thing.

SH: Was there a vote on this? How did they make that change?

JK: I think there was a vote on it. I think there was, yes, I think there was, and so, they started the Scarlet Knight and they're still called the Scarlet Knights, of course. ... As I say, I'm not sure, but, you know, I think it was in my freshman year, the Douglass College ... went from New Jersey College for Women to Douglass College. That would have been '54, '55. Is that true, do you know? [Editor's Note: The name was changed in 1955.]

SH: I think so.

JK: Yes, and the reason that I think that is, I think I remember hanging around Demarest Hall when they were talking about it happening. So, that's when Douglass College became Douglass College.

SH: It is amazing that you were here during so many changes, like when New Jersey College changed to Douglass College and when the mascot changed.

JK: Yes, yes, and, of course, you know, events with Douglass College, ... in this paperwork that I left with you, I keep referring to a piece of paperwork that I wrote ... for this interview, and I talk about campus life and I tell about the social interactions. There was, of course, I mentioned, those were the years of the panty raids and there was the great panty raid that occurred. One day, there was a big snowstorm, and I guess, I think, we were actually out of school, and the students were out making snow figures and that, and I guess their hormone level rose to gigantic proportions. ... I was in Ford Hall at the time, of course, and they said, "Hey, let's go over to Douglass College, have a panty raid," and, by gosh, a whole gang of them marched across town, and I wasn't there, but, anyway, there were all these stories and it was reported in *Targum*, and the thing that I thought was, well, funny or not, but, of course, it was brought up by several moralists, well, how terrible it was, how these young ladies ... had all their panties taken away from them, and the expense of this was terrible on these poor, young women, and, on the other hand, the coverage of it was saying how some of the girls were encouraging the guys, ... but you know how college students are. ... Yes, I remember that event, because it fit in with the times, if you will.

SH: You had Kinsey here. [laughter]

JK: Kinsey, yes, yes. Well, that, to me, was so interesting. Though, I mean, just the social changes and all, and, of course, so many good ... social changes, like, people stopped smoking over the years and there's been a lot of good things. I'm not one who dwells on "the old days," because there were as many bad things then as there were good.

SH: Where was the library when you were here?

JK: Yes, the library was the Zimmerli, you know, where the Art Museum is now. That was the old one, and, while I was here, they also built the library, and the last year or so, we used that library, too. [Editor's Note: The Voorhees Library was the primary library facility on the College Avenue Campus before Alexander Library opened its doors in 1956. Voorhees Hall and the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum now occupy that location.]

SH: You used Alexander Library, up here on College Avenue.

JK: Yes, yes, you're right, that was the library, and, let's see, what else of great note? ... Oh, well, the engineering campus, of course, was still here [on the College Avenue Campus], but we still went out to the Heights, [what is today the Busch Campus], for courses in mechanical drawing, or engineering drawing, and we actually had engineering shop courses then, ... which I think has gone by the wayside, many, many years ago, but we had a course in manufacturing methods and we would go out there and we'd go through various schools of it. First of all, the first class I took in my rotation was in sheet metalworking and that was for so many periods, and then, the next thing we did, probably, was milling, and then, welding, and then, using a lathe, and stuff like that. So, we actually did work on machinery and that was something that really went out of engineering programs worldwide, and the biggest effect on engineering studies was probably in '57, when *Sputnik* went up. I was a senior, this was the first semester. ... That was in October, I think, of '57, and I ...

SH: You would have been a senior.

JK: Yes, I was a senior, and I came back to the dorm when my roommate said, "Hey, Koehler," he said, "the Russians have put a satellite up." I said, "Oh, well, yes, well, gee, oh, okay," you know, and, yes, they had put a satellite up and it was the first one that had been put up there. ... We had graduate students in the central portion of Ford Hall at the time and some of them were physicists and all that, and so, the next night or something, they were all out, gathered out, looking at the sky. I said, "What's up?" and he said, "We're going to see *Sputnik* pass over. It's supposed to pass over at about this time," and I said, "Oh, really?" So, we hung around and looked up and, sure enough, we saw this satellite, the first satellite that had ever been put up there, by gosh. So, yes, we had a chance to see that, too. So, that was quite an event, actually, when you think of it, but how it affected [things], what got me is how it affected the whole attitude in this country, because engineers had gotten this picture of, "Well, who goes into engineering." You know, "It's not an erudite field," and stuff like that. Well, all of a sudden, people said, "The Russians beat us, beat us to space. Why, we've got to do something about this," and so, suddenly, articles in all the major magazines came out about how we're lacking in science, mathematics, teachers of this thing [math and science], and how our programs were antiquated and not adequate to the times, and stuff like that, and we ought to improve on this. ... You know, the University got down, as did everyone, probably, and they reviewed their programs and they decided to upgrade a number of their programs, so that, I mean, it didn't affect us, because we were so far along, but they would upgrade the program so that the math requirements ... were upgraded and things like that. ... So, there was a resurgence of interest, which, of course, carried on through the Space Program and stuff like that, and that really changed, that really brought a lot of people to look at where we were scientifically and engineering-wise in this country.

SH: As a senior, knowing that you have a commitment to, I think you said two years.

JK: Three years, three years in the Air Force, yes.

SH: Three years in the Air Force; you were not looking for a job at that point. You were going to go active after graduation. What were your plans as a senior?

JK: ... I went and I did interview, more to see, you know, what was available, and, also, the story was that if you could get a job for a little while before you went into the service, the chances are you could be held on a retainer. So, when you got out, you could go back with this company. Now, the previous year was a good hiring year, that was '57, and I mean there was just lots of jobs, but, in '58, things slowed down a little bit, not too bad, though. I mean, the word was out that it's not as good as last year, but everybody, well, who can get a job and wants one could get it. I think I had eight interviews, but, of course, I told them, "Well, I'm going into the Air Force," and I didn't get any offers or anything, and, of course, I think the fact that I was twenty-one years old, young, no background, all that kind of stuff, didn't really help things, but they knew I was going into the Air Force, and the jobs, I can tell you about what they were offering salary-wise. It was about 475 to five hundred dollars a month for engineers, starting out, and that was very good, because non-engineers, maybe, if they got four hundred dollars a month, were doing pretty well, but, if you went to the West Coast, I mean, there were some people who got interviews and jobs on the West Coast for five hundred dollars a month. That's six thousand per year. That was about the high end. Oh, once in awhile, you'd get somebody who had some background, maybe a veteran or something, who had some background and had worked in the field in summers and that, would get a pretty good offer. ... Yes, that's pretty much the engineering aspect of it.

SH: Was it your choice as to when you went on active duty?

JK: No.

SH: You just got your commission.

JK: I got my commission and I got my orders close to the end of the semester and I was assigned to Dyess Air Force Base, Abilene, Texas, and I was to report in on October 20th, as I remember, 1961. ... Well, no, no, I'm sorry, '58. Yes, I'm sorry

SH: We lost three years. [laughter] No, I am kidding.

JK: So, I'm getting the dates mixed up. I was to report in, I believe, October 20th, it was, 1958 and I was assigned to be an engineering officer, and so, I said, "Well, okay." You know, I had hoped to see the world, but, you know, I figured, "Well, all right, this is fine," and I had never been to Texas. That was interesting. I'd never been to Texas, Abilene, Texas, that was, ... and I heard about that, and then, for the summer, I went out and I wanted [to travel]. I'd met a graduate student here named (Steve Martens?). His father was the head of the Geology Department at the time. Steve was a graduate student in chemistry and he was a motorcycle

rider, and I always liked the idea of going motorcycling, and he had ridden motorcycles over in Europe with the son of the head of the Electrical Engineering Department, I believe his name was Potter, at the time, and they had toured Europe that way. Then, the next year, he and another guy had gone down to South America and toured there, and they split up somewhere, but, anyway, he went back up via Montana and places like that. ... In fact, on our trip out West in '57, I met him out there, at Glacier National Park, and we went hiking, but I had met him here before. So, anyway, I decided, "Well, I'd like to go on a motorcycle trip. I've got the time." So, anyway, ... I bought a motorcycle from a fellow, from another graduate student, and the two of us set out on two motorcycles and headed west, and, unfortunately, my bike broke down in Lockport, New York. So, anyway, we lightened our load and the two of us got on his, just kept going, and we made an agreement. ... We were going to meet somebody in Great Falls, Montana, and, if I couldn't get hold of another motorcycle by then, I'd come home. Well, we had many adventures, which I could go into, but, basically, we split up there. I came home and I had to wait until I got into the service. So, I went to this surveyor that my brother had worked for, for a number of years, and I walked in and told him who I was and they said, "Yes, we could use you," and I had an engineering degree and all that. So, anyway, I worked as a surveyor until I went into the Air Force, and that was the start of quite an adventure, so, yes.

SH: Before we leave Rutgers, was there any division between those who were in the Advanced ROTC, whether it be Air Force or Army, and the rest of the population? I know you said you had not done the fraternity scene here, but was ROTC just something that was accepted and part of the scene, like the Military Ball?

JK: ... Yes. I mean, in my opinion, yes, it was. There were no anti-military sentiments, at that time.

SH: Okay, thanks.

JK: A number of people felt that if you went into ROTC, you were not a critical thinking individual and all that kind of stuff, and so, we had a few spirited discussions. I remember, I was over at that fraternity that I was saying about, "The Zoo," who were a bunch of free-thinking people, and I said, "Yes, I'm in Advanced ROTC," and they said, "Well, gee, oh, how can you do a thing like that?" ... So, I said, "Well," I said, "look," I said, "first of all, chances are, we're all going to be drafted. [I would] rather go in as an officer than [as] an enlisted man, and, besides that, you know, there's the patriotic aspect of it," and, you know, we had some discussions about it, and they could see my point. I mean, I wasn't shy about it, ... and I still feel it was the thing to do. I mean, I'm very patriotic.

SH: You talked about the professor, [Dr. Richard Schlatter], who did not want the academic schedule altered by the Arthur Godfrey lecture. We switched. I was just wondering if there was a current like that.

JK: Well, no, ... his problem, and I could understand it, his problem was not so much that ROTC exists, I mean, the way I understood it, his problem was that the University was bowing to the wants of ROTC to get the publicity, basically. See what I mean? That's the way that I saw it.

SH: Okay, all right.

JK: I don't think he was anti-military. I mean, there weren't many people who were truly anti-military then. It was between the wars, you know, ... and we didn't have Vietnam and, still, ... let's say, the aura of World War II was there, a lot of anti-Communism, anti-Communist feeling, and the worry about the bombs. You know, a lot of people can't realize the feeling [of] fear that was there. I mean, this was the nuclear age, and, by gosh, it wasn't anything to fool with. There were plenty of people around from World War II and all that.

SH: What do you remember about your graduation?

JK: What do I remember about graduation? Well, I remember, we graduated out at the ... football stadium, of course. Remember, it was a nice day. I'm trying to think who the speaker was and, you know, I don't remember. I do remember there was a member of the Armed Forces who got his doctor of humane letters, or whatever. ... He was given an honorary degree. You know, I don't remember. Lewis Webster Jones, the President of the University, of course, did give a speech. I don't remember a talk, though.

SH: Were you commissioned at that time or the day before?

JK: No, I was commissioned earlier in the day. It was June 4, 1958, and we were commissioned in the [College Avenue] Gymnasium, at the same time that the Army guys were commissioned, and I remember, there was an Air Force general who presented the commissions to both the Army and the Air Force guys.

SH: Okay.

JK: ... And Colonel Hammond was also leaving then, by the way, and Mason Gross, you've heard of Mason Gross, of course, you knew of course that Mason Gross was on a television show. Yes, okay, so, you knew about that. [Editor's Note: Mason Gross was President of Rutgers University from 1959-1971, as well as a panelist and judge on two television game shows.]

SH: Was he on that show while you were in school here?

JK: Yes, oh, yes, yes.

SH: Did people listen?

JK: Well, yes, some did. I mean, it wasn't necessarily because [of him]; they wanted to watch the show. It wasn't because Mason Gross was there. In fact, Mason Gross was here when my brother was here. He was not President of the University yet, at the time. He did eventually become [President]. In fact, he was the President of the University in ... '66, when the two hundredth anniversary of the school was there, because I remember, we were living in Scottsdale, Arizona, at the time, and we held a party, you know, to celebrate the two hundredth anniversary, and we received [a telegram]. The guy who was running the party, there were only

about, my gosh, twenty to forty of us there, but he received a telegram from Mason Gross, congratulating us. He sent it to everybody, you know, but he did receive this telegram, congratulating us for the party and to wish everybody the best of luck. ... The guest of honor was a fellow who was a former assistant football coach at Rutgers. He retired down in [the] Scottsdale/Phoenix area, and we invited him as the guest of honor. He gave a little talk.

SH: Was this Arthur Matsu? [Editor's Note: Arthur Matsu was a Rutgers football coach beginning in 1936.]

JK: I'm sorry?

SH: Was it Matsu?

JK: I don't remember his name. He'd been there for ... twenty-five years; might have been. I don't remember. ... In fact, ... since I had worked on the committee, I ended up sitting next to the guy's wife at the head table, such as it was, [laughter] I mean, you know, and chatting with her. ... She was talking about, "Oh, it's so nice being old, you know, being down here," and I thought, "Being old? You know, nobody ever gets old," you know, but, anyway, she was happy to be living down there. He had not gone to Rutgers, by the way, but he was a coach here, so, we invited him. What was the name you suggested?

SH: Matsu.

JK: No, I don't think that was his name.

SH: Okay. I just know that there was a football coach that wound up in Arizona, in that area.

JK: Oh, well, this would have been, yes, ... in the, probably, yes, '50s and '60s, somewhere around there, might have been. In fact, I sort of had the impression, looking at him, he was sort of semi-Oriental, and the name Matsu sort of rings a bell. I should say Asian now, I suppose. I'm sorry, sorry; it was Asian, though I don't see anything wrong with Oriental, to be honest with you, yes.

SH: As it goes. Then, in October, you just told the family good-bye and off you went.

JK: Yes, yes. ... You know, being an officer, I was given travel time. So, yes, I just left my job and we'd bought a car for me. My father bought a car for me, and I paid him back for it, eventually, and jumped in the car and headed for Abilene, Texas, and I stopped at my uncle's place in Cleveland, one night, then, I stopped at some other relatives in Manhattan, Kansas, then, I went down to my duty station at Dyess Air Force Base. ... I remember, I drove up to the base and wasn't in uniform or anything, and, you know, this was all new to me, new to a lot of us, you know, and we drove in and I didn't even have an ID card, but I had my orders. So, I had been told, "Yes, just go in, show them your orders." ... So, I drove up to the base. I said, "Hi, I'm reporting in for duty and here are my orders," and the air policeman said, "Yes, sir, yes, sir," and all that, and he said, "Well, where do you want go?" and, anyway, drove in, checked in at the BOQ [bachelor officers' quarters]. ... The interesting thing was, Dyess Air Force Base in

Abilene, Texas, which, by the way, opened in 1955 [1956], and I was there in 1958, okay, so, this was early on; they're still in operation, by the way. They are a B-1 bomber base, one of the few bases to have them, but, at that time, it was the home of two air wings, the 341st and the 96th Air Wing, part of 15th Air Force, and they were both B-47 bomber squadrons, and that meant they consisted of about forty-five aircraft each, and they were also home of a tanker wing of KC-97 tankers, and, let's see, oh, yes, then, they had some C-124s, which were used in the Fourth SSS, which stands for Strategic Support Squadron. ... You'd have to understand the structure of the Air Force, but, at that time, the Strategic Air Command was, by some people, looked upon as a different air force than the rest of it, and the Strategic Air Command did very little to alleviate that notion. In fact, one thing, you have to understand the military, there's regulations to do everything. Well, they would, the Strategic Air Command would, write regulations. I mean, there'd be Air Force regulations, base regs, 15th Air Force regs, then, there was SAC regs, and, sometimes, they'd say, "This is SAC regulation number so-and-so," blah, blah, blah, "which supersedes Air Force regulation thus-and-so." [laughter] ... The Strategic Air Command was founded, was started up, by Curtis LeMay, actually, who, during World War II, was responsible for the bombing of Japan, and he was quite a hardnosed individual and he was a very toe-the-line-type person, and he did build up quite a reputation for the unit. ... So, anyway, I was part of that, but I was in the 819th Combat Support Group, which meant base housekeeping, basically, and stuff like that, because what are you going to do with an engineer who wasn't a pilot or navigator or something? So, anyway, I walked in, you know, and met my roommate, who I've somewhat kept in touch with. He's a fellow ... who was a SAC navigator and, in the Strategic Air Command, a navigator, ... a navigator/bombardier, has a fair amount of prestige, and I'll go into that later, but, anyway, I came into the base and ... went through the usual things of get another physical and stuff like this, but, anyway, I went into personnel and they processed me in. ... They said, yes, they had, let's see, a board, you know, with showing, "This is where you are, this is where you are," and stuff, I forgot what they're called, and there I was, you know, located off working for the base engineering group. So, anyway, "Okay, well, I guess we'll send you [there], but we've got to talk to Colonel Daly, ... who is in charge of personnel," he said, "and we'll introduce you to him," and so, I walked in. He introduced me to Colonel Daly and Colonel Daly says, "Oh, yes," he said, "yes, I see you're an engineer," and all that kind of stuff, but he says, "Unfortunately, we don't have any engineering positions and there is a need for people in supply. So, you are now a supply officer." This is what's known as getting a warm body to fill a slot, see. [laughter] Well, anyway, I figure, "Well, I'm here, you know. I'm doing my part for the country, and so, of course, I'll make the best of it." Well, anyway, you know, I became a supply officer, and, going through all that, I was in a supply group. ... I still remember, I was working in this [area], for [with?] this group of people, I had twenty-two people under me, all of which, of course, were lower rank, with one crusty master sergeant and one less-than-crusty tech sergeant, but all of these people were, I think, I don't know if they were all older than I was, but they all made more money than I did, because, you know, I was just a new, fresh second lieutenant.

SH: Right. [laughter]

JK: That changed, of course, but, ... frankly, I didn't know much about what to do, you know, but my boss, a major, would say, "Oh, we're having trouble down in this unit. So, go on down there and do something." "Well, all right." So, I went down there and I tried to do something

and, as they say, these crusty master sergeants, [laughter] and all that, pretty much knew what was going on. ... There were some personnel problems, which I took some action, and we [did] get some results out of it, you know, but it was quite a personal experience for me, because I had never had a position like that, you know. I'd never been in charge of anything and didn't have the people skills, and so, basically, I had an awful lot to learn, but, after I was there three months, they sent me to supply school in Amarillo, Texas. I mean, that's, oh, a little less than three hundred miles away. So, [I] drove up there and went to supply school for twelve weeks and had some adventures there, among other things, drove up to Denver with a fellow. ... Actually, we stopped at the then new Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, and the Air Force Academy had started in 1955, in Denver, where they were there for a year while they were building, or finishing building, the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, and so, they had just moved down there, and this was 1959. [Editor's Note: The US Air Force Academy was established in 1954 and the first class of cadets was sworn in at Denver's Lowry Air Force Base in July 1955. The cadets moved into the Colorado Springs facility in August 1958.] So, we went down there and everything was new and they were still even building some stuff, but, heck, while we were there, we were a couple of engineers.

[TAPE PAUSED]

JK: We had better charge on.

SH: You were talking about being so brand-new and your crusty staff.

JK: ... Yes, yes, right, and it was interesting. ... As I say, we went up and we saw the early parts of the Air Force Academy. ... Let's see, they had not graduated their first class yet, because the first class graduated in '59, and, of course, I had gotten out of school in '58. So, really, the Air Force Academy wasn't even in existence when I started [college], okay, but, anyway, ... we had that adventure, so-to-speak, and several others. For one thing, near Amarillo is a place called Palo Duro Canyon, which most people have never heard of, but it's the second-largest canyon system in the United States, after the Grand Canyon, beautiful place. ...

SH: I have never even heard of it.

JK: That's right, I mean, very few people have, but I've been there, I went there several times while I was there, and I've been there, over the years, many times. The last time was just about a month ago, in fact. My wife is an artist and it's a beautiful place. In fact, the artist Georgia O'Keefe, at one time, taught at the nearby college there and she did some artwork there, but, anyway, that was a very interesting point in my life, because of that. So, anyway, ... I came back from there and, at that time, my roommate had decided to get married and he got married and moved out, and that began a series of forgettable roommates over the years. ... So, he left and I ended up, well, ... eventually, after three years, I was actually able to get housing off base, but that was later on. ... Anyway, yes, carrying on with the Air Force, so, I came back to my supply sergeant job there, not sergeant, my supply officer job, and then, word got around and my tech sergeant said, "Yes, they're going to be making changes," he said, "and, among other things, the word is out, you're going to become clothing sales officer." I said "Oh, what's that?" He said, "Well, this is an officer [in charge of the clothing sales store]," you know; well, all right,

basically, people coming into the service would get, not officers, but enlisted men, got a clothing allotment. I mean, they'd just give them the clothing. Then, they'd give them a monthly amount in their paychecks that was for clothing maintenance over the years, and what they would do is, they established this clothing sales store, where they'd sell uniform items to the people who came in. They could also buy some uniforms, by the way, at the base exchange or other places, but, I mean, by and large, they could come into the clothing sales store. Well, this was a military-run operation and they had to have an officer in charge of it, and so, I became clothing sales officer, and that also gave me the job of base laundry officer. So, basically, I became a housekeeping officer for the next, oh, a little over two years, say, and, anyway, in that clothing sales job, that was another growing up type of thing. I'd never felt I had a lot of support from my bosses and stuff like that, ... and I had some personnel problems there. I, in particular, had a staff sergeant who ... [had] a very bad attitude, and, finally, after awhile, he and I had a real falling out and I took action to get rid of him. That's the way you would deal with people in the service that you couldn't fire.

SH: I was just going to say, because he had been in there for quite awhile, if he was a tech sergeant, right?

JK: No, he was a staff sergeant.

SH: A staff sergeant, sorry.

JK: I had a master sergeant who was good, but the master sergeant couldn't handle this, didn't handle this guy very, very well, and, as I say, there were some personnel problems, but, finally, he and I had a confrontation in front of the rest of the crew there. ... I finally decided that, hey, this could not do, and so, I put him in his place and was able to get him a transfer to the commissary next-door, and they said, "Oh, yes, we're glad to get this guy, wonderful guy, wonderful guy," and I said, "Fine, I'll trade him for somebody else," [laughter] and I did, and, after that, the master sergeant had no trouble running the place and all this kind of stuff. ... Of course, it later turned out that they [the commissary] became a little disenchanted with this fellow also, but I was just glad to get rid of him, and there were, as I say, ... some growing up things there, like, my squadron commander was wondering why I was getting rid of this wonderful fellow, who he had no problems with, and I told him. He said, "Okay, well," he said, "I just want to know. I mean, you're an officer and you've got that right," and so, anyway, that was sort of the thing that went on there. What had happened is, I was getting shortages and you shouldn't be getting shortages in a small inventory like that, and we never could find out where those shortages were going, but there were things that made us suspicious. So, anyway, it's amazing, I get rid of that guy and the shortages disappeared. So, I don't know, you know, you deal with things as you can, and that's the way we dealt with it. ... Anyway, along the time I was in this clothing sales job, there was a fellow who was an airman who died and I received a call from this major who worked for my lieutenant colonel, who was the boss, said, "Hey, Koehler," he said, "we have an airman [who] died and the mortuary officer, Major Jones, is going on vacation." He said, "So, we need somebody to be a mortuary officer." I said, "Well, what's a mortuary officer?" He said, "Oh, it's nothing much, Koehler. You just help make arrangements, you know, for making sure the body gets shipped to the next of kin, and, ... if there's a military funeral, you make sure it comes about and you take care of the paperwork and all that kind of

stuff." I said, "Well, gee, I don't know." He said, "Well, look, only once, just this one time, Koehler, that's all, that's all," and, "Well, all right," you know, I want to help out and be a good fellow, and so, sure enough, ... fortunately, this [officer], the mortuary officer, hadn't left yet. I mean, he was going to leave later in the day and he set the thing up, told me what to do, and so, I followed through with it and I figured that was the end. Well, no; "Hey, Koehler, just so happens we have to get a new mortuary officer and, with all your experience, you can be the next mortuary officer." [laughter] So, anyway, ... I mean, this is typical of the service, and so, I became mortuary officer, [laughter] which, in some ways, was a very satisfying job. Now, you know, there's the obvious bad things about it; you're dealing with dead people and all that, but, you know, there's a certain satisfaction, because you get called into a situation where people's lives are just thrown apart and you can come in and help stabilize them, bring them back [their loved one]. That was one part, and, on top of that, you found out that, when something like that happened, everybody on base who was connected with this was more than willing to help, help you out and support you, and I had a certain amount of power. If I had trouble, I could go to the base commander and say, "Base commander, I'm having a little difficulty dealing with so-and-so on this mortuary job. Can you help me?" and, by gosh, I'd get results. So, a certain amount of power to it, but, you know, you still didn't want the job, but there were some good things about it, truly, and that brought about many memorable stories I could go into [for] you. Fortunately, ... in the, I think, about less than two years that I had the job, I think I only had about seven cases, but they were all varied and every one was different, as you might imagine.

SH: You were part of this elite SAC group. Were you considered a part of that?

JK: I was a member, oh, yes, I was in the Strategic Air Command all four years, all three-and-a-half years, that I was in.

SH: Okay.

JK: Yes. ... Well, let's discuss that, because, you know, the particular jobs that I had, ... I can go on and on about them, but there's more than you'd ever want to hear about it, but, yes, the Strategic Air Command, as I say, you have to understand, they were one of the biggest deterrents to war, at that period of time in history. ... In Strategic Air Command, you had bombers waiting on alert all over the world, you had crews waiting there, planes waiting to go. In fact, Marty Kravarik, I don't know if you interviewed him, but he was in SAC. In fact, he was a SAC co-pilot, and he probably told you about some of this, I don't know, but, basically, they were ready to go. They had planes loaded with thermonuclear weapons and they all had targets picked out, which they would practice. They would go on training missions to cities all over the United States which looked like cities in Russia, China, wherever, and they would do fake bombing runs on them and they would test their expertise at dropping bombs and stuff like that. They were frontline, they were frontline military people, and, by gosh, they took that seriously, and I feel privileged to have served with these folks, because, as I say, they were the frontline deterrent for [the United States] in the Cold War. In fact, at the time, we had a new commander. [General Curtis] LeMay had gone by the wayside and a fellow named [General Thomas S.] Power was our commander at that time, and they wrote an article ... in *Reader's Digest* one time, and he was told that, "Russia was said to have feared God and SAC," and as he said, "I think that puts us in pretty good company," and I could see why. I mean, these people were very serious, highly-

trained. A number of them had been in World War II, or the Korean War, definitely, and they were, you know, ... very stable, I mean, comparatively stable figures, people who ... were very serious about their jobs, and they were topflight people, topflight. My roommate was a topflight navigator. SAC had a promotion system ... where you give what they called spot promotions, like, even though you were a lieutenant and you wouldn't come up for a normal promotion, at the commander's discretion, they could say, "This person is doing a good job. I'm going to give him a spot promotion to captain," and, by gosh, a few of them got that. In fact, one guy that I knew actually went from [captain], he got a spot promotion from captain, and then, up to major, and he was a navigator also, but the navigator-bombardier in the Strategic Air Command had a very responsible position, because, as they said, when they dropped a bomb, ... you know, they'd, say, drop that thing on that city and, when they dropped it, they had a choice of whether it was an air blast, a ground blast or whatever. ... As he said, as my roommate told me, he said, "Nobody would ever know how I set that thing," and depending on what kind of a blast, ... you could cause a lot of damage.

SH: You were also in charge of assessing sound barriers.

JK: Yes, sonic boom [damage claim] investigator.

SH: Sonic boom investigator.

JK: Yes, which I'm glad you got my email message on that. Yes, when I wrote this up in the paperwork on my Air Force years, I sent to Sandra a message saying, "Remind me to mention sonic boom claims investigating." Yes, back in those days, we heard a lot of sonic booms, especially out West, and, sometimes, I mean, you'd be sitting there, fat, dumb and happy, and, suddenly, "Boom," and you'd feel windows shake and, you know, stuff like that happened. Well, sometimes, sometimes there were; well, let's see, how do I say this? In some cases, there was enough energy in those booms to literally shake glass and windows and stuff like that to the point where they break them, and, in some cases, they might even; well, maybe, this was if it cracked plaster or something like that. So, anyway, what would happen? Well, a sonic boom is heard somewhere. The next week or so, letters would come into the Air Force, "Say, the other day, one of those planes drove over and we heard a sonic boom and it crashed and it cracked my foundation." Well, anyway, all this was all well and good, but, in reality, the Air Force ... did not have to even answer these claims legally, but for public; what's the word? ...

SH: Opinion or morale or relations?

JK: Yes, public relations, yes, they would investigate these claims, and so, anyway, when they'd investigate them, well, they sent out a lawyer and they sent out a photographer, to photograph the damage, and they'd want an engineer to go. Well, I had an engineering degree. So, they said, "Hey, we need an engineer to go out," and so, they gave me a bunch of paperwork to read about sonic booms, this, that and the other thing, and I read it, you know, and then, I'd go out on these cases, and this would take us all over that part of Texas. ... You'd go out on ranches and farms and in cities and you'd go into some of these places and it was not unusual [to hear], like, I think the first one that I went to, somebody said, "Oh, boy, this cracked my foundation." So, I'd go to the place and I said, "Well, where's the crack?" He said, "Well, there it is, right there," and you'd

look and there's moss growing over the thing and, yes, I mean, it was obviously [older]. ... So, at first, I was a little bit, "Oh, well, these, you know, folks," but, you know, you're there for public relations, ... and these people didn't know. So, I finally realized, "Well," I said, "well, yes, these people are certainly concerned," you know, and so, we'd investigate and we'd write it up and all that. Some of the cases were almost laughable. I mean, one time, I swear, we were called into this house and this woman said, "Oh, yes, there's a crack in our garage, in the cement in the garage." So, anyway, I said, "Well, okay, would you show it to us, ma'am?" "Yes." So, we went into the garage and they said, "There it is," and I swear, I looked down on the garage floor and I said, "I'm sorry, where's the crack?" They said, "Well, it's right there, it's right there," and I swear I could barely see it. I finally had to get down and look at it, and all of us [did], and it did run the length of the garage, but it was ... almost a hairline crack. ... I'll tell you the truth, I came so close to laughing out loud, it was embarrassing, you know. So, what we had to do for the photographer is, we had to draw a line along the crack, and then, point a pencil; no, I think we pointed a pencil, I don't know, but we had to illuminate it, and then, show and say, "This is the line." ... Obviously, that wasn't [always] the case, but, once in awhile, you'd run into some weird ones. There was a church with stained glass windows, you know. Now, that was something. Now, the stained glass windows hadn't been reset or ... re-lead for years or anything like that. So, any shaking might cause something, and we don't really know what happened, you know, but, anyway, they put in a claim, because some of this, they said, "Oh, yes, we had to replace this glass," and all that, and this was quite a few bucks, and then, there was another one. There was a factory that made ceramic items, like ashtrays and things like this. Well, they had written down, you know, every time there was a sonic boom, they had the time listed and they could check the amount of things that came through, see, during firing, which is a very critical time, see. ... They seemed to show there was an increase in spoilage or damage during these times following the sonic boom, you see, and so, you know, a lot of these things came into it, but, then, there were some other aspects of it, too. For instance, some of those planes that caused the sonic boom were specifically B-58s [Convair B-58 Hustler], which were in the Air Force inventory a fairly short period of time, but they were supersonic aircraft and they were big and they could really throw a lot of energy down. See, the size of the plane and the speed it's going determines the amount of energy that will be [expended], that goes into the boom, ... but some of those were being flown and tested by Convair, or General Dynamics. [Editor's Note: Convair was a Fort Worth, Texas-based company that designed bombers for the US Air Force.] ... So, that was not an Air Force plane and they couldn't make a claim against us; they had to make a claim against Convair, see. So, we had records of that, and I'm not sure; some of these things were paid off. I don't know if any that I was involved in were paid off. One time, we had a case where we went back to this subsistence farm and, to find the place, we had to ask at a post office and we told the guy that we're going there. He says, "Well, you're going to meet quite a character," and, when the letter came in, it was by some 150-year-old lawyer, no doubt, who had a typing ribbon that was worn out and misspelling on it. ... He said, "Yes," he said, "Mr. So-and-So, one of those planes went over and that sonic boom came and knocked off a piece of his chimney and killed a horse, which I understand was a very valuable quarter horse," and I said, "Well, okay." So, anyway, we went back to this place, driving down an old road, and we came to, you know, this fence and there was a shack there, literally, and hanging from this fence were these big objects, I mean, about this big, I'm making a sign of about six inches to a foot in diameter, or something like [that], hanging from this fence. ... We

looked at them and they were cat heads, cat head skeletons, you know, the things that are cut off from a big catfish, just hanging there or something.

SH: From a catfish?

JK: Yes. I mean, you see, the body of the fish was cut off and probably eaten, or so on.

SH: Okay, all right.

JK: But, the heads were just hung there for some reason, and then, we go through the gate and we hear these dogs and we opened up the shack [door] and there must have been twenty or thirty dogs come running out of it, like hunting dogs and stuff like this, and the [USAF] lawyer was talking to this guy and he said, "Yes, well, we're here to check on that sonic boom thing." He says, "Yes, yes, well, I'm not feeling good. I'm sick right now and my brother, who made the claim, and my deaf-and-dumb brother, they're not here right now," and so, I said, "Well, could you show us, tell us more about it?" So, he got out of bed in his shabby clothes, and, I mean, this was like the [real] McCoy, you know, ... real, honest to goodness, back-country Texas, and he took us out and he told us. He [the lawyer] said, "Well, now, what's the story about the chimney?" We looked up at the chimney. He said, "Oh, yes, chimney just blew apart, top of it fell off," and [I said], "Oh, is that right?" "Yes," and we're saying, "What about this dead horse?" He said, "Well, let's see, I think he's out in the field here," and so, well, all right. So, we wander out to this field. Well, it wasn't in the first field he went to. Then, he had to go to another field and he showed us some bones. I said, "Well, you sure this is the horse?" "Oh, yes, positive, positive," and the lawyer, I mean, I didn't know a cow bone from a horse bone, but he was sure that they were cow bones, you see.

SH: Oh.

JK: And so, anyway, we took pictures and he said, "Now, I want you to give me the [story], ... tell us the story," and this [and] that, and he wrote it down and he suggested, actually, this might have been a fraudulent claim, but that was quite an experience. ... We had several experiences like that. I could go on and on, but, okay, anyway, enough said about that. One of the things that I should say about while I was in this SAC thing, there were two events that are very, very, well, the same event, was very memorable. I was in the supply building and I heard a couple of the airmen talking. They said, "Hey, there was a guy killed in that air crash this morning," and so, I thought, "Oh." So, I later found out what had happened. They were doing some take-offs, practice full load take-offs, and they were launching aircraft and they had a weapon aboard, which means a thermonuclear weapon, hydrogen bomb, aboard, and, anyway, this plane took off, ... these planes were taking off, and, when they were fully loaded, they had, well, half the weight of the aircraft, or more than half the weight of the aircraft, was fuel, on take-off, and then, they had the weapon aboard and they're fully loaded, okay. So, in order to get the plane off the ground, they had what they called "assist take-off," namely, they had rocket ATO [assisted take-off] bottles, basically. They're rocket bottles on the aircraft to propel it to take-off, and, once they're fired, you know, they just go and they just burn out, and then, they fly. So, anyway, they started down the runway and the guy fired his ATO, oh, and aboard, they had the usual complement. They had the aircraft commander, the co-pilot, the navigator, and there was a crew

chief aboard trying to get his flying time. See, you have to fly four hours a month to get [flight pay], and [he] wanted to get his flying time. So, they're flying down the runway and something happened. One of the ATO bottles cracked, and, when that cracked, flames started coming out, not only from the rear of the thing, but it started spewing fire up into the wheel well and a number of other ATO bottles went loose and went flying all over the runway, all over the place. ... Anyway, they're halfway down the runway and the control tower says, "Aircraft commander," he says, "your plane is on fire." "Well, okay, well, we ought to do something." ... Now, they had a problem. ... The pilot and co-pilot could have ejected right on the runway and it would have thrown up and it would have given them room to parachute out. The navigator on a B-47 ejected downward.

SH: That is right.

JK: He couldn't get out, and the crew chief, he didn't have a chance, either. So, anyway, the aircraft commander says, "Okay, we're going up." So, he jettisoned the canopy, ran down the runway and took off. ... They got up high enough, and he tilted a few degrees one way or the other, and the navigator punched out, his chute opened, and, in one swing, he just went to the ground. So, he got out, and then, the pilot, the aircraft commander, and co-pilot punched out, and the sad thing about it was that the crew chief, his only way out was to go out the door that he climbed up into. ... What happens is, when you open that door, in order to get out, there was a spoiler that dropped down to spoil the air stream coming into it, and then, he would have been able to drop out through the air stream and open his chute. Well, unfortunately, when that spoiler came down, it didn't stop, it just kept going. So, the crew chief tried, tried to get out, and he ended up in the wheel well and the plane went in, and close to a school, I mean, not very, very close, but in a field. There were fields out there then, and it crashed and it burned a little bit, and, now, I said there was a weapon aboard. So, this was officially a "broken arrow," if you will, you know, an incident with a [nuclear weapon being out of direct control], but what happened [was], the weapon was not armed, and this is an important thing that a lot of people don't realize about nuclear weapons. If they're not armed, they're not going to go off, and it was not armed and, if it was armed, I probably wouldn't be here, neither would the City of Abilene, Texas, but, anyway, it went in, and so, anyway, they went out and they looked over the [wreckage]. All that they found of the crew chief could fit in a wastepaper basket, unfortunately. Yes, it was a tough situation. Now, I was not involved in mortuary officer's [duties] at this time.

SH: Thank heavens.

JK: Yes, but, anyway, oh, yes, we had some incidents. Oh, an interesting thing about the "broken arrow;" after I moved to Albuquerque, in 1997, I ran into a guy there who was writing for the Air Force, he was writing a record of all the "broken arrows" that had occurred, and I told him that I knew about this. He said, "Well, I'd like to know what your story was," and I wrote that up and gave it to him. ... This is one of these books that are published, but nobody will ever see, because it's classified, but I think he actually put that into that report and, before I went to Dyess, there was an interesting case called "The Man in the Burning Bomber," where they had a problem with an aircraft in which a co-pilot was able to bring in the plane. Well, that's a long story, and it was before I was in, but, if you ever get interested, back in 1958, early '58, there was an interesting incident there, and I met the hero of that incident while I was there. ...

SH: He was still flying and everything.

JK: Oh, sure, oh, yes, sure. In fact, he got a spot promotion for that. ... Well, I was a member of the local aero club. I learned to fly while I was in the Air Force, although I wasn't an Air Force pilot, but I wanted to learn to fly. So, I joined the aero club and this guy was a member of the aero club, so, I met him. I didn't see much of him [not] too much.

SH: He just brought a plane in.

JK: Yes. What happened was, basically, okay, I'm not even sure exactly what happened, but the plane was having some problems and there was a navigator and an instructor-navigator aboard, there was the aircraft commander and a co-pilot, and so, anyway, ... what it was, the aircraft commander, for some reason, gave the order to punch out, because they had problems. ... So, the navigator punched out, and then, they jettisoned the canopy, and the pilot, the aircraft commander, and the copilot tried to punch out, and their seats wouldn't [eject]. The ejection mechanism did not work. So, well, what to do? Well, what had happened [was], by the way, when the navigator punched out, the blast of air knocked this instructor-navigator back and he hit his head or something and went unconscious. So, anyway, the aircraft commander thought that everybody was gone, but he couldn't eject. So, he went down and went out and he went to the navigator's hole and dove out, got banged up on the underside of the airplane, but he got out. ... The copilot was coming out to do the same thing when he tripped over the instructor-navigator. He saw, "I can't leave this guy here," and so, he climbed up ... back into his copilot's seat. Now, understand, the seat was armed. I mean, he'd tried to eject and the seat was armed. ... So, they radioed home and all that, and he said, "Well, I'm bringing it back in, because, you know, what am I going to go do?" So, he brought the thing back in, and there was one thing he couldn't do from the copilot's seat. He could not activate the wheels, I mean, the landing gear, but this instructor-navigator woke up and he said, "Well;" so, he went up there and, when the time came, he just lowered the gear, but, here, they'd brought the thing in on armed seats and the feeling was, you couldn't land a C-47 from the copilot's seat. Well, he did, but what happened is, ... you know, the canopy was off, he had a lot of wind blast, or something, the poor guy was almost blinded from all this, but he brought the plane in, and that was quite a story.

SH: Incredible story.

JK: Oh, yes, that was quite a story, and, okay, so, let's see.

SH: How did people around that area treat guys who were part of this base?

JK: Oh, the Air Force, you mean?

SH: This was a new base, as you said.

JK: Yes. Well, economically, they were very happy. In fact, that was the reason, that was the main reason, that they were there. I mean, Abilene, ... frankly, they saw the economics of the town as being somewhat limited. ... They figured, "Well, a base should do us some good." So,

of course, a number of them had political connections, but they also were pretty good about it. I mean, they gave the Air Force the land, they built the officers' club. I don't know if they built the runways. They may have, but they were very good in courting the Air Force. ... Of course, when I was there, stationed on the base, that was my world, more or less, but we went downtown quite a bit, and they were pretty happy, I think, that we spent money down there, like, ... we used to eat out every night, and I didn't particularly like going to the officers' club all the time. So, there was a group of us who would go downtown, and we could wear [civilian clothes]. You know, as soon as the workday was over, ... we could go out of uniform and that, and we saw a lot of movies and, well, it really depended on the people. Now, the group I fell in with were a bunch of, "Oh, well, I'm just glad I'll be out of the Air Force soon," blah, blah, blah, ... although they were conscientious people, hard-working and all that, and, in some ways, I think were a little bit on the snobbish side. Maybe I was looked on that way, too. I don't like to think so, but, I mean, ... everybody at that age, every young man at that age, talks about meeting young ladies, ... but these guys didn't seem to. They might have talked a lot, but they didn't do anything, ... but, you know, we were all friends and we'd eat together and do things, and this went on for most of the time that I was there. ... Finally, I met this fellow who did things. I mean, he ... always had girlfriends and stuff like this, and, anyway, ... in the summer before I got out of the Air Force; that was 1961. I was supposed to get out in October of 1961, and he invited me to this party over on the campus, around the campus, of Abilene Christian College, which was a Church of Christ-affiliated school in Abilene, Texas, and, there, I met the woman who would become my wife. ... She was between junior and senior year. She was there in summer school, and so, anyway, I met her and I didn't think much of anything, and then, ... I went on a trip down to visit somebody down in Austin. I came back one night, and there was a little note on my door, with a phone number, and said, "You can reach Elaine at this number. Why don't you call her up? Maybe she'll give you a date." I said, "All right." So, I did, and I knew I was going to get out of the Air Force in a few months. I said, "Well, that's nice," you know. So, anyway, we went out. Well, lo and behold, in September of '61, I think it was September of '61, ... President John F. Kennedy ... got on the air and announced that there was a problem in Berlin. Russia was rattling their rockets and causing all sorts of problems, and, by gosh, he was going to do something about it. ... Among a whole list of other things, like, a number of B-47 wings were to be, oh, what's the word I'm trying to say? decommissioned, or whatever. He said, "We're going to keep them on active duty, and I'm also going to extend officers on active duty who were supposed to get out," and a number of us fell into that category. So, I was extended on active duty, officially for a year. ... That only lasted seven months, by the way, because things had cooled down, but, anyway. [laughter] So, I was extended on active duty, and so, because of that, I got to know my wife-to-be more, and we fell in love and got married, after I got out of the service, but, anyway, that's how I met my wife.

SH: What were your plans for after the service? Now, you had met your intended wife.

JK: Right, my plans were to go to graduate school and get a master's degree.

SH: In engineering?

JK: In engineering. Actually, I was thinking of going to law school, because I'd fallen in among a bunch of lawyers, and law seemed like a good field, and especially patent law, because I heard

it was very lucrative. I also heard it was very boring, but really it was, and law seemed to intrigue me, but I got [to] thinking about it and I said, "No, I think I'm going to stay in engineering." So, I applied to a number of places and, finally, well, anyway, when I was extended on active duty, I had to reapply and I got words back from some of these schools, "We hesitate to give you a chance to come here because of your marginal academic record." Well, okay, so, marginal academic record; anyway, but, then, while I was there, I was talking to ... an Army officer who lived in the BOQ next to me for awhile, and he said, "Why don't you try University of Nevada, Reno." I said, "Well, who ever heard of the University of Nevada, Reno?" Have you ever heard of the University of Nevada, Reno?

SH: Yes.

JK: Oh, you did, okay. Well, anyway, he said, "No," he said, "it's a fine school. I think you'd love it. There's a lot to do there. It's a great place," stuff like that. "Why don't you look into it?" So, I wrote them a letter and they said, "Sure, we'd be glad to have you." So, anyway, then, of course, I was extended on active duty. I was planning to go in '61, but I was extended on active duty. So, I said, "Well, could you put it off for a year?" and they said, "Sure." They were very, very nice about it, and I eventually did go there and I did get my master's degree there. ... It was a nice thing. It was the first year of our honeymoon, because we got married in September, on Labor Day, and then, we went out there and all that.

SH: Did you stay in the Reserves?

JK: No, I did not stay in the Reserves. I did not enjoy the military experience that much, because you had no control. I mean, you know, I'd been put in places. I should say, when I was extended on active duty, ... my commanding officer at the time said, "Look," he said he went up to the powers-that-be and said, "Look, this fellow is an engineer. He shouldn't be doing what he's doing. Either give him an engineering job or put him out of the service." So, they gave me an engineering job, and I got some good experience on it, too.

SH: Really? They finally found one for you.

JK: Yes, really, yes. It was some pretty good design experience and all that. ...

SH: You were still at Dyess Air Force Base.

JK: Still at Dyess Air Force Base. I was in there the whole period of time.

SH: Okay, you stayed right out at Dyess.

JK: Yes, and so, that was a good time. Of course, I then had a girlfriend, and it was a much better experience. I had some good experiences in some respects, like, I think I wrote up in my thing about the Air Force years about Toastmaster's Club, which was a tremendous, tremendous way to learn about public speaking. ... Toastmaster's Clubs were pretty popular in the Air Force, or in the military, you know, to get people to learn how to do presentations. I got very involved

in that and, ... in fact, when I got out of the service, I was, at the time, president of the local chapter, and it was a great learning experience. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: Ready?

JK: Yes. Well, I should also tell you about my job as funeral officer. That was something. As a mortuary officer, it mostly a paperwork thing. Funeral officer was a little bit different. In fact, when I was mortuary officer, part of my job was to make sure that we had a funeral officer, if necessary, but what happened was, if military funerals occurred, we had a group of people who, ... if a military funeral was requested by the next of kin, we would often have to go and participate in the service. ... This usually consisted of going out there, and the chaplain would go there, or the minister, whatever, and he'd read the words, you know, give the words of encouragement, and this [and] that type of thing, after which, people were called to attention, and our firing squad of seven people would be called to attention. An NCO [non-commissioned officer] was in charge of this. An NCO would then go through the motions ... of having the firing squad fire three volleys, for a twenty-one gun salute, after which, people snapped to attention, I'd come to a salute, and, in the background, you'd have a bugler playing *Taps*. ... Let me assure you, if you've never experienced that, it is a very emotional moment. ... Then, after *Taps* were played, ... one of the airmen and I would go pick up the flag, fold it into a military fold, and then, hand it to the chaplain, who would pass it on to the next kin. One time, there wasn't a chaplain there. So, I had to present this to the next of kin. Well, at that time, I was going with my girlfriend, and now wife, and I wanted to practice this, and so, she's never let me forget this, but she sat there, as I practiced walking up to her, the grieving widow, and handing her the flag and giving this speech about thanking him for the service rendered by her husband. ... Lo and behold, this ... particular case was like that. In fact, one of the pallbearers, that's right, one of the pallbearers had been at the guy's and the woman's wedding. He'd been the best man, what? eight months before, or something like that, and, now, he was a pallbearer, and there was his young, pregnant wife sitting there. ... I folded the thing up, I walked up to her and I gave my little talk, and the poor woman, she, you know, looked away and it was tough. It wasn't easy for me, I might add, but, you know, you do what you have to do, and it's kind of funny. I talked to our bugler; we had a number of buglers, until we finally settled on one. ... This fellow was interesting, because he had been in the Marines, and then, decided to go into the Air Force, you know, to finish out his time. ... He told me one time, he had buried, if you will, he had been bugler for over eighteen hundred people. He was keeping track, and he said he was in Hawaii for awhile, ... during the Korean War, they'd bring Marines back and bury them, fifty, fifty, at a time, at Punch Bowl Cemetery. ... He was telling me, he says, "Oh, yes," he said, "they had all sorts of things, like, they would have maybe multiple buglers, where the first bugler would play part of it, and then, they'd have echoes going back." ... "Oh, gosh," he said. I said, "You know," I said, "I don't know how you could stand there, because, I tell you, this just breaks me up," and I know it broke everybody else up, because you hear those three volleys, and then, you hear the sound of *Taps*. It was something, and I said, "I don't know how you can do it." He says, "It breaks me up, too, but," he says, "I have to do it and I do it." He was a real professional, I tell you, but, anyway, I had that job. It was kind of funny. See, as a junior officer in a support squadron, you get all sorts of jobs, like inventorying the commissary once in awhile,

inventorying the clothing sales. Well, I did that every month, but we had others come in, do it, too, you know, ... but there were various little things, check the central base fund equipment, do this, that and the other thing. ... So, I had to be a funeral officer, and so, anyway, ... the first sergeant of the base was a guy who made these assignments, and so, he had said, "Well," somebody said, "well, you're going to be permanent funeral officer." So, I called him up. I said, "What are you doing to me?" He said, "Hey, Lieutenant," he says, "I'll tell you what." He said, "We need a professional on this job and, with all your experience, you're just the man, but I'll tell you what I'll do." He said, "I will take your name out of the box for all those other assignments, and, therefore, you can be the funeral officer and you won't have to do any of these other assignments. How does that sound?" and I said "That sounds all right," because, you know, you didn't have that many funerals, and so, we worked that out and that worked out okay.

SH: What would you do then to fill your day?

JK: Oh, no, no, I mean, understand, ... okay, for the longest while, ... see, for the first nine months, I was supply, and then, for about two more years, I was clothing sales, mortuary.

SH: All combined.

JK: Oh, yes, all combined.

SH: I see. I thought they just kept moving you to all these different areas.

JK: Oh, no, no, I had all these jobs. In fact, ... we also, on the base, had what they called Dyess Fiesta Days, which was, you know, [an event where] they'd have games and show off what's there, and planes'd fly in, and this, that, and the other thing. ... They'd invite the public to come and all that. Well, my boss was in charge of that, and so, I was always involved in that, and then, one year, I mean, the enlisted men in my boss' office said, "Lieutenant, would you come around and sit in the boss' chair? We need an officer down here to help us out." I said, "Well, I don't know what I can do." He said, "We just need an officer to answer the phone and ... to be an officer to help move things along," and so, I sat there. ... By gosh, I tell you, the first thing, because my boss was doing other things, and, for the first few hours, boy, I was on that phone all the time and talking to people, and then, things suddenly quieted down, but, yes, I mean, it was quite an experience. ... We had other things happen. We had a couple of U-2s land there. At the time, U-2s were, well, they were not too well-known. [Editor's Note: U-2s were single-engine planes operated by the Air Force and CIA for surveillance.]

SH: They said they did not exist. [laughter]

JK: Well, there's another aspect to that, which probably; yes, well, anyway. Yes, they were, but they were spy planes, and they were stationed at Del Rio, Texas. I forgot the name of the base, but maybe it's Del Rio Air Force Base. I forgot, but they were stationed there, and, of course, they were stationed all over the world, too. I didn't know that, but, anyway, ... they were high flying spy planes, and I heard about them first up in Amarillo and I was told about them, but, anyway, while we were there, two of them were forced to land there. ... So, everybody went to the hangar to look at them and all that kind of stuff. That was interesting, and so, there was that

incident, and, of course, there was the "broken arrow" I told you about, and I also mentioned, in here, something. I said, "You know, while I was in the service, I never really thought that I was going to have to go to war or anything like that," but, about that time, I guess, of the Berlin Crisis, ... we were at a wedding, I remember. One of the nurses on base got married to one of the dentists and the guys were standing around and, you know, you're in a room of warriors. I mean, these are people who are warriors, and just about all, yes, all of them, were volunteers, you know, and they were talking about, "Well, yes, it's possible we might go to war," you know, and, gosh, I remember, that was the one time I really felt fear, I mean, just honest to goodness fear. I said, "You know, I might actually have to go out and go to war." What I was going to do, I had no idea, but, you know, "I might actually have to lay my life on the line," and I often said to myself, "I wonder how I would have held up under those circumstances," and I suspect it would have been same as anybody else, but, you know, it was quite a feeling. It was something that you don't know until you really felt it.

SH: Was the base ever put on alert?

JK: Oh, well, yes.

SH: I know they do drills over there.

JK: Practice alerts, yes, oh, yes, practice alerts.

SH: What would you do when the base would be put on alert? What was your duty station there?

JK: It was the same thing. I mean, I kept doing the same thing. There was something else though, during these practices, that we had a control room, where the maintenance people wanted to make sure ... that all the planes were up to snuff, and so, they'd go on twenty-four-hour-a-day operation. ... Everybody was working, and so, we, as officers, this caused some dissention, because they said, "Okay, we want you officers to go out and ride around with enlisted men and you're in control of the car, of course, with these enlisted men," the sergeants or whatever. ... They would check to see what the status of each plane was, and then, we'd call it in by radio, say, "We have a delta time on this plane, we have an alpha time on that plane," and so on, like that. ... Anyway, so, we'd work a night shift, or something like that, ... but what got to be noticed was, we weren't really doing anything. I mean, it was the NCOs who were doing all the work and they knew what was going on, and all we were was glorified drivers. So, I happened to belong to the, ... what was it? the Junior Officers Council, and a number of the guys were rather miffed about this. They said, "Hey, we're not doing a thing." They said, "Get us off of this," and, eventually, they just took us off of it, because we just said, you know, we weren't really doing anything. It didn't bother me, because I liked to drive, but, on the other hand, there's a status thing and all that.

SH: It sounds like you had a fairly good rapport, except for this one individual, with your enlisted men.

JK: Pretty well, yes, yes. I would say pretty well, yes. I think that, above all, I tried to be honest, ... but, on the other hand, there were things that I was just too young ... and too inexperienced with life to understand, but I think I got along very well, yes.

SH: Was the officer corps integrated at Dyess?

JK: ... You mean black and white? yes. Yes, there weren't ... that many black officers, actually, but, yes, they were. However, at that time, Abilene, Texas, was still [segregated], you know, [in] that part of Texas, there were still integration problems. As you know, ... let's see, what was it, the school integration act, Brown versus the Topeka School System, basically, happened in 1954, [the US Supreme Court's 1954 *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka* decision], and my wife, by the way, was from Topeka and was there at the time, and somebody asked that question by the way, last night. My cousin asked, and she said, "Well, you know, I don't remember much of what happened, but, yes, we were in the same high school with them," but, anyway, it was kind of interesting, because we did have black officers. There was a black pilot, I remember, and one of my buddies was a staunch Virginian, and I remember him making a comment that showed his attitude. ... We were riding around in a car, there were three of us, and he saw this black officer, he was a pilot, you know, aircraft commander, and he was riding around in his car. ... "Yes," he says, "while we're in the Air Force together, I respect him as a fellow officer and a person," he says, "but, other than that, he's just another black man," and I thought, "Well," but, you know, the attitude then, ... there was still a lot of prejudice. This same guy was trying to convince me that, "Well, you know, they're fundamentally inferior, blacks are fundamentally inferior." They didn't necessarily call them blacks at the time, either, but [he thought] they were fundamentally inferior, and then, the people who I would work with, like the civilians, too, and I'm not talking about rednecks, I mean, I'm talking about good, solid citizens, like I like to think we are, no, but I mean good, solid citizens, had been brought up in this segregated culture, ... when it got down to it, they said, "They're just not, oh, able, they're not smart, they're not capable," and so on, like that, and they really did believe this. This was their feeling.

SH: Were the enlisted men under you integrated as well?

JK: Oh, yes, oh, yes. Oh, well, you have to understand, I mean, integration in the services occurred under Harry Truman.

SH: I know, but, sometimes, you get large segments that are mostly white or with very few blacks.

JK: ... Oh, no, they were all [diverse]; I mean, I had a lot of black guys working for me. In fact, yes, I had plenty of black guys and a few Hispanic fellows, and, oh, yes, they were integrated. ... At that time, women were not integrated. I mean, they were in the WAF, Women in the Air Force, and, in order to get WAFs onto a base, you had to get a whole squadron of them in there, see, but, actually, now, it's completely different. I mean, you know, women and men are the same, and, let's see, I do remember some of the incidents that I remember with the black/white situation. One of them was when I first got there; I had to get Texas license plates on my car. So, I went downtown to the city hall in Abilene. ... They said, "Well, you have to have a law officer read the engine number," or the something number, "on your car." So, I said, "Well, what

do I do there?" "Oh, well, go downstairs to the sheriff's office." So, I went downstairs [to] the sheriff's office, and I'm going down this stairway. ... You went down the first set of steps to a landing, and then, you made the ninety-degree right turn, and then, you went down the rest of the way. ... I remember, I made that turn, I looked up and I saw this big sign, in letters about a foot high, that said, "Black men," and I said, "What on Earth is this about?" and then, I looked and it was an integrated toilet in the city hall there, for black men.

SH: Segregated.

JK: Yes, and, in fact, all over the South, I remember driving across the South one time, and you would go to these gas stations and you very often would see, in fact, practically all the time, you had bathrooms, men, women and colored, and that was the way that they did things. Restaurants; I remember, there was a restaurant there that we would go to, and I remember paying the bill one time. ... This black truck driver came in one time, he said, "Hey, any chance of getting something to eat here?" and the guy said, "Sure can, right back here," and they led him back to the kitchen, you know. I mean, the blacks would eat in the kitchen, and one guy told me, one black officer who I knew, said he was driving through the South one time, and he was in uniform and he went into a restaurant and he ordered food. ... He said, "They weren't too happy." They served him, but they weren't too happy about it, you know, and all that, but, yes, there was still a lot of that in the South at the time, and it was with a great deal of pleasure that, back in the 1970s, and maybe early '80s, I was talking to some people, to a young man who had gone to Harding College in Searcy, Arkansas. He was black, and I couldn't help but ask him, I said, "Hey, Joe," I said, "did you ... have to use segregated bathrooms down there?" and he looked at me as if I had three heads. He said, "No; why?" and that was one of the happiest moments of my life, I think, because things had come along the way. Another time, I was in Charlottesville, Virginia, some time in the '70s, and [went] in a McDonald's, and, sure enough, there were black and white people in there, you know, ordering food. So, things have come a long way, despite what a lot of people might tell you. ... Then, one of the more interesting ... events was, Abilene, Texas, okay, here's the base and they had a, I think it was a grammar school, you know, built by federal funds, and that, Dyess Air Force Base Grammar School. ... I was driving through with one of the chaplains on a mortuary case and I saw these black kids standing on a corner. I said, "Gee, what are they doing?" He said, "Oh, they're waiting to be bused to the Negro school." Now, understand, this was at least 1958, and I said, "Well, why can't they go to, you know, Dyess Grammar School?" and he said, "Oh," he said, "it's a state law in Texas that all schools must be segregated." Oh, well, I mean, I had to accept it; I didn't know. ... So, anyway, to the base comes a young lawyer from Kearny, New Jersey, whose name, you might recognize, was Leonard Wineglass. I don't know whether you remember, but you might have heard of the case of the Chicago Eight, and [later] became Chicago Seven, when Bobby Seale was taken out of it. [Editor's Note: The "Chicago Seven" were seven defendants, all social and political activists, charged with conspiracy to incite the riot that took place during the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago.] Well, Len Wineglass was one of the two lawyers on that case, but I knew Len Wineglass in the Air Force, and Len had in him all the makings of being a cause lawyer, and he did become a cause lawyer and established a certain degree of fame. ... He became a cause lawyer, but, anyway, Len was at Dyess Air Force Base, and I guess after I got out of the service, no, before I got out of the service, he was transferred to Iceland, and he had some fun up there. He was interviewed ... on a radio station, and Len was obviously

Jewish, with a characteristically hooked nose, and so, anyway, the interviewer asked him, said, "Lieutenant Wineglass, you're a lawyer and you're an Air Force person. Have you ever been called a legal eagle?" and he turned his face sideways, said, "Only when they see my profile," which was kind of interesting, [laughter] but, anyway, why did Len end up in Iceland? Well, apparently, Len heard about this segregated school, Dyess School, and he said, "Hmm, that school must have been made with federal funds." So, he goes looking into the legalities of it, and, apparently, any school made with federal funds should not have been segregated, and so, I guess, this is the word we heard; now, whether it's true or not, but I can believe it. He looked into the legalities of it and I guess was going to make a big issue of it, and I guess the people at the base didn't want any more trouble with the town ... or with the State of Texas, and so, he suddenly received a transfer. By the way, you asked before, and I didn't answer it completely, "How did the people and the base get along?" I think pretty well, but not totally, I mean, and I later found out, because my daughter went down to Abilene Christian University, years later. ... I went back down there and there I was, ... say, on the outside looking in, as the parent of a student, and, you know, you hardly knew the base was there. I mean, you might see somebody in uniform once in awhile, but you just had no feeling for the base being there, whereas when I lived on and around and worked there, that was my whole world and the town was there, too, you know, but, by and large, they got along all right. There were some things about [it], you know, the usual stories that you hear. For instance, Taylor County was dry, you know, no booze, but there was a lot of bootlegging going on. However, the base, of course, had access to booze, the officers' club, and all sorts of people would cozy up to some of the officers, so [that] they could come out and partake of [alcohol], get booze out there. ... Then, there were the stories, which probably happened once and got told many times over, that people living off base had the neighbors walking over to them, saying, "Say, could we put our beer ... and wine bottles in your trash, because we don't want to be seen as being drinkers?" and stuff like that, and so, you know, this is one of the stories that went around. Yes, it was an interesting cultural shock in many ways, to live there and see, really, two cultures, the Southern culture and the military culture.

SH: Right, especially coming from Fort Lee or from Rutgers, it must have been a real shock.

JK: Yes, Fort Lee, New Jersey, is where I was raised.

SH: You got married, and then, went to Nevada. Do you want to kind of sum up your career?

JK: Oh, sure, I could sum that up. Let's see, yes, I married, went to the University of Nevada, Reno, and finished up a master's degree, and then, went to Scottsdale, Arizona. I worked for the Garrett Corporation. ... I was there for four years, and, while there, the longest time that I was there, I worked on, well, about two years of it, ... compressor design on a gas turbine engine that was used ... in an aircraft, ... it's designated the OV-10 [Bronco], which was a dual-engine counterinsurgency aircraft. ... It was a big thrill when I went to a museum, you know, an aviation museum, and they showed that aircraft there, and they said, "These are T76 engines, designed by the Garrett Corporation," and I had played a pivotal part in that, and I also helped design the auxiliary power unit, the compressor on the auxiliary power unit, for the 747. One of the guys, who I worked with on this design, had also designed this big fan on the main engines of the 747, ... but I was heavily involved in that. ... Then, I left there to go back to graduate school. I wanted to study for a PhD. I went to Syracuse, and I'm ABD ["all but dissertation"]

there. ... What happened is, this was back around 1969, this was '70, and the money dropped out of the research market. ... My wife was having a little bit of trouble adjusting to the strain of it, and I said, "Well, look, it's either put her and the family through all this," and I didn't want to do that. So, I said, "Well, I'll go look for a job." So, I got a job at the Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory in Schenectady, New York. ... I figured that'd be a four or five-year job, and, naturally, it lasted almost twenty-seven years, and I retired then, and retired and we decided to go out West, for a couple of reasons. For one thing, the climate's nicer there, and, also, my wife's mother was living in Amarillo at the time; back to Amarillo, you know. [laughter] ... Her care had been supervised by my sister-in-law, and my poor sister-in-law, as she said, "I had Mom longer than she had me," and so, she finally [put her in an assisted living facility], but, anyway, we ended up going to the Southwest, and Amarillo, it's a wonderful town, but somewhat recreationally challenged. So, we decided, well, we'd look into New Mexico, and, hey, Albuquerque is a very pleasant five-hour drive from Amarillo and lots to do there. So, we retired over there, and it was back and forth, and, in fact, in 2000, my sister-in-law had just about had it. So, we brought Mom over to Albuquerque and we monitored her care. She lived in a, you know, assisted living home, then, final nursing, and then, she passed away in 2002, at the age of ninety-one. ... While I was there in Albuquerque, I got into the New Mexico Mountain Club and kept up my hiking, which I enjoyed a great [deal], still enjoy it, and then, got into search-and-rescue, which I did that for seven years, and that was a very rewarding experience, a wonderful experience. ... In fact, I told you, I was so impressed by the people I met and the things they did that I wrote the book on that.

SH: What is the makeup of a group like that? Is it set up over a large geographical area or is it a small geographical area that covers a small area?

JK: A series of small groups, like, in Albuquerque, well, Albuquerque is a population center of going on from something like, depending on who you want to believe, half a million to eight hundred thousand people, you know, surrounding area and all that, and to calibrate you, all of New Mexico has got a population of about 1.8 million, okay. So, you know, it's a fairly small state, but it's the fifth largest state by area in the United States. So, you know, there's a lot of empty land out there, too, but, anyway, ... there are several search-and-rescue groups all over the state. The one I was with in Albuquerque, we were mountain rescue, you know, the people who trained going over cliffs and roping down, this, that and the other thing. So, I was in mountain rescue, but we also had a bunch of "ground pounders" called Cibola Search-and-Rescue, and we also had a group of communicators, basically. I mean, ... they'd work communications for the search-and-rescue jobs. They did a very good job, but, anyway, these were all ham radio operators, and then, a lot of us went out and got our ham licenses. I did, too, but, anyway, ... our group had a roster of about fifty people, but, when it came to actually, you know, getting people out, maybe you'd get the usual five to twenty people, depending, ... often the same people, you know what I mean, typical volunteer organization, and although we were mountain rescue and trained that way, ... most of the cases we went on ... did not require that. So, we became "ground pounders" or whatever, and I was in seventy-three missions over the seven years that I was in, seventy-three, seventy-four.

SH: These were people who hiked up in the mountains and were not prepared to make their way back.

JK: A mix. Yes, there was that. ... You'd run into the usual assortment of people. Now, everybody says, "Oh, well, I guess they were a bunch of dumb people who don't know anything about the mountains." Well, in some cases, yes, but, in other cases, yes, there were experienced climbers and hikers. There were older people, such as myself, [laughter] you know, who [got stuck]. There was a trail that went from the bottom of the mountain up to the top, about, oh, I'd say a four-thousand-foot vertical rise, but a nice trail, about seven miles, called the La Luz Trail, which, translated in Spanish, means "The Light," beautiful trail, well-engineered and everything, and that gave us about half of our business. ... There's one rule that you knew was going to be followed; nothing ever happens until it's night, because people are never lost in the day, right? [laughter] I mean, you know, you could look out and see Albuquerque down below, but, you know, until they got, if you will, "darked," you know, [then], they say, "Oh, no, we've got to call for help." ... So, lo and behold, you're sitting there, fat, dumb and happy, you've just finished watching your TV show, it's about nine or ten o'clock at night and you've been up all day, your beeper goes off. "Hey, we've got somebody on La Luz Trail. We've got to go up and get them." "Oh, jeepers." So, then, you'd go out and you'd be out all night and, I tell you, I mean, you get pretty tired. [laughter]

SH: Does this trail allow you to take four-wheeled vehicles, or would you hike up?

JK: No. We hiked up, but we would take a Stokes litter, typically, okay, I mean, if it required it. We'd take a Stokes litter, and we also had a wheel that you'd put the Stokes litter on, see, and so, we'd go up there and ascertain what the problem was, stabilize the patient, and, if they needed the litter, we'd put them in the litter, tie them in. ... It sounds easy, because people say, "Well, yes, but so all you do is, you put three people on each side of the litter and you guide it along with this trail." Well, in theory, that's right, but, don't forget, you're going downhill, and sometimes uphill, and so, what you have to do is tie a rope to each end of the thing, and so, ... sometimes, you couldn't fit six people on the litter, because you'd have a cliff on one side and a wall on the other side, and there would [be] cactus coming in and brush and all that kind of stuff, and then, you wanted to have people on that rope behind, in case you're going down a hill, to slow you down, or, if you're going uphill, vice versa, to pull you up. So, you would figure that, in order to fairly comfortably go about five miles, and, typically, we'd have to take people from three to five miles, downhill, you'd want to have maybe at least twenty people, because you'd be moving people around, in and out, and stuff like that, and that can tire you, and, one time, we had a case where we had to bring two people down. ... So, we had two litter teams, and we were light on people, and we kept calling in, "Hey, if you haven't come out, we need your help," and we did this all night. I mean, we were out all night and we got to the bottom, it must have been, I'd say there were forty people on that, and, when we got to the bottom, I've never seen such tired rescuers. So, yes, I mean, that can take it out of you. One time, ... we were called out and there was a Native American guy who was said to have [had] diabetes, and there was a woman with him, you know, and they were in their sixties, early sixties. Well, I was in my [sixties], I was about sixty-four, sixty-five, at the time, and we got up there and some guys had already got there. I said, "What's happening?" He says, "Well," he says, "the guy seems to be okay. We're trying to check him to see if his diabetes is all right," and he was okay and he was a Native American artist, you know, and this woman was his agent from Los Angeles. ... Anyway, they had gone up and they decided to come down the trail. Well, the upper part of the trail is pretty rocky and

[there were] switchbacks, and, surprisingly, a lot of people have trouble with that and they get very tired coming down. So, anyway, I said, "What's going on?" He [the SAR team leader] says, "Well, he's all right, but she's kind of wobbly. So, keep your eye on her." I said, "You got it." So, one of the lady rescuers and I literally held her hands and chatted with her all the way down. She was moving so slowly, ... I don't know if you know what APRS is, but it's a device on me that could tell people in base camp where I was, through a GPS, and so on, and we were moving so slowly, one time, that they called me and said, "Hey, why are you stopping?" "We're not stopping, we're moving slowly," and here we are, taking her down, "How much longer?" "Oh," I said, "not too much longer," you know, and we're lying, you know, all the way, and we finally got to a place where we ... just had to go around the corner and there was the parking lot. We went around the corner, and I'm holding her hand and the lady's holding her hand, and she said, "Oh, I'm going to collapse." So, I grabbed her, I said, "Oh, no, you're not," and you know what? that Native American guy ran around to the front, where we're holding her up, pulls out a camera and takes a picture. [laughter] I thought that was the funniest thing, gosh, oh, gee.

SH: One for the record books.

JK: Oh, well, he wanted it recorded, I suppose. ... Then, there were dead people we had to recover. We had a plane crash, where people's bodies were smeared all over the place, and you had to pick pieces off of trees and stuff like that. I think there was a death, and, of those seventy cases, I one time added up the number of deaths that were involved in all that I did, I think it was over ten, ten to fifteen, you know. A twenty-six-year-old climber fell two hundred feet, got impaled on a tree. ...

SH: I do not think people have much respect for a four-thousand-foot change in altitude, as far as your physical ability and the weather changes.

JK: Well, people ... do some dumb things. There was a track team, a few years ago, there was a track team from Pennsylvania, and they went out there on a spring break, and I still remember that day. I looked up in the mountains, I said, "Anybody who's up in the mountains on that trail today is out of his mind," and I was right. They were out of their minds. They actually hiked up there, and in April is a terrible time, because there's a lot of snow up there, and the wind's worse. ... [When] we got to the base of the Sandia [Peak] Tram that goes up [to the] top of the mountain and there was practically the whole track team there, with blankets around them, standing in there, wet and all this. This guy said, "Well, what happened?" He says, "Well," he says, "you know, gee, it was a little more rugged than we thought," and he said, "and, by the way, this one girl, we tried to get up, well, she passed out five times on the way up, and I think they got them up there." Well, so, anyway, I went up the tram, you know, a number of us went up the tram, and, lo and behold, they were just bringing her in. She was walking, but, you know, one of our lady members got to her first and got her out of her wet clothes. ... Lo and behold, we got her on the tram and [we were] taking her down. The tram had a contract, and, if we needed them, they'd take us up and down, and we're bringing her down and the medic on the job said, "You know, it's Elizabeth's birthday," and, lo and behold, everybody on that tram sang *Happy Birthday* to her. ... We got down to the bottom and this guy's coming around, shaking our hands and that. I said, "Oh, were you one of the coaches?" and, as he was thanking us, "Thanks a lot, thanks a lot," "You one of the coaches?" He said, "I'm *the* coach." He said, "I'm sure glad you guys were

here." He was quoted on television later as saying, "Yes, it was rough, but we were prepared," and they weren't prepared, but, you know, as one guy says, "It's the myth of fitness." So, well, anyway, I didn't want to get carried away on that.

SH: Thank you. Is there anything else that we did not cover?

[TAPE PAUSED]

JK: ... Yes, I did forget to mention some of the interesting people that I met. One of the fellows was a fellow named T. Waldo Davis. He was one of what I called, at that time, you saw them in the Air Force quite a bit, they were what I called "field grade captains." A field grade is major and above, ... but, at that time, there were a lot of people from World War II who had never gone beyond the rank of captain, but they were [in for] eighteen years and they were ready to get out, and a lot of them retired as captains. Well, T. Waldo was kind of a character, because ... I asked him one time, how many years, how many [flying] hours he had. He said, "Oh, I don't know." ... I said, "Well, a guess, like, for instance, was it three thousand hours?" He said, "What?" He says, "You kidding?" He says, "Why, I've got ten thousand military hours alone. It's more like twenty thousand," and he maybe had about twenty-three thousand hours of flying time, and he said, the first day he was in the Army Air Corps, he'd been a pilot before, he was instructing instructors on how to instruct their students. So, he was quite a pilot, and one of my roommates, in fact, had flown with him one time. ... He said, "Yes," he said, "he was quite a pilot." He said, "That guy could land a C-47." He made the smoothest landing he'd ever seen, and, oh, T. Waldo was a character. He was a promoter, also. He bought an airport, and they had a little flying company, business, there and all that, but he also got a little bit peeved at some of the people who were some of the [US Air Force] inspectors. He had to pass inspection or something, I forgot, qualification, and he was, at that time, a KC-97 pilot, and a KC-97 is a huge, four-motor aircraft. So, he was going out for his check ride and he walks up to the plane, and, you know, you're supposed to do a preflight inspection. He walks up to the plane, he walks up to one of those big, gigantic tires on the thing, right in front of these fellows, he gives it a kick, stands back. He said, "Well, didn't go flat, she's a goer." They got on the plane and flew the check ride. Now, whether he passed or not, I don't know, but I heard the story in the officers' club one time, and so, I asked Waldo himself. He said, "Yes," he said, "that's true." He said, "I was getting mad at those guys, anyway, so, I pulled that stunt," and it's kind of funny. He was actually RIF-ed, "reduction in force," shortly thereafter, but ... he said, "Well, no problem." He was disturbed by it. He had something like, I asked him, "How many kids?" He said, "Oh, I don't know," but he had about seven children, or something. ... He said, "Don't worry, they'll call me back when they need me. They always do," and I could picture him flying for Air America or something like that, one of these clandestine outfits, and he hinted about having done some of that, and that reminded me of a few other guys. There was a guy named [Tom], who I knew, he was a Naval Academy graduate and, in 1961, word was he was leaving the base. I knew him through Toastmasters. He was leaving the base on some secret, secret mission. ... So, anyway, somebody said, "Yes, this is an outfit where they fly in unmarked planes on secret missions," you know, and I said, "Oh, well, indeed," and the guy wouldn't tell anybody about it. Okay, flash forward to 1998, and I'm hiking with this guy who was in the Air Force, former Air Force guy, and I got [to] talking to him and he said, "Yes," he said, "I was in an organization, a little different. We flew on some different missions." I said, "Do you know," I said, "there's a

friend of mine who was in that circumstance? His name was," and I gave him his name. He said, "Oh, gosh," he says, "I know him." He said, "Yes, I knew him well." He said, "He and I were in the same organization," and this fellow, by the way, who I knew, had gotten killed. He was in a plane crash, but, anyway, it turned out that these guys belonged to an organization called the Air Commandos. Now, the first Air Commandos were actually the Flying Tigers of World War II, and ... I forgot what they called the AV, the something force, yes, but, anyway, the Flying Tigers. Everybody knew, ... American Volunteer Force, or something like that, AVF, something like that, and, anyway, they were thought of as the first of this type of outfit. [Editor's Note: The First American Volunteer Group (AVG), or "Flying Tigers," operated in China and Southeast Asia prior to and following the attack on Pearl Harbor before being absorbed into the US Army Air Forces.] Well, anyway, the Air Force decided to form an organization like that in 1961, and a friend of my friend in Albuquerque had published a book, this fellow who had published a book called *Air Commando Chronicles*. His name was Robert Gleason, Colonel, USAF, Retired. So, this friend loaned me the book and I read it, and I even contacted Bob Gleason and corresponded with him for awhile, but, anyway, it was true. These guys were in the Air Force and, out of the blue, they would receive an invitation, basically, "Would you be interested in trying out for an organization that's rather [dangerous], and we won't tell you too much about it?" ... Anyway, they had an interview and, during this interview, they were asked several questions, and they said, ... "You may answer these any way you wish and ... you can opt out at any time and it would not be held against you at all, but, anyway, if you answered these questions in the affirmative, we will go on further," and the questions were, like, essentially, ... "If you were shot down somewhere or something, would you disavow any knowledge of or any connection with the Air Force?" I mean, things like [that], "or with the country and with the war effort?" [and] so on, this, that and the other thing, and, basically, it said, "Man, you're going to be out there, you're with us, but, you know, you have limited..."

SH: We cannot help you.

JK: Yes, "We ... can give you limited help." Of course, they did help. I mean, there was no question about that, but, anyway, there was the usual disclaimer type of thing, and so, anyway, ... these fellows answered all their questions in the negative, I mean, in the affirmative, in the proper way.

SH: Yes.

JK: And, sure enough, yes, they went into ... it and they flew out of Hurlburt Field in Florida and that was their beginning of operations down there. ... Anyway, these fellows, including my friend at Dyess, were one of the first groups of Air Commandoes, and little did I know it, there was another guy at Dyess, who was a C-130 pilot, and he later became an Air Commando, or he did [serve] in that same group, and they were covered in this book, *Air Commando Chronicles*. In fact, this one fellow who was a C-130 pilot had quite an incident that he wrote up and all that kind of stuff, but, anyway, they were an interesting [group]. Lots of interesting stories came [out] in 1998 and '99.

SH: Right.

JK: When this guy could tell these stories, but I didn't even know they existed, and nobody knew.

SH: Right.

JK: But, it was under the name, they went in under the ... name Operation: JUNGLE JIM. ... If you want to pursue it further, you could look it up. So, that was some of the guys. ... I did enjoy my time learning to fly and all that. That was very [good], for one thing, is something that I wanted to learn and I did learn, and I found out a lot about myself and about flying, and it helped.

SH: Do you still fly?

JK: ... No. I only amassed a total of 120 hours, but it was kind of interesting, because, you know, this stuff that you learned, and there were changes in aviation about that time, which, when I was researching; ... I now research airplane crashes.

SH: Really?

JK: Yes, and I go looking for crash sites and stuff like that, and that all started with that research that I did ... for the foster son of a relative of my wife's who crashed in the Sandia [Mountains], but I did a lot of research on that, and the flying experience and what I'd learned then was very helpful when researching the conditions that existed at the time. ... In fact, over the past year, myself and four other guys have ... worked on and have finished a video on ... an introduction to crash exploring and aviation archeology, and we're going to distribute that.

SH: You keep going back to archeology. [laughter]

JK: Yes, oh, yes. Well, we call it archeology.

SH: No, but I am just laughing because you were talking about being intrigued by Margaret Mead, and then, of course, here.

JK: Oh, yes. Oh, she was an anthropologist, actually.

SH: Yes.

JK: Well, I mean, history, history is fascinating, as you probably know, and, as I said to you, I'm looking forward to meeting and chatting with Rick Atkinson. ... [Editor's Note: The Rutgers Living History Society, an honor society affiliated with the Rutgers Oral History Archives, honored author Rick Atkinson with its Stephen E. Ambrose Oral History Award at its annual meeting the following day.]

SH: Was John Paul Vann here when you were here? I think that would have been the Army ROTC. I do not know if he had left by then.

JK: I wouldn't have known him. Was that a student?

[TAPE PAUSED]

JK: Oh, sure, sure, yes. When I was here, in '54 through '58, there was a fellow I knew named John Cash. He was in Army ROTC. He later went to Vietnam and made a career of the service, although he died somewhere along the line. ... In fact, Bob [Robert] Max, who was in my class, had met him in the Pentagon. Bob worked in the Pentagon from time to time and he rose to the rank of colonel in the Reserves, ... but he said John had had heart trouble and he'd passed away, but John had majored in history and was somewhat of a military historian. ... He wrote a book called *Seven Firefights in Vietnam* and I got hold of a copy of the book, through Alibris, and Bob Max had that book, too, but I got hold of a copy through it, and of the seven firefights, John, I think, wrote the history of at least three of them, I think. ... Let's see, other people here, well, of course, I knew Marty Kravarik quite well, and he has come in and given his talk [oral history interview]. Marty told me a very interesting story, I don't know if he mentioned it to you, but I'll mention it, because I think it goes to show some of the pressure and some of the responsibility we had at that time. Marty, of course, was ... a B-47 copilot and, as I mentioned previously, they had their assignments, they had their targets, and then, he flew out of Little Rock, as I remember. ... He came down to Albuquerque one time. He happened to mention, "Yes, I was in Albuquerque, went to the Atomic Museum [The National Museum of Nuclear Science & History] down there," and, in the Atomic Museum, they have mock-ups of various bombs and there was a mock-up of a hydrogen bomb, which Marty recognized. He said, "Oh, yes," he said, "I was there and I saw this mock-up of this hydrogen bomb." ... It wasn't going to blow up, you know.

SH: Right.

JK: And he said, "I saw it," he said, ... "I sunk to the floor and started crying." He said, "Scared the dickens out of my wife." She said, "Marty, Marty, what's wrong?" and Marty looked up, he just said, "I'm glad I never had to fly and drop that bomb on a city and kill five million people," and, you know, ... that's something that affected the man years and years later. At the time, a lot of us didn't [think about it]. You know, I mean, I wasn't in that end of it, but a lot of people didn't realize what they were going to be faced with.

SH: Yes. I do not think anyone realized how it does affect people.

JK: Yes. Well, you know, I also met a fellow, ... we ended up rescuing this fellow, when I was in search-and-rescue, and he was a former Ranger, Charlie Company, in Vietnam and they had a saying, which they always [do]. You know, these guys have these sayings, but, as best I can remember, the saying was, "For those who have fought for it, freedom has a meaning the protected will never know," and that's a pretty powerful statement. This guy was a Ranger, long-range patrol. That was a pretty dangerous job. They'd get put behind enemy lines, spot targets. ... He had eight people in his squad. I think he said he lost three of them, maybe, and then, the day that he got out of the service, a fourth one died, I mean, the day he came back from Vietnam. He said, "And all this did have an effect on me," he said, and this Ranger group would get together several times and he'd talk with these guys and he'd tell them about it. In fact, he had a

road rage incident in which he showed his gun, because Texas has a right-to-carry thing and he had a gun and he showed his gun to somebody he was mad at. ... Anyway, he realized the problem and he went back and he reported himself to the police, but, anyway, ... he said they would talk to each other when they would get together. He was talking to one of his sergeants and the guy said, "Hey," he says, "it's happened to all of us, every one of us that have gone through this." ... I have had problems talking about some of my search-and-rescue experiences. I told you some of the funny ones, you know, but, you know, sometimes, well, you'd find people dead, you'd find a guy in a plane crash and body with a chopped up face and we had to carry him out and, when we went in to ... carry people out of this plane crash, [in] which three people died, there were so many pieces of body parts all around, I couldn't identify a single body part as belonging to a human being. That made it easier, believe me, but, you know, the very first rescue I was called out on, there were three rookies on that, myself and two others, we found the body of an eighty-one-year-old woman who had perished and probably frozen to death seventy-five yards from her trailer home, and that has always stuck with me. There was another case of a twenty-three-year-old young man who had gotten discouraged because ... his girlfriend had said, say, "Well, no, I don't want to get married when you want to." He went out and killed himself. So, we had to go and recover his body; you know, a twenty-six-year-old climber who fell, you know, this ...

SH: It takes its toll. It has to.

JK: It does, it does take its toll, and I guess that's why a lot of people, who you've probably seen here, talk about their combat experiences, have got worse stories to tell.

SH: I think that is part of the experience, everyone thinks that, because you are doing something that is good in the air and rescue.

JK: Yes, search-and-rescue.

SH: Right. They think that is not supposed to affect you, as opposed to somebody who is in combat, but it is not true. They are both very traumatic.

JK: No. Yes, sure, I mean, it happens to (A Bird?), because I got [to] talking to; see, ... several of our guys were also ambulance attendants, paramedics, stuff like that. ... I asked this young guy once, I said, "How does it affect you?" and we had a little talk about that. He says, "Hey, some of the things I see are awful," and, probably, they are, ... but he says, "But, you know," he says, "Why? Do you have problems?" He asked me, "Do you have problems?" I said, "Well, usually, I can deal with it," you know. "What the heck? ... I didn't get into search-and-rescue until I was at least sixty and I've seen a few things, but I must admit, I saw a lot of things after that that I'd never seen before in my life," ... but he said, "Yes," he says, "sometimes, it can get to you."

SH: Are there other things that you have jotted down that you would like to mention?

JK: Oh, jeez.

SH: Now that we have got you here, I do not want to miss anything.

JK: Oh, yes, yes. Oh, I could go on and on. I would say, though, if you wanted to, you could take a lot of this stuff that I've written and, however, you want to, integrate it into it. ... I told you about my studying, I told you about the 156 credits, and that was interesting, in fact, too. I don't know what it's like now, but, I mean, ... I've heard people talk about grade inflation, you know, and I don't know if there's grade inflation here or not, but, like, when I went to school, virtually nobody, I don't know if anybody ever got a "1;" at Rutgers, [it would] be a 1.0 average. This is ... about the only school I know, and I think Douglass has the same, you know, grading thing, this is the only school that I know of that has that system. Most of them are in the four, three, two, one category, [4.0 as the highest GPA], you know, but I don't know of anybody who ever got a 1.0 average, I mean, for four years, but, when my daughter graduated from college, there were about six or so kids who did. ... In fact, as I said here, I had about a 2.5 average and was still a member of the mechanical engineering honor fraternity. So, you know, that's [what it was]; as I say, I don't know [about today]. Of course, there were the comments about Silent Willie, you know, but I guess that story goes on and on and on. [laughter]

SH: As he whistles.

JK: Yes, right, right, and I'd mentioned Phil Jackson, my English composition professor, who was a really, really good fellow.

SH: I thought that was very interesting, that you picked him as your favorite professor ...

JK: Yes, an English professor.

SH: ... An English composition professor, being an engineering major.

JK: Yes, yes. I noticed that. I think it was maybe not because [of the subject], it was the man himself, because I had a terrible stutter, ... all through high school, you know, grammar school, junior high, high school, and starting into college. ... Of course, most people, at that time, you know, said, "Well, you don't talk about it." ... Well, Phil Jackson, one time, called me up, he said, "Mr. Koehler, I want to talk to you." He said, "Would you come over to ... my office?" and I was afraid, "Oh, gosh." So, I went to his office. He shuts the door. He says, "Mr. Koehler," he said, "there are people who can maybe help you with your stuttering," and I thought that was wonderful, that he cared that much, and he had talked to a speech professor, whose name escapes me, but, anyway, he took me over to him and we chatted for awhile and he gave me some suggestions, but the fact that he, as I say, that he cared. ... For the next four years, I'd meet him on campus and we'd pass, talk a few words, and he cared about his students and that, and a lot of people say, "Oh, these colleges, they're big colleges, nobody cares." Well, I don't believe that for a minute. I mean, there are some people who care and others who don't, and, yes, that made quite an impression on me. So, yes, he was good, and he did encourage me. He said, "Yes, you write pretty well," and I've written an article for *Appalachian Trailway News*, and another, the *Adirondack Mountain Club Magazine*, and so, yes, I've done a little bit, and I keep getting, as I say, ... questions from my friends, "When am I going to have another book out?" and I probably will, but, as I say, I'm afraid that ...

SH: What are the titles of your books, just for the record?

JK: My first book is entitled SAR, S-A-R, *We Have A Mission*, and that stands for, "Search-and-Rescue, we have a mission." The reason that I named it, well, for a number of meanings, our mission is, we say, to help and save people's lives. "*That others may live*," is the official search-and-rescue motto, which goes to all levels of search-and-rescue, even the Air Force search-and-rescue people, who are as good as anybody in the world at it, and the Coast Guard. "That others may live," you will see that motto, and so, that's our mission, okay, but, also, what would happen is, we'd get a beeper call and I'd call into the phone number and the person answering would say, "Hi, this is so-and-so. We have a mission," and the mission was to go out on this and help somebody, and so, that always struck me [as] being a pretty neat title, you know, *Search-and-Rescue, We Have a Mission*, and so, I wax eloquent about it. ... Of course, there's no other book talking about New Mexico Search-and-Rescue in the world, see. There are very few written about it, but there are a few good ones, and so, anyway, that's that book, and then, the other book was a book about, as I say, this mythical plane crash, based on my example. ... I named it *Answers*, A-N-S-W-E-R-S, because, what happened [is], it starts out with a fellow who comes to this history professor whose background is in Air Force, you know, Air Force or Army Air Corps history, wanting to get answers about this crash in which his father, ... who he didn't know, died and there was a mystery around it, of course, and I won't tell you what it was, [laughter] but, anyway, so, I weave in an unlikely plot and all that. ... It was fun, you know, but that ... went over bad. [laughter] That goes over better than my first book, yes.

SH: I thought there were more than two.

JK: I wrote four. My first one was my autobiography, ... and that's private. Then, I wrote the search-and-rescue book. Then, I wrote the true story of my looking for the plane crash, but, then, I said, "I've got to, I feel this need, to write a story [laughter] based on that." So, I wrote that one and named it *Answers*, because this fellow was looking for answers, and that was fun. They were both fun to write. So, this next one, one of my [friends], the guy who has inspired me, who's done some proofreading on my work, says, "You know, you ought to pick that [up], picking a plane crash and writing a story about it. It's a good gimmick, like Nevada Barr writes about." I don't know whether you're familiar with Nevada Barr. She's a mystery writer, ... in which her protagonist is a law enforcement ranger in National Parks all over the United States, and, of course, there's a murder in every one, [laughter] and Nevada Barr['s protagonist] goes out and gets the perpetrator and either kills him or her or, you know, does all sorts of things. ... She's a very good writer and [writes] very good stories, but that's her gimmick, though, you know, and she's done very well by it, too.

SH: I wish you lots of luck with your writing. Like I said, I am impressed.

JK: Well, it's fun.

SH: If there is nothing else that we need to talk about.

JK: Yes, I suppose.

SH: I want to wish you well for your fiftieth anniversary.

JK: My gosh, it's three o'clock.

SH: Have a wonderful weekend.

JK: Yes. There was the one thing here that my wife was impressed by, and I mentioned this here, when we come back to our reunions, you know, she says, "My gosh, they all sing *On the Banks [of the Old Raritan]* [the Rutgers *alma mater*] over and over and over again, and the wives know the song," [laughter] and she's right.

SH: She is right.

JK: Yes. Well, yes, if anything else comes up, I'll be sure to pass it on to you. ...

SH: Great.

JK: Okay, let's see, I guess I say stop. Now, let's see if I actually got something.

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

Reviewed by Catherine Dzendzera 11/4/09

Reviewed by Mitchell Gilson 11/4/09

Reviewed by Maria Juliano 11/4/09

Reviewed by Christian Martinez 11/4/09

Reviewed by Kristie Thomas 11/4/09

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 11/30/09

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 12/9/09

Reviewed by James R. Koehler 1/4/10