

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH W. WESLEY KONRAD

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with W. Wesley Konrad on April 11, 1997, in White Plains, New York, with Kurt Piehler and ...

Alexia Maizel: Alexia Maizel.

KP: I'd like you to begin, if you could talk a little bit about your mother and father and your early life in Newark.

Wesley Konrad: Wow, all right.

KP: Of course you could talk about your father who served in World War I.

WK: Yes, my father was in the army, he was in Germany. My father's roots were in Germany so, I guess, it was good for him. He was born in Brooklyn. His mother and father had met on the boat coming from Germany and were married when they got to Brooklyn and my father was the result of that marriage. ... My father was about seventeen when he went into World War I, and did get overseas, and often talked about it. He was a baker, his father was also a baker, and I think most of his time in the service was spent cooking. ... He often spoke of it with fond remembrances of his associations in the service. He grew up in Brooklyn and went to school in Brooklyn. ... Then when his parents moved to New Jersey, this was about the time he went into the service, and they moved to Newark. ... My grandfather had a bake shop on Washington Street, in Newark, and then he moved to Washington, New Jersey for awhile and had a bake shop, and finally to Gladstone-Peapack. ... He was the sort of resident baker for all the very wealthy people who lived in the Far Hills, Bernardsville, Gladstone-Peapack area. The Macys and the Gimbels lived there; my grandfather was the baker for that community. ... I spent my summers in Gladstone-Peapack at the bake shop, where my grandfather and grandmother lived. It was a fun time to be growing up in New Jersey. That part of New Jersey was always very lovely and sort of nullified all of the awful thoughts people had about New Jersey, when they would see Secaucus, and that was New Jersey to them. Well, I knew New Jersey from another point of view, the horse and carriage crowd out in that nice area, which I enjoyed. So, I spent my life in Newark. I grew up in what probably would be called a tenement now, but I had nice experiences, especially with my grandparents in the summer. My mother was born in Massachusetts, but her father had come from England, Bolton, England. ... My grandmother, my maternal grandmother, was born in Paterson, New Jersey. My grandfather was a cotton mill worker and was apparently a troubleshooter for the cotton mills and was transferred a lot. ... So, the family moved around the East Coast and up into Canada a great deal. ... My mother was born in Massachusetts. ... Then, the family finally moved down to, in my mother's young adulthood, moved down to Belleville, New Jersey and that's how ... her side of the family began to get associated with New Jersey.

KP: You mentioned your father was born in the United States but barely because he ...

WK: He spoke only German at first because his parents never learned English. ... I studied German in high school because I wanted to speak with my grandmother and grandfather. By the time I learned enough to say *Guten morgen*, they were dead. I never had much a chance to use

my German with them, but I always felt sorry that I couldn't communicate with them. They sort of lived encapsulated in a German community and stayed that way. I guess a lot of people from Europe did in those days. They didn't want to become a part of America, they liked America, they weren't subversive, they were just isolationist in a way. They wanted to live by themselves, speaking their language.

KP: Newark had a very large German community when you were growing up ...

WK: They surely did.

KP: You mentioned your father was very proud of his World War I experiences. Do you think he was proud of it because it made him more American?

WK: I'm sure it was so. Yes, he was always proud of being American. He was very conservative, Republican, hated Franklin Delano Roosevelt with a passion. "Franklin Delano Roosevelt was ruining everything that was decent in America." ... I think my own point of view now is almost a direct response, or objection, to my father's point of view. ... So, I think that all my life I've been trying to prove my father wrong about it, certainly about his politics.

KP: On your pre-interview survey you didn't list your father as having any religious affiliation.

WK: He had none.

KP: The fact that you're an Episcopal priest it seemed very relevant to ask.

WK: Yes, right. When I told him I was going to be a priest, he just thought I had gone off the deep end. Because he had a business; by that time he owned a little laundry in Belleville, New Jersey. ... I was his only son, his only child, and he wanted me to have that laundry. ... He wanted to ... you know, he felt that he was making a good living, and I didn't need an education. What did I need an education for? And to study English and History was ridiculous, so, he never really, he did come to church once, when I was ordained to the priesthood, but I don't remember him ever coming at any other time. So, my mother was the one sort of ... she had really no active religion either as I was growing up. I wasn't baptized until I was a teenager, so I had a late start as far as Christianity was concerned.

KP: So. in other words if I were to have asked you at the age nine what you wanted to be ...

WK: I would have told you that I wanted to be a song and dance man. I loved instruments. I loved music. I loved singing and dancing. Those were the things that interested me. I loved making people happy. I wanted to be a joker. I was a joker. I was a pain in the neck to a lot of people. [laughter]

KP: You were born in Newark, you grew up in Belleville. ... Belleville and Newark are so close ...

WK: I know ... and once they were one. Belleville, I guess, sort of became an individual community some time later on.

KP: It sounds like your father was fairly prosperous, relatively speaking.

WK: Yes, for those days. My father was a hard working German. Germans are notorious for being very hard working. ... During the Depression, about the beginning of the Depression, I was nine years old, say in 1930, my father's company wanted to give him a cut in salary at the laundry where he was working and he said, "No, I am worth more than that," so he quit. When people were jumping out of windows because they had been fired, my father quit, and bought a little, old truck and went out and literally stole all the customers from the other laundry. He was a thief. [laughter] That's the way he kept his family together. We would go out on Sunday afternoon, my mother, father, and I, in his little truck and gather all the laundry. We would take it to a laundry, we didn't own a laundry then, take it to a laundry, and it would be washed during the night on Sunday night, and about four o'clock Monday morning we'd go out again. We would pick it all up, wet wash it was called, and deliver it back so the women had their laundry ready to hang up by seven o'clock Monday morning. ... It was ten cents a pound I remember. ... Finally, he was able to do better. He owned his own little laundry in Belleville. ... He was never rich, but he was always able to provide very adequately for his family. ... I guess in those days we were kind of wealthy, because we always had plenty to eat and I never had to worry about anything like that.

KP: Yes, it sounds like your father was a pretty determined man, to quit in the middle of the Depression.

WK: He was very determined. He was bullheaded, but he knew his own value. I think, that had come with his mother's milk, I suppose. A lot of people didn't like him because he was kind of pushy. But he was also a fun guy, especially with people outside his family, you know, he was very fun loving, not so much with my mother and me, but with others he was.

KP: Did he ever join the American Legion?

WK: Oh, very much so. Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, anything that was patriotic, he was in. ... Of course, when I was overseas, he had me enrolled in these things before I came home. ... The fact that I wouldn't have anything to do with them almost drove him crazy. I was unpatriotic; he didn't care if I had been flying airplanes. I was unpatriotic; I wouldn't join the American Legion. I had nothing against them, really; it was not my cup of tea, that's all. I just couldn't see myself going to those meetings and waving flags. I just couldn't see it.

AM: I was wondering, how did you make your way to higher education if your father didn't back that, and your mother, who pushed you to go on?

WK: When I was in grammar school, I loved to sing and a teacher of mine, a Miss Bunce said to me, "There is a church in Newark, New Jersey," we're living in Belleville, "There's a church in Newark, New Jersey, where they're looking for sopranos, boy sopranos, why don't you go and

get an audition?" So, I went to Grace Church in Newark, at 950 Broad Street, had an audition, passed it, and began to sing in the choir. ... In a few weeks the priest said to me, "Hello, Wesley, tell me about yourself. Have you ever been baptized?" ... I said, "I don't know," because I didn't. I didn't know; at that point I didn't know how to spell Jesus, I didn't know anything about it; I just knew this was very nice. I liked this, I liked the atmosphere, the people were nice to me. It was kind of a nice place to be, so I was baptized, confirmed, and received at First Holy Communion at about the age of thirteen. ... Almost immediately, I kept saying to myself, "I think I'll be a priest instead of a song and dance man." ... The young man I went with was a young fellow in my class named Jean Saville. He had had a Presbyterian background, and when we got to Grace Church, Newark, (it's a very Anglo-Catholic parish) one of the sisters, one of the nuns answered when we rang the door to be admitted for these auditions. ... My friend, who had all these prejudices, Protestant prejudices, ran like a scared bunny rabbit, and said, "If my mother and father catch me in this Roman Catholic Church, they'll kill me." Well, I didn't know any better, so I walked in. ... A couple of years later he committed suicide. ... I often thought to myself, "If only he had stuck with me," ... if he hadn't of had those prejudices, he might have found what I found there, because pretty soon it was my whole life. I was being sent to camp in the summer to learn how to sing better. ... When I was ready to go to school, my rector said to me, because he knew my father didn't want me to go to school, my rector said, "Don't worry about the money, I'll pay for your college education." I mean, you know, talk about a life change, completely different, completely.

KP: I think, if I have my Episcopal churches right, I've been to the Trinity Cathedral.

WK: Up the street, I went past Trinity every time I went to Grace Church, because Grace Church is down on South Broad Street, and Trinity was up near Military Park.

KP: It's the one that has the men's, boys choir, which is very unique.

WK: Yes, a buddy of mine is the dean there, and it's a cathedral now. A fellow from South Africa, Peter Sabooni is the dean of the cathedral now.

KP: But I think Grace still has a men's, a boy's choir.

WK: Oh, yes. Well, they had an endowed choir. Even in my day I received four dollars a month for singing, which was a fortune in those days, four dollars plus car fare, gosh.

KP: Especially as a boy.

WK: Oh, as a boy, I was rolling in it. [laughter]

KP: You mentioned that you wanted to be a song and dance man; it almost sounds like you were hinting that you were the class clown growing up.

WK: I was. I wanted, I just had to keep everybody happy. If I saw anybody being sad I'd turn on my act.

KP: I imagine some teachers didn't appreciate that.

WK: I was very unappreciated. I was disruptive; I never knew or had a sense of what was appropriate when it came to making people happy. I would do it, stand on my head, stick my tongue out, and do anything.

KP: You were also very active at Rutgers. Were you as active in high school for example in terms of different clubs and activities?

WK: Yes, I think so, yet maybe not as much in high school. I had a pretty low, not a very high feeling about myself in high school. I was always skinny; I was always the shortest kid in my class in grammar school. I didn't start to grow tall, but when I did I went just up, so I looked just like skin and bones. ... I never thought anybody could like me because I wasn't very strong. I wasn't very athletic, all those things, you know. ... But, in high school, things like music, I was always very active in sort of anything that was musical. ... That was enough in high school for me, ... but, in Rutgers I got into the Glee Club immediately. Soup Walters was the director. He and I, I really liked him very much, right from the beginning. ... When I came back from World War II, I was made the senior manager. ... Rutgers was the Rutgers University Glee Club. The University wasn't really that important to me in those days, but the Club was everything for me.

KP: Growing up in the Newark-Belleville area; Newark was a very interesting city, and it was also a very diverse city. ... I lived in Newark for a few years in the early '90s. There are some real gems. You're not that far from Branch Brook Park.

WK: The Japanese cherry trees. [laughter]

KP: Are there any other fond memories you have of Belleville and Newark, or not too fond?

WK: Yes, well, I think that, let me see, ... I can't think of anything in particular growing up. Except that I was always, I always had this feeling of being sort of less important than other people because I was physically not very strong, or attractive, or whatever you call it. ... I always had that feeling, although, I did get involved with some sort of social groups. We had a group of fellas called The Musketeers, it was just like a fellowship group, and we went on trips together and did things like that. ... I always felt more comfortable with a friend, or a small group of friends. I was never much for a big scene.

KP: ... Did your school have any fraternities in high school?

WK: I don't think so, but if they did, I wouldn't have had much to do with them.

KP: Did you ever play any sports in high school?

WK: I swam. I swam a lot. Yes, I've always been a swimmer, but that's about all.

AM: Was high school when you gained your interest? I've noticed you've always seemed to have an interest in international people and affairs ...

WK: My mother was a very outgoing person. In those days my father had a number of black people who worked for him. ... My mother would go out and have lunch with black people in the '30s and '40s and sit in a restaurant with them, and she would be appalled when people would speak to her about it. ... I think, what I got from my mother, is my own, my greatest gift, my blindness to color, and that's been a great blessing for me. I think that she was the one that gave that to me. We, my parents, had a lot friends who were not strictly white, Anglo-Saxon Americans. ... I think that I got started appreciating different kinds of people very young in life. ... My first girlfriend was Jewish, my second girlfriend was a black girl. I've always had a feeling that we're all one somehow, if we could only figure out how to work, how to really appreciate each other.

AM: It must have struck you when you came to Rutgers that it was pretty white Anglo-Saxon, There was not a lot of ethnic or religious diversity.

WK: Yes, yes, very little, although I never, it never really occurred to me that we were pure white and undefiled at Rutgers in those days. Although, when you think back I had to go to bat for David. I can't remember David's last name. He was the only black fella in the choir, in the Glee Club, and we went to Atlantic City to Haden Hall and they wouldn't let him in. ... I said to the manager, because I was the Club manager, I said to him, "Then we'll all go some place else and stay." Well, he couldn't have that, so I said, "If I room with David, and nobody else rooms with him, would that be all right?" ... He said, "Yes, that would be all right."

KP: What year was that?

WK: It was 1947, probably.

KP: Oh, it was after the war.

WK: It was after the war, yes, yes.

KP: You said that you father was very conservative.

WK: Very conservative.

KP: Your mother was a Republican, both of your parents?

WK: They were both Republican and very conservative. They believed in the Protestant work ethic. ... My father was more outspoken about it.

KP: But you mentioned, they seemed very tolerant, and your mother to the point of being way ahead of her time.

WK: Yes. My father was a strange man. He had all kinds of terrible names for people who weren't like him, and he used them regularly. All the things you could imagine, he used, but also despite the fact that he had that side to his personality, he was also very receptive to individuals; whether they were Jewish, or Polish, or Italians, or black, or whatever. Individuals were okay with him but ...

KP: So he didn't think anything of hiring someone because he was black or ...

WK: No, no, not at all, but he had lots of ugly words to say about their background or their people. ... They weren't like Bill Konrad, they just were not German. [laughter] ... You know, "What good could they be?" was his attitude about almost anyone. Roman Catholics, oh, when he found out there was incense in the church I went to, he thought I had suddenly lost it completely. Incense equaled Roman Catholicism.

KP: Your mother, going out to restaurants, she really seems to have made a point that she was really ...

WK: ... I never thought of it in those terms, but I think she was making a point because she often said, "I don't understand why people want to make such a big deal over color." She always felt that way.

KP: You mentioned that your first girlfriend was Jewish and your second girlfriend was black, which now wouldn't be such an issue.

WK: They were probably the only Jewish girl and only black girl at Belleville High School. [laughter] I'm sure they were, I can't remember very many, because we were talking about a white community; that was Belleville in those days. But I always had that feeling. It was strange because I wouldn't have been able to say that I didn't do this deliberately. I didn't set out to do this, but I can remember it being naturally drawn. I can remember my niece, when she married a black man, I said to her, "How come, Liz, how come you have married a black man with all those nice white guys out there?" She said, "Uncle Wes, I have always liked black people better than white people," [laughter] and I said, "Okay." Maybe she caught a little of that from me, I don't know. Most of my work has been in black communities. It is hard to find a white face in my living room, because all my work has been in the West Indies with black people, so ...

KP: Your father was very, you could even say a hyper patriot, in terms of his allegiance. How did he feel about the approach of war in the 1930s? Did he ever talk about it?

WK: Going through, you mean, during our isolationist days?

KP: Was he an isolationist?

WK: No, he was not, ever.

KP: Really?

WK: He would never have been an isolationist. Maybe it was because of his European background, I don't know, but he wasn't opposed to World War II.

KP: How did he feel about the rise of Hitler, being a German-American, fighting in World War I, and now so very active? Do you ever remember him discussing ...

WK: I don't remember him ever talking about Hitler. I am sure he did, but I don't remember that. I am sure he would have had very strong feelings about that, because he always had very strong feelings about everything. I can remember he had no objection to my going into the service. The next generation, I said to my son, "If you want to go into the service, I am going to ship you off to Canada." [laughter] ... My father would never have said that, even if I said it jokingly, he would never have even said it jokingly. He believed that the country needed to be defended whenever it was threatened, and that was the end of that.

KP: Even though you were his only son?

WK: Oh, I was his only son, yes and he was proud of me in many ways. He didn't like the profession that I chose, but other than that I was okay.

KP: You mentioned how important Grace Church was to you, and the rector of the church, when did you decide that you wanted to be a priest? ...

WK: I started to think about it almost immediately. I think it was because it was such a complete change. My mother and father were ... they cared about ... they weren't elitist, my father was always worried about money, and I grew up always being so concerned whether I was spending too much, or whether I was being frugal enough, and all those things.

KP: You were making a princely sum of four dollars.

WK: Yes, that's right. I always had the feeling that I was not living up to his standards in terms of my appreciation of material things. ... I think that when I went to Grace Church, and I suddenly found this sort of worshipping community, which took me in. I was really right off the street, I didn't know anything, and, in such a foreign setting, they could have made me feel very uncomfortable. Practically everyone there had sort of grown up in this, and came from the beginning; not so with me. They made me feel very, very comfortable. It was almost like a womb for me, because of my particular feelings about myself, I really needed that sort of support system. ... The rector was a very unusual person. He always hired another younger priest just to work with young people. We always had our own counselor and friend, who would go out and bowl with us, and go to the beach with us, and all those things. We always had that; the rector always made sure that the young people had someone to guide them. ... Those young clergymen always meant a great deal to me. I always emulated them. So it started right off, almost from the beginning, when I was probably thirteen. I think that I even wrote in my graduation book from grammar school that I was going into the ministry. It was that early. So by the time WWII came, I was well along in my thinking, at least, if not in my preparation.

KP: Earlier you mentioned that your father owned a business and was very frugal. Did you ever get to travel very much?

WK: We traveled as far as Asbury Park. [laughter] When we were really gung-ho, we would go as far as Seaside Heights. I think that once we went to Wildwood. My father would take us up into Massachusetts to visit where my mother had been born, in the North Adams area, near Mt. Greylock. ... I had an uncle who lived in Pennsylvania, but I never got much farther than that. We never did much traveling. We would, except to drive someplace in the car for a weekend, or go on a vacation for a week. It was not like today. My kids have been all over Creation, but we didn't travel much in those days.

KP: So before the military service, you had not been west of Pennsylvania ...

WK: Never

KP: ... or above Massachusetts ...

WK: Never, never, and certainly not farther south than, I think, maybe once in high school I went to Washington D.C. Traveling was something that you might have gone into the service for in order to be able to travel, as a matter-of-fact. I can't remember that that was my reason. But, I always enjoyed it. I was disappointed that they first sent me to Atlantic City. I said, "This is dreadful. They are going to stick me in Atlantic City," but then I got out of Atlantic City in a hurry and went on from there.

KP: You mentioned that until you had gone to Grace Church that you hadn't really thought of college and that your father wanted you to ...

WK: My mother went to third grade and my father to fifth grade. ... My father never read a book, and my mother read constantly, so she was educated, my father wasn't educated in the bookish way. My mother knew a lot about what was going on in the world because she read, and he knew about his business and that was it, and he was satisfied with that. Although, I think, at times he was embarrassed that he couldn't write very well.

KP: It sounds like if it hadn't been for the church, you would have probably not gone to college.

WK: I'm sure I wouldn't have. Where would I have gotten any inspiration? I wouldn't have. Unless there was another profession where it was essential, I might then have. I was pretty determined, so maybe I would have, but I can't imagine what it might have been, but it was really the church that inspired me and made me want a better education.

KP: How well did Belleville High School prepare you for college?

WK: I think pretty well. I was always kind of weak in mathematics, and so in order to get into Rutgers, ... well, I first matriculated at Lehigh [University], because it was a small school

associated with the Episcopal Church. At least, they had Leonard Hall. Leonard Hall was a residential place for pre-theological students. I was admitted there [to Leonard Hall], and also admitted to Lehigh. ... Then on a fluke, I took the examination for a state scholarship and won it. I had to go to Rutgers, because I couldn't afford not to. I wanted to go to Lehigh, and I wanted a small school. I always felt, and I think rightly so, that I would be better off in a small pond where I could be a big fish, rather than a great big pond where I might get lost. ... If it hadn't been for the Glee Club, I might have ... I think that it actually was very good that it happened, because everything that happened to me after going to Rutgers was positive. I can't really think of anything that was negative after that.

KP: On your pre-interview survey you also listed, in the summer of '39 as having taken college courses in New York City. Where did you go?

WK: New York University. Was it in '39? It was, I guess, right after I graduated from high school, and I graduated in '39. ... I was working at the Prudential Life Insurance Company in Newark. They hired us right out of high school. I graduated on Friday and started on Monday. I met my wife there; she was working there. But I decided that I was going to be ... I think I was always thinking of the priesthood, but every once in a while, I would get off the track. I would think, "Well, maybe I can't ever do that." I always thought that I would never be able to go to college. After all, my mother and father didn't even finish grammar school, how could I go to college? I was an only child and I was the oldest grandson of my grandparents. I had nobody to look up to and say, "Well, they went to college." I decided to take psychology; I took abnormal psychology for some reason. I think, there was a guy over there named [Link], who had written a book, and I had read that book. I took one other course, I can't remember what it was, but I took two courses at night and went over from Newark on the PATH to Washington Square for just the summer.

KP: You brought up Prudential, which is still to this day a very Newark institution, how did you get the job, and how long did you stay?

WK: I have no idea. I can't remember. [laughter] All I know is that I started working immediately. I think you filled out an application. It was almost a foregone conclusion, that if you were alive and well and had two hands and one head, that you would be hired by the Prudential. They just took you and molded you the way they wanted you. I worked in the mailroom, racking mail. I had to learn all the different offices: 'A' was in something, 'B' was in Brooklyn, 'A' was New York City, it had everything right through to 'Z'. I had to learn how to sort each piece of mail. Because I was a mail clerk, I would go around to the different departments. I got to meet some of the higher-up echelon people. One man said to me, "Why don't you study stenography and business English, and shorthand, and stuff like that because all the officers of the Prudential like to have male secretaries that they can take with them on their trips. They can't take the young ladies with them, so they want men that they can take with them, who can do their work where they are traveling." I thought, "Wow, I'll be able to travel." So I went to school at night and took courses at the Washington Street School for secretaries, and I got some more shorthand. I had had some in high school, so I had got typing and shorthand, thinking that if I couldn't make it to the ministry, I would have something to fall back on.

KP: How long did you stay at Prudential?

WK: Just about ... I started in 1939, and went to Rutgers in September of 1941. So, it was about two years. ... I saved enough money, because at that point my father was still very much opposed to my going to school; he thought it was crazy, but he came around.

KP: You mentioned that you met your wife at the Prudential, so, it was fairly significant in terms of that, but how did you meet?

WK: Right. I didn't actually meet her there. I was playing the guitar in a little orchestra in Belleville High School, after I graduated, so this was probably the summer of '39. ... She went dancing past with my best friend and I thought, "Hmmm," so I got him to introduce us. ... Then the next time I saw her, she was with her aunt, who went to Grace Church, Newark. Helen was a member of another parish in Newark, St. John's, but her aunt brought her to Grace Church, and I was the hatcheck boy that night. The youth were sponsoring a Chinese dinner to support Christians in China after the Communists took over. I was at the front door taking hats and coats and I saw her come in and said to her to, "Save me a seat". One of these young priest heard me and he started teasing me about her saying, "Ah-ho, Wesley has a girlfriend." I met her at the high school. My friend introduced her to me and then I lost a friend but gained a girlfriend. [laughter] ... My father wasn't the only thief in the family! ... Then I met her again at the church, and then saw her because she was working for Ordinary Actuarial, whatever that means, I can't remember now. ... She would go through the mail department on her trips around and we would talk and then we started dating, and then got interested in the church and I invited her to my church. ... I was elected president of the young people and she was my secretary and we got into that; it was all very cozy.

KP: It sounded like you dated quite a bit because you mentioned that you had a lot of girlfriends.

WK: Yes, I always had a lot of girlfriends.

KP: Please describe what a classic date or what was a typical date? You did have some money, by the standard of the day, you actually had some money to work with.

WK: Right. It was always the movies and an ice cream soda, and a kiss at the door. It was standard.

KP: There were some great movie theaters in Newark.

WK: Cutting school to go see the great bands that came, Tommy Dorsey and Glenn Miller and Artie Shaw, all those guys came to the Paramount and Lowes and had live concerts. Schools would be empty when those big bands were in town; we would all be there. [laughter] It was a good time to be alive. When you think of it, it was sort of innocent, a lovely time.

KP: You've mentioned the big bands and the theaters, because it sounds like the big bands were be appealing, and a lot of people also mentioned the Newark Bears. Did you have any interest in them?

WK: Sure, Charlie Keller. Charlie Keller, I have forgotten what he played, but he was my idol. My father liked baseball and he would take me to see the Bears. They were the team that fed into the New York Yankees ...

KP: Farm teams?

WK: Farm team. I remember Charlie Keller, which is all I remember. I remember enjoying those games. There was a lot in Newark in those days. We were always in the shadow of New York City. It never felt like we were able to compete with that great big monstrosity across the river, but Newark had its own identity in those days. It was a very nice place to grow up.

KP: I know this is very curious to me, because I ended up sort of by accident living in Newark.

WK: What part of Newark did you live in?

KP: I lived in the old *Newark News* building ...

WK: Oh, did you?

KP: ... It had just been turned into Condos. I actually found Newark a delightful place.

WK: Isn't that funny because I was a copyholder for the *Newark Sunday Call* and on Saturday nights I worked with this proofreader as a copyholder. ... I remember working through one night till two o'clock in the morning waiting for Thomas Edison to die. They couldn't finish his obituary until he died. So we sat there and waited for old Tom to die. [laughter] There are lots of good things in Newark. I hate to hear people talk it down.

KP: I found it a very interesting city. Some things have changed, but certain aspects of the city are very ... there is a lot of continuity. Some things have changed for the better; the Newark Museum for example is much better than it ever was.

AM: When you went to Rutgers, did you continue to be a part of the church there? Were you involved in church activities?

WK: Very much so. I was like one of those strange ducks who never dropped out of church. It was probably because I got such a late start, so I wasn't like someone who had been going to church all his life and sort of felt, "This isn't for me." It was never like that. I went down to Christ Church in New Brunswick, and there was Dr. Walter Stowe, who was a very interesting old guy. He was the church historian for the Episcopal Church in the USA. ... I asked him if he needed an acolyte. He said, "Yes." I said that I would like to come to the early service, because I am in the Rutgers Glee Club, which is also the Rutgers choir, and I have to sing in Kirkpatrick

Chapel at eleven o'clock. So, I always served every Sunday at eight o'clock at Christ Church. My roommate, before the war, was also studying for the priesthood, and the two of us would go down and serve for Dr. Stowe at eight o'clock and then I would go back and sing in the choir at Kirkpatrick Chapel for the late service, eleven. I don't know if it is still like that, but in those days the Glee Club and choir were the same group. We sang on Sunday at Kirkpatrick, and sang all those rowdy things on Saturday night. It was nice it kept you sort of balanced. You didn't get too pious.

AM: The Glee Club was just amazing how big it was, I mean, it had a preseason ...

WK: Oh, my gosh, we went to Minnewaska for a week. I had to arrange that, I know. It was tremendous. We would work hard all morning and play hard all afternoon. It was really wonderful. It was like being on the football team, you went away and had your preseason training. Then we would have our first concert real early in the season, and then we tried to have a concert every week, or two, on weekends. There was the one big trip each year. My year as manager was when I arranged for us to go to Bermuda, we had it all set up, everything was ready, and then the king died. ... The whole British Empire went into mourning and canceled our tour. I was broken-hearted. [laughter] We ended up going to Atlantic City; it was awful.

AM: Did the Glee Club compete at all?

WK: The competition was always with Princeton, of course. We would go down and do horrible things at Nassau Tavern. [laughter] My wife was pregnant at the time, and she went down with Betty Martens. Pete and Betty Martens lived two trailers from us, and Pete was a tenor and I was baritone. We were down at Nassau Tavern and both girls were pregnant, so they went into the ladies room. They had these little pillows on the couches and they tucked them under their dresses, so they looked more pregnant, and came home. When we got home they showed us the pillows they had stolen from Nassau Tavern. [laughter] I was like, "We are going to get arrested." [laughter] It was sort of competitive, but mostly just with Princeton. Although, I think there were probably other Glee Clubs that challenged us.

AM: There must have been. They must have gotten people from the boy's choir there, it was quite good. I had friends who were in it.

WK: We did things like a concert at Carnegie Hall with Paul Robeson. There were great things happening. We did, *The Testament of Freedom* by Randall Thompson. There were a lot of good things happening in those days in the Glee Club.

AM: So that was kind of like your fraternity, because you weren't a member of a fraternity, where you?

WK: No, no. I couldn't have afforded one. I wouldn't have gone into one anyway. I thought they were very snooty. I thought, "Gee, there is nothing worse than a Greek." [laughter] Had I not been in the Glee Club, I would have been independent, absolutely. It was ridiculous. A lot of my friends were Greeks, but the Glee Club was all there was for me.

KP: Before I forget the thought, one thing that really surprised me was how respected Paul Robeson was by the Rutgers students in your year, even people who were very conservative who I have interviewed.

WK: Yes. The hurt, when he was hurt, the hurt that went through the community was amazing; there was such empathy for him and the things that he faced with the government.

KP: Even though he became fairly radical ...

WK: Oh, yes. Nobody I ever spoke to at Rutgers felt that being radical changed him from being a great human being, just a great human being, so powerful in every way. Having a chance to talk with him at rehearsals, and being with him, and hearing him was such a refreshing thing. Then when he went amuck, it was heartbreaking. Nobody at Rutgers, that I know of, was able to be realistic about his shortcomings, or failures, or whatever they were.

KP: People have commented during interviews, and I have just been surprised, because there are ...

WK: You go outside the Rutgers community and people throw rocks at him all the time, even to this day, I think, despite the fact that he has been exonerated for many of those things.

KP: I just wanted to make sure that it wasn't just people talking to me, because people have said, who have been very conservative, who I would expect to denounce him for being so radical, they would say, "No, we really respected him." ... His concerts, my students have gone through and read about them in the *Targum*, and they seemed to be very well-attended.

WK: Oh, gosh, yes. Even at Carnegie Hall, I think, it was filled the night that we did the concert with him there. We did other things with him on the campus, of course, but that was the big deal, at Carnegie Hall.

KP: One of my standard questions to everyone is how you felt about going to chapel, combined with your memories of Dean Metzger?

WK: Well, let me see, I was always very smug about the Episcopal Church. Once I became an Episcopalian, I became intolerable. You know, just in my typical fashion, I always see things black and white, and I used to go to Kirkpatrick Chapel and great preachers, you know, they had these great preacher that were advertised. I always used to think they were awful. ... Because to me, going to church was not hearing a great sermon. It was some sort of other worldliness. It was worship, and great music, and being able to receive Holy Communion. Those were the things that counted.

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

WK: ... When I went overseas, my mother went to my rector, and said, "I'd like to study and become an Episcopalian." He said "Why?" Now, remember, my mother is almost as naive about things as I am at this point. She says, "Wes is going overseas, he's a pilot, and I know he's going to be killed, and he'll go to heaven, and I will go to hell, and I want to be confirmed so that I'll go to heaven and be with him." [laughter] That was the reason she wanted to become a Christian. I don't mean become a Christian, because she had already been baptized, but, you know, become an active person. It was really the way I felt about it. I knew the way God was worshipped at Grace Church in Newark, and I knew I liked it. ... I couldn't imagine anything else, and one time my mother went to a church that was very, very low, and they had morning prayer and on the way out, (she told me this story and I almost died. I thought "What did the priest think?") On the way out my mother said, "That was a lovely little service for the children, when do you have the service for the big people?" [laughter] Wow! Can you imagine after a man had put his whole body and soul and mind, in what he thought was probably the greatest thing, and then my mother accuses him of being infantile. [laughter]

KP: Even low church isn't that low compared to others.

WK: Compared to others, but my mother, like me, she didn't you know she only knew Grace Church. She knew Father Gomph, she knew that he was just next to Jesus somewhere, you know. [laughter] Talk about being programmed. [laughter]

KP: You experienced several different Rutgers, I guess, when you got there in September of '41, we still were not in the war and so there's this full range of activities ...

WK: Oh, yes, we, I lived the first year at Ford. Do you still have Ford?

KP: Oh, yes.

WK: Ford Dormitory.

KP: It's called Ford Hall.

WK: Or maybe it was Hageman the first year, and Ford the second. It was one or the other.

KP: Hageman is still there and Ford is still there.

WK: Is it? Which one is on College Avenue?

KP: Ford Hall.

WK: Then it was Hageman the first year and Ford the second. ... My roommate and I were both older. I had been working for a few years and so had Clarence Sickles. We were both very serious about what we were doing. We were going to be priests, and we were trying to act like that, you know, and we couldn't figure out why all these young guys had come to Rutgers to have such a good time, "What was the matter with them? Didn't they know that it was costing them a

lot of money to go to school, and why were they wasting their time drinking beer on Saturday night when they could be studying?" This was our attitude. Finally, I caught on first and I'd go out on Saturday night; and my roommate, I'd come home and he'd be studying. ... I'd say, "Clarence, you're killing me, because I can't go out and have a good time. I visualize you sitting over that desk and why don't you come out and have a good time with me?" Well, he wouldn't do it.

KP: Now was Clarence studying for the Episcopal priesthood?

WK: Oh, yes, yes, and he founded the big nursing home in Hackettstown, Heath Village, he was the founder of it. He was the first director, and the first everything. He got a doctors degree from General Seminary because of his work there, so, his studying paid off. [laughter]

AM: Was it just coincidence that you were matched up as roommates?

WK: No! We grew up together at Grace Church, Newark. You see, he was an acolyte, and I sang in the choir, and later on I became an acolyte also. An acolyte is a server, someone who serves at the altar, so, I would serve at the altar at seven o' clock, and sing in the choir at eleven at Grace Church. That's why it was very easy for me to do it at college because I had been accustomed to doing it at home. ... Clarence and I got to be good friends, and we were both in the youth group, both were the same age, and he was born in February, and I was born in March. ... We decided to go to school at the same time and ended up, because I didn't go to Lehigh, ended up at Rutgers together.

AM: Were you also working part-time during the school year?

WK: I always worked at the Roger Smith Hotel. Remember the Roger Smith Hotel?

KP: Well, it's still there.

WK: It's not called the Roger Smith Hotel?

KP: It's not called the Roger Smith Hotel anymore.

WK: No, but is that building still there?

KP: Yes, it is. It's still a hotel, but it's not called the Roger Smith.

WK: Is it really? Well, we had the best deal at Roger Smith. When I think of it, we worked the noon hour, say, from twelve to two, maybe. We had every meal, and if we went to the movies at night, we would go there and have a soda, or a Sunday afterward, and our meals never cost us a penny, no, meals and we worked for two hours day.

AM: You didn't have to eat cafeteria food.

WK: I never ate cafeteria food until after we were married and my wife was working in the cafeteria, and then I would go see her and have my lunch there, but I never ate in the cafeteria until I was married, at Rutgers, which was after the war.

KP: You worked as a server for those two hours?

WK: No, I worked in the kitchen. I was the pantry boy. I made the salads and the coffee and did the dessert things, not the main meals. Clarence wasn't as intelligent as I was so he did the pots and pans. [laughter] Actually, he was a heck of a lot smarter than I was, but we ended up that way.

AM: Just luckier

KP: What about Dean Metzger?

WK: I don't remember him. Who was he? I remember the name, of course, but what did he do?

KP: He was Dean of Men. He was a very stern Calvinist, which a lot of people ...

WK: I know Howie Crosby, he was the dean of something-or-other.

KP: He was the Dean after Metzger. ...

WK: Was Metzger there when I was there?

KP: Pre-war.

WK: Oh, pre-war, then he was probably there when I got there in '41. Well, I didn't know those people. I was too busy singing or ... [laughter]

KP: It also sounds like you didn't get in very much trouble.

WK: No, I didn't. Oh, no, no, I didn't get in any trouble at all. Too bad, I don't know, I don't know why I didn't but I didn't. He was very rugged wasn't he? A Calvinist?

KP: Yes, he was very stern actually.

WK: The name is so familiar. I'm sure a face should come to my mind, but I don't think ...

KP: I think if you saw a picture ...

WK: Probably.

KP: It's one of my standard stock questions.

WK: I'm sorry you're not going to get anything out of me on Dean Metzger. I can't sing his praises, or not.

KP: ... I have a friend who's an Episcopal priest who's talked about conduct, about the certain role you were expected to perform. ... I got the sense it was sort of looser for ministers now than in your era, but it sounds like in college you were already going to that role, you felt there was a certain way you had to act.

WK: Well, you know Rutgers was very secular. ... I didn't have very many friends who were even sympathetic with what I was doing. Most of them were not, except the guys on Holy Hill, New Brunswick Theological Seminary, you know, and I got involved with them. Now they were a corrupt crowd. I mean they were always pranking all over the place, and it was terrible. ... Sometimes it shocked me, I guess, I must have been quite pious or something. ... They did things that I thought were just, you know, a bit weird.

KP: What kinds of things?

WK: Well, you know, all kinds of panty raids in different places, and beer bashes, ... you know, here, up on Holy Hill, where everything was supposed to be very pious and religious. ... I could never get Clarence to go with me because he was even more pious than I was. I'd go up there and get mixed-up with them. Finally, one of those guys married my wife's sister so I, we became not only best friends at Rutgers, but related through our wives. His name was Don (McNeill?).

KP: It's interesting because I've heard ...

AM: He was one of the men at your wedding, (actually, my best man) and he came from Garden City, Long Island.

WK: Yes. He was my best man. He came from, well, he was stationed at someplace called Paris, Texas, I think, at the time. I was stationed at Greenwood, Mississippi and I asked him if he could come and be my best man when Helen and I got married. He knew Helen very well, and knew her sister a little bit at that point. She was married to another man, who was killed during the war, then they got married after the war.

KP: You mentioned that before we started the interview that you had an exemption from the military service because you were studying for the ministry, even though you were not in theological school yet.

WK: That's right, they did that if you intended to go to seminary. The bishop had to make me an official postulant, which was the first step, so I was made a postulant in 1940, in order to matriculate at Lehigh and be admitted to Leonard Hall, to live there. But I wouldn't have ordinarily been eligible for a 4D, at that stage of my life, if I weren't, if I hadn't been given a sort of official stamp of approval by somebody and the bishop had done that.

KP: That was way before Pearl Harbor it sounds like.

WK: It was. It would have been as early as sometime in 1940, because I certainly started to think about all of this in 1940. I finally went to school in '41.

KP: Were you in ROTC?

WK: Yes, I was. I think just because it was just two years because by that time I went away to the service, yes, I had two years of ROTC. Was it compulsory? I can't remember.

KP: Yes, it was.

WK: Yes, I thought so.

KP: I was interested because you had this exemption and I was wondering if that had ...

WK: I had no conscientious objection tendencies, at all, even though I had the exemption. The exemption was purely so that I could get on with my profession and I was even thinking maybe a chaplain, or something like that, if the war lasted long enough.

AM: Is that how you got interested in flying? Did you get interested in flying when you were in college?

WK: I got interested in flying primarily because I couldn't imagine walking all over Europe. [laughter] I thought, "If I'm going to do this, I'm going to go first class," is what I thought. I didn't realize how first class I was getting into.

AM: Yes, and you must be very smart.

WK: It really was first class. I guess I was, but I didn't think of it that way. ... When I decided I was not going to keep my 4D status with the government, I had heard someplace that you could take an examination for the cadets, and I thought, even though I was very weak in math, I thought maybe I can pass it, and I did. I got admitted to the Army Air Corps cadets, so that was the way I started. ... I'd never flown. I don't think I'd ever been up in an airplane.

KP: Any trips to Newark airport growing up as a kid?

WK: No. No. I had no interest as far as I know. I think it was a purely practical solution to my wanting to go into the service but not wanting to walk all over Europe. It was either swim in the Navy or fly in the Air force, and, I think, I decided I'd rather fly. I don't really know why. [laughter]

AM: So in those two years did you start training for flying?

WK: Oh, right away. In the two years, where do you mean?

AM: In the two years at Rutgers, where were you practicing?

WK: Oh, no, I had no flying experience at all. I went to Newark to take the test and then got my call February 28, 1943. They sent me right to Atlantic City to get my uniform and all that stuff, and then they sent me to Waterville, Maine. That's where I had my first flight. ... I liked it; I really loved it right from the beginning. I got a First Lieutenant rank ... out of it. I took to it. I took to it right away. I wasn't particularly well coordinated, if I remember correctly, because I remember my German instructor. He liked the fact that my name was Konrad, spelled with a 'K', because he knew then where I came from. He would bang ... he was in the back seat ... he would bang the stick, the joystick, between my knees whenever I made a mistake until they were black-and-blue, and at the same he was saying over the intercom, "Konrad, ven vill you learn." As I tried to kill him. [laughter]

AM: Was that your German teacher at Rutgers. He was an instructor?

WK: No, this was my German ... my first instructor in the Air Force was a German man, who spoke with an accent and who liked the fact that my roots had been German. Although, I didn't speak much German, I could say, *Guten Morgen* and, *Vie Sind Sie* and stuff.

AM: You were in the German Club when you were in Rutgers though, right?

WK: Yes, yes. Was I? Yes, I was,? ... Herr Holtzman or Frau Holtzman, was the convener of the German Club.

KP: Just to back up a little bit, before we go into the Air Corps, one question would be why Dr. McGinn was your favorite professor?

WK: Oh, gosh, Donald.

KP: Was that before the war? Did you meet him before you entered the war?

WK: I have to think, I get things all mixed-up now, remember I am seventy-six, so my mind is not as clear. Donald McGinn was my professor in English; it must have been after the war. It was when I was taking the test for honors, graduation with honors, and that would have been in my last year that I had him. I had him for Shakespeare and for a number of other courses. Yes, it was after the war. Whether I had him before, I don't think so. It was just after the war, but he was a great guy and a wonderful teacher, inspirational.

KP: Do you remember where you were when you heard the news about Pearl Harbor?

WK: Oh, ... God, do I remember. Did I put that on there? I didn't?

KP: No, we didn't ask that question on the pre-interview survey.

WK: Oh, that was the most wonderful story, because that involves a lot of Rutgers people, Rutgers University Glee Club. We had gone by bus to Trenton on the seventh of December, after Kirkpatrick Chapel in the morning, to do a concert in the afternoon at the State House; right under the dome, in the State House in Trenton, and we were singing, and if I start to bawl please excuse me. We were singing the concert and some guy came up the center aisle and hands a note to Soup Walters, and Soup just turns around, in his amiable fashion, he was always so flamboyant, he said, "Japan has just declared war on the United States!" We will now sing the *Star Spangled Banner*". It has never been sung like that before, or since, ever.

AM: Wow.

WK: Unbelievable. Well, in months, in months it just seems, that was ... what was that? That was December 7, 1941, by the next February, March, the Glee Club was just beginning to empty out and by the time that I left, there was practically no one there.

AM: Do you remember anything before that, or after that, things that Rutgers was doing, gearing up for the war? Changes in the social activities, or the curriculum, the blackouts that they had and such?

WK: I think I was pretty oblivious to a lot of that. I don't think I remember anything happening. I am sure that there were things happening because, gosh, the war had started in '39, I mean, we must have been ...

AM: Were any of your activities cut? Nothing from the Glee Club was cut because of the war?

WK: No. We traveled a lot. We always seemed to have enough money to rent the buses and go wherever we wanted to go. I can't remember anything being curtailed. No, I don't remember anything that changed our way of life because of the war in Europe.

KP: Soup Walters comes up quite a bit, especially with people in the Glee Club. My interview with Bob Moss is when I first heard fully about Soup Walters. Maybe if you could speak a little about Soup Walters and how important he was at the time, because he sounded like a very important figure?

WK: He changed more lives, I think, than anyone else could possibly have, because he was in such close touch with so many young men over such an intense period of time. I mean, we practiced a lot. It was not a small commitment to belong to the Rutgers Glee Club. It meant, really, that you didn't have time for anything else. I was able to swim a little bit, but I couldn't do a lot of other things because the Glee Club was all-consuming and you had to have a commitment to it, and Soup inspired young men to want to give their best musically. That was his great gift, was inspiring people to do their best. ... He was able to do that because he was such an intense perfectionist himself. He would go over and over and over something until you had it right. You always felt that by the time you sang a concert with Soup, standing like this ...

His eyes were his big thing. He had intense eyes, and he would stand like this before a thing, and he would go like that, and the whole, all sixty voices, would go 'pliph' like that. He never had to go 'da, da', or any of that. He would always like (tikch, tikch, tchue, tchue?) and we got so accustomed to this, watching his eyes, I could sing a whole thing by just watching Soup's eyes. I never had to watch anything else. He said everything with his eyes. It was always done with such power, with such power. He had such power in controlling sixty voices, however many we were, I suppose that it was maybe sometimes less and sometimes more. He always had so much, complete control, with a little bit of movement with his hands and a lot of expression in his eyes. It was absolutely thrilling, if anyone liked music, to be able to sing with him directing, it was sort of like ... it was a religious experience every time. I wouldn't have missed a rehearsal or a concert unless I was dying of pneumonia. I wouldn't have missed it.

AM: Sounds very professional, not like a casual ...

WK: He was not a ... he started there as a student and then he became Dr. McKinley's assistant, while he was still a student, and then he became an assistant director, and I don't know how he worked it up, but, anyway, even when I got there in '41, he was still a relatively young man and relatively ... he was such a combination of hard work, intense professionalism, and stupidity; like doing cartwheels down George Street. Every time something great happened, it's time for Soup to do his cartwheels down George Street. ... This was the way he proved that he was still alive and well and healthy, doing cartwheels. Well you can imagine a professor doing cartwheels. I am sure that Kurt never did that, but this was the kind of person that he was. We always felt ...

KP: He had two sides, the professional side and then doing cartwheels ...

WK: He had two sides, yes. He could do cartwheels; he could have fun. If we were on the bus, we could be singing raucous songs and having a good time, and he was always a part of this, and yet he was always above this. He was never ensconced in it, but he was always there, and you always knew that he was enjoying himself, too. ... Then, of course, after the war, after I went to the West Indies, I was able to sponsor the Club to go down there, twice, and that was when I really got to appreciate Soup. I saw the other part of him then, when he was on tour with the fellows. Long after I got out and was already getting on to being an old man, he was still going strong.

KP: He is still going strong. It is remarkable. I have never met him personally but I have seen him lead the Glee Club and he is really remarkable.

WK: He must be eighty ... what, I guess, he must be ...

KP: Eighty-five.

WK: Yes, eighty-five, can you imagine?

KP: I think he recently celebrated his birthday.

WK: Amazing.

KP: Before we started the interview you mentioned people were going off after Pearl Harbor, and you felt almost a little guilty.

WK: A little guilty? I was simply obsessed with my guilt. I mean, not being a conscientious objector, and having this deferment, and not liking it, and having my bishop saying, "If they want you they'll call you. Stay there, I need you as a priest," and he was right and he was putting a lot into me. He was supporting me too, and I had a lot of guilt about that.

KP: Did you stay in touch with any of your friends who'd gone off? You mentioned people from the Glee Club; did you stay in touch while you were at Rutgers? Did you get any letters saying, "I'm in training camp now."

WK: No, I don't remember any, except fellas coming back, or hearing about fellas that had been killed. That happened, maybe not during that time, that was afterward that I heard, I don't know, but that was always sort of part of being in that community.

KP: I'm intrigued by Camp Kilmer across the river. Do you have any memories of Camp Kilmer effecting New Brunswick at all? Because there were a lot of people going through Camp Kilmer, it was a very transient facility, and a lot of people were going into town.

WK: ... No.

KP: No, memories of ...

WK: I think we lived pretty isolated on Hillside Campus, you know, we didn't go into town. We weren't looking for girls, we all had our wives, we had our children, you know. We were working on daughter number two, I guess when we were still at Rutgers. Yes, the one who just left here, and so I don't think I remember any contact with Camp Kilmer.

KP: Okay, I mean, yes, it's been ...

WK: I knew it was there, seems to me I went through there one time myself, or was it, maybe it was another camp in New Jersey. I, maybe it was Fort Dix. I think I went there either on the way out, or on the way back to get myself either programmed or un-programmed.

AM: You got your discharge at Fort Dix.

WK: Was it Fort Dix? I can't remember.

AM: Yes, I remember reading that on the pre-interviewing survey.

KP: You mentioned that you joined the Air Force, the Air Corps, partly because you didn't want to walk. ...

WK: Yes, I wanted to contribute, and I thought, "Well this would be a good way to do it," and I guess, maybe I told Alexia that I didn't have any interest in flying, but I must have had some, at least some kind of an inquisitiveness about it anyway. ... I don't remember ever having built airplanes, or saved airplane pictures or anything like that before the war.

KP: Yes, because a lot of people we've interviewed have said they went to Newark airport or they ...

WK: Afterwards ... much later on, I can remember taking my son-in-law to the airport and sitting him in planes because I hated watching him go down the drain working in a factory and finally, by doing that with him, he went to Emory and is now chief pilot for Midwest Airlines and I chalk that up as one of my successes, you know, chief pilot for Midwest Airlines is no small thing, I guess.

KP: One of the things I'm struck by is how dangerous World War II aviation was even before you left. I'm not even talking combat, but just training. You, in fact, would have a crash in training. Did you have any sense of how dangerous it was going to be?

WK: None. I was thinking of that just this morning because I thought you might ask that and I was trying to think; I don't know whether it was because I was young, or because, I suppose, a young person feels so invincible. It never occurred to me to be frightened. Someone said to me about that crash, "Were you frightened?" I wasn't the least bit frightened, and I don't say that because I'm a brave person. I think I'm the world's original chicken, but I was not frightened. I simply was not frightened. Although, I can remember flying (when I was first learning,) in single engine planes that you did tricks in, I would turn over and hang by my strap, with nothing between me and the ground but a strap around my waist and think nothing of it; when I think of it now I get goose bumps.

AM: That was a single engine plane with an open cockpit?

WK: Yes, of course, a Fairchild PT-23.

AM: When you had the training crash what were you in?

WK: A B-29.

AM: Oh, you crashed a B-29?

WK: Yes, I waited until the big one, yes, two million bucks they told us. (laughter)

AM: Who was the pilot on that flight?

WK: Well, I wasn't fortunately, I was the pilot, but I wasn't flying it.

AM: Was there a full eleven-man crew in that plane?

WK: We had a full crew plus three instructors; it was our training mission. We were learning (actually our very first flight) to fly and I was sitting on what we call "George." It was the automatic pilot. It was a box in between the pilot and the co-pilot, or the airplane commander and the pilot, which is what they were called in the B-29. I was the pilot and we had an airplane commander and our instructor was sitting in my seat, and I was sitting on George and, you know, that's how we took off. We had been shooting landings, taking off, going around in the pattern, and coming back down. The instructor pilot was teaching us how to take off and land the plane. We had gone through this procedure six times. On the sixth landing one of the gunners, Pat Pouder, asked to be taken off the plane, he was so sick.

AM: Pass.

WK: Up and down, it was up and down, and it was too much for him. He said, "Let me out, I'm sick as a dog." So we let him out and he stood on the airstrip and watched us takeoff, and that's when we crashed. It was in the desert outside of Tucson, and it was Davis Montham Field. When Pat saw the mushroom cloud we made with the crash, he stood on the tarmac and cried like a baby because he knew we were all dead, he said, [laughter] there wasn't anybody who was really seriously hurt, but we were very fortunate.

KP: Oh, wow, so you really had a crash?

WK: A real crash. The plane ended up in three different parts, can you imagine that and we all lived to tell about it, a miracle.

KP: No, that is ...

WK: Yeah, the airplane commander, the pilot, the instructor ... well, we took off and almost immediately, I think we were a hundred and fifty feet high, the outboard engine on the left and the inboard engine on the right both cut out at the same time. Now a '29 will fly on one engine under the best circumstances, but these were not the best of circumstances, and so on two engines it wouldn't fly, because the air was too thin. It was a very hot day and the air is thin on a hot day ... so there was nothing to sustain this big thing and so ... the instructor knew we were going to crash, and it was a desert and he thought that because it was flat that he could land it without crashing. So he did what ...

AM: You mean, into the sand, belly-landing?

WK: Yes, he did what the book tells you you should never do; he hit the switch to lower the gears thinking he could land on the gears. Well, he forgot that the nose wheels on a B-29, when you hit the switch they come down immediately. They fall out, literally, and click into place, but the main gear is hydraulically operated and it slowly grinds out like "Errrrr", and it takes forever

for it to come out. They had only been out about that far before we hit the ground, so the plane hit like this, bang, and cracked right behind where I was sitting, and cracked right behind the bomb bays, in three different parts, with a river of gasoline flowing where we had scooped out a nice trough for the gasoline to flow. My escape hatch was next to the instructor pilot and he was sitting in my seat. He didn't take his parachute off before he went through that little hole, so he got stuck in it. I was sitting there thinking, "This thing is going to explode any minute," so I got behind him, like this, ... he was a major and at that point I was a second lieutenant ... I got behind him like this and went "Bumph" [laughter].

KP: And pushed him out the side?

WK: Yes, it was the only chance I had during the war to kick a major, and then I went out after him. It was something, though. It was amazing that we didn't all die. I was hurt the worst of all. It was because I didn't have a seat, or a seat belt, or any of those things. I was sore from where I bounced all over the place on a rather skinny behind.

KP: Everyone walked away?

WK: Everybody walked away from it, and all I could think of was that we crashed in an area, just a mile or so from where we lived, and all I could think of was my wife hanging clothes up in the backyard seeing this and would immediately think it was me. After all the interrogation and everything we went through after this you know, the debriefing and all that, which was hours later, I called her and was expecting her to be crying and she says "Where have you been?" I was late; she knew nothing about the crash. I was never so thankful to be bawled out in my life.

KP: One crewmember you said was devastated; you had dropped him because you said he was getting airsick. He was just ...

WK: He was unbelievably devastated because, apparently, hitting the sand it looks like, I suppose, what later was the atomic bomb, you know, this great big cloud. I think that's why it didn't explode, because there was so much dirt in the air that it snuffed out any sparks that might have ignited this river of gasoline. It was amazing, we were so lucky, you know, when I think of it now. One of my friends said, "You must've prayed all the way down." I said, "Pray? The last thing I thought of was to pray. All I could think of was, 'What could I do to keep this darn thing flying,'" you know.

AM: So did you have to walk back to the base?

WK: No, they sent out for us.

AM: They saw you coming and said, "Oh, boy, they're done."

WK: Yes, they came out in an ambulance, of course, and all kinds of things came out for us.

AM: So you had two engines left, b cause they had four engines.

WK: Four engines, yes. Two on the outboard and two on the inboard. I mean two on the you know, starboard and what have you, port and starboard.

AM: That's the heaviest bomber in the war, right?

WK: It was then.

AM: Yes, it was then.

WK: It was then. It was the big one. It was the "Super Fortress."

AM: Super Fortress.

WK: Yes.

KP: I'd like to go, through, systematically, because there's a number of trainings ... you first go to Atlantic City.

WK: Atlantic City was where we had what they called preflight ...

KP: People have talked about how you stayed in different hotels.

WK: Horrendous. Horrendous. The awful ... you know, right out of Rutgers, right out of the academic world, that protected academic world where you're only given a glimpse of the real world now and then, and then into this. ... I've forgotten what floor I was on, but I was upstairs, high, and they'd run us down the stairs and then get us down on the boardwalk to line up and then they'd say, "Well, we've had a change of uniforms, you have to put on something else." You'd have to run up the stairs again and get dressed. Oh, you'd do that three or four times, just to keep us in shape. ... Then out to Brigantine Fields to march and it was in February and March. ... It was cold and damp and Atlantic City was awful. ...

KP: You were not too happy to be living in Atlantic City.

WK: ... I was so miserable. I think I had, you know, as many, I thought, "Oh, the Air Force, glory," you know, glorious things and here I was marching and being screamed at by these, these sergeants, who thought they were God himself, you know. I just hated it, but we weren't there very long, fortunately.

KP: And where were you sent to next?

WK: To a place called Waterville, Maine. It was Colby College, a girl's school. They were in the process of building a new campus on Mayflower Hill, but we were housed on the old campus and I was billeted in the YMCA building, which is, was, a part of the campus life, I guess, at that point, I'm not sure. That's where we were, and that's where I got my first, you know, experience

in flying. There was a lot of studying you had to do. We were doing a lot of things in aerodynamics and in meteorology and in, you know, all other related things. So, a lot of it was studying and then some flying, not very much, just to get us sort of started. I think, I was there for three or four months. I remember I was there long enough to be in Maine during the summer, because they had some nice lakes and I can remember being out in little rowboats on those lakes.

It was nice and Helen came up a couple of times. ... She came up to see me there, from Newark, and my mother and father came up once. But I liked Maine. It was very nice and the people were very nice. We were one of the earlier classes up there so the natives still liked us, thought we were just All-American boys. [laughter]

KP: Did you ever get any invitations to Sunday dinner, or anything? ... A lot of people said they'd be on the street and someone would say do you have a place to go to for dinner this Sunday?" or something similar, did you have any of that?

WK: I didn't have any in Waterville that I can remember, but when we left Waterville I was sent to Cape Girardeau, Missouri for my ... what was that called, primary training? Primary training.

KP: Yes. Colby was pre-flight.

WK: Colby was pre-flight and Cape Girardeau was primary. We were there a couple of months, maybe more than that. But, there was a family that adopted me there, the Kempfers, and their son was off in the service, so I took his place, and anyone I wanted to bring with me was welcome and they were like a mother and father while I was there. That was very nice. Every Sunday night, dinner with the Kempfers. It was like a home away from home. It was a really nice experience. They were good.

KP: Air Force, Air Corps training was fairly rigorous. You alluded to a German, German-American, who trained you, who had spoken very sternly, he probably reminded you very much of your father. [laughter]

WK: Very much so. He hollered at me in German. [laughter] It was quite rigorous. It was very good training because there was a lot of book work, but also you had this ... flying always had this mystique about it, about really getting into this thing, and making it go up in the air and making it do what you wanted it to do was always sort of a mystery to me. How are they able to do this? The training was good. I was never sorry that I went into the Air Force, ever. I always felt that the training was so good.

AM: How was it decided what kind of plane you would be flying?

WK: As we went through, stage by stage, at Cape Girardeau it was primary and then Malden, Missouri was basic training ... and then advanced training at Blytheville, Arkansas. By that time, we would put in a bid for what we wanted to fly and they told me, (I was six feet or six-one), I wouldn't likely get a fighter plane anyway, so don't bother asking for it. So I asked for a B-25 Mitchell, Billy Mitchell, the one that had bombed Tokyo. It was probably the only plane I knew, and I had seen several of those. I liked the looks of that plane and, again, I thought that

my crew would only be five men. I thought that was a doable group. I didn't want to have eleven, like on the B-29, because I always liked small groups. I asked for a B-25. Well, I finished and they put me into instructing instead. So I was sent from there to Randolph Field, Texas to learn how to be an instructor. Then they sent me to Greenwood, Mississippi to be an instructor in basic trainers. Primary, Basic and Advanced were the three stages. It just came about as a fluke really because when I was instructing, the Battle of the Bulge was happening and they took all the newest instructors, the ones who had had the least time instructing, and put them into B-24s, the Liberators, because it was the plane that was going to knock Hitler out and he was making great strides with the Battle of the Bulge at that point. As a first pilot, I was put into a B-24, the Liberator. Then, by the time I finished that training, the war in Europe had ended and so then the only plane that would have enough range to fly from the Marianas to Japan was the B-29. So, I was switched from a '24 to a '29, and then went through all that training again and by that time the war was almost over.

AM: So was it just the B-29s or was there also the Liberators was that the other big plane?

WK: No, ...

AM: It was the second heaviest plane besides the B-29 ...

WK: Oh, you mean the Fortress?

AM: There was another one.

WK: There were three big bombers that the United States produced, the biggest was the Super Fortress, the B-17 Fortress was the next one, and then the Liberator was the third one. They were the three four engine bombers that dropped all the bombs on both Germany, Japan, and England had different kinds of bombers but we ... they were the only three we had.

KP: One question I'll ask before I ask how long you instructed is how many people didn't make it through the various levels of training? What do you remember about that? Because some people said in the Air Corps ... many people didn't make it ...

WK: Sometimes maybe it was just an accident, or maybe one guy was taxiing and taxied into the plane in front of him and he was washed out, sent. Some of them were washed out because of air sickness, some of them because of depth perception. If you took a test to see whether you could land a plane, whether you would know when you were close to the ground or not and if you didn't, they didn't like it. There were different reasons like that. I can remember people washing out, mostly for those reasons. Very seldom academic, although, I guess, some of those, too. We would have terrible parties, good-bye parties, to guys that were going into the army from the Air Force and, you know, it was all weeping and wailing and commiserating with them, "I hope you live through this," and all of that.

KP: So they weren't viewed as pariahs? They were ...

WK: Oh, no, everybody felt sorry for them because you knew you might be next. You don't pick on anybody who might be paving the way for you.

KP: So it wasn't like, how some people have talked about some training camps, the empty bunk in the middle of the night, the persons gone.

WK: Sometimes, even at night, we would be called to line up while a washed-out-cadet marched out of the Air Corps into the Army.

KP: For you it was very ...

WK: This was very clean-cut stuff. I don't think it was ever done in such a way that we felt we were next. It was not used as a threat, I don't think, particularly, but perhaps that was part of the reason.

KP: Did you ever think that you would have a problem because you mentioned your first instructor and you ...

WK: I always knew I was going to have a problem. I never could believe when I passed. I thought, "God, they're sending me on to the next stage, I don't even know this one yet," you know. I always felt I was sort of behind the eightball, but it was because, I think, that that was my way of life anyway. I got started late in the church everybody knew more about Christianity than I did, because I got started so late, so here I was going to be a priest and I didn't know much about my tradition yet; I always felt a little bit behind people and I think I felt that way in the Air Force, too. Although, I guess I was doing all right because I was pushed ahead and being made an instructor certainly says they appreciated what I was doing.

KP: So, when did you start serving as an instructor?

WK: Well, I graduated in Blytheville, Arkansas in the class of '44. Which means what, August of '44. Then I went on, we were engaged there and, but we weren't going to be married. We decided we would not be married until the end of the war. That's what Helen and I decided when she came to Blytheville to my graduation. But I had a leave of absence, a sort of, "Go home and enjoy yourself for a few days," I guess it was a week or so, and then they were going to send me to Randolph Field to learn how to be an instructor.

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

WK: We decided that we would not get married then and, I think, it was probably because Helen wanted a nice wedding, and you couldn't have a nice wedding if you got married on leave. I got on the train to go back to Randolph Field, in Texas, and I had no sooner gotten on the train then I knew we had made a big mistake. I was not going to be a bachelor much longer, and I knew that, so I wrote her a long, long letter while I was still on the train, and sent it as soon as I got to Randolph, and I said, "Let's get married right away." She wrote back and said, "Yes." These were in the days when you didn't make telephone calls, you wrote long letters and then waited.

She said "Yes, we'll get married right away." So, I said, "When I get wherever they assign me I will let you know where I am and you can come there." After Randolph Field, which was just a month or two I think, of training to be an instructor in a BT-13A. It was called the Vultee-Vibrator, and it vibrated. It was *Brrrr* like that. ... I went to Greenwood, Mississippi and found a little Episcopal church and called Helen. She came down and we were married October 7, 1944. Only my mother and her mother were able to come and that was when Don McNeill came from Texas to be my best man.

KP: So you very much had a GI wedding.

WK: Very much so. It was sort of funny, too because I told you I was sort of high church and this was a very low church. I said to the priest, "I want a nuptial mass." Well he said, "What's that?" and then I knew I was in big trouble, because if a priest didn't know what a nuptial mass was then ... wow. I think that I was the only Air Force man to conduct his own rehearsal and taught the priest how to do it. [laughter] We had a nice service. There were about ten people there and it was nice our mothers were able to come, nobody else was able to come, but our mothers were able to be there.

KP: What was it like to be an instructor?

WK: I didn't get a chance to do much instructing because the Battle of the Bulge happened almost immediately. I remember getting ready to do instructing and even having students assigned to me and I can remember initial flights but I don't remember anything else. I think what happened was, almost immediately, ... well, for example: On the day we were married I was scheduled for a cross-country flight that morning, so, I flew from Greenwood, Mississippi to Little Rock, Arkansas, to Memphis, Tennessee and back to ... it was a triangle. It probably took the whole morning to do that with a student and I got back and got dressed in time for the wedding at four o'clock. I don't remember any of the other students, and I remember things well enough I think that I would have remembered if I had any other experiences. I think what happened was by the time they got me ready for this, to be an instructor, they decided to send us all to B-24s so we could finish the war in Europe. So we were all pushed in and then pulled out right away and sent to Courtland, Alabama to learn how to be B-24 pilots, which was the next step then.

KP: Then how long were you in Alabama?

WK: Courtland, Alabama was where I learned to fly the '24, the Liberator. The only thing I remember about Courtland was that we were losing planes left and right.

KP: In training?

WK: It was awful. It was scary and the reason, there were several reasons. The '24 was a pretty tricky plane. I loved it, but there were a lot of people who didn't like the '24. ... The pilots who were teaching us, the instructors, were all men who had come back from Europe. I think they were half angry that they were no longer in combat and they thought of themselves as above the

rules and regulations, so, they were doing a lot of stupid things and a lot of the accidents happened, I think, because the instructors were not being careful.

KP: When you say they felt like they didn't have to follow the rules, do you have any specific examples?

WK: I don't think they were careful enough. Once you have flown in combat and flown combat missions, and then you go back, being in sort of a ... almost a peacetime, teaching people to fly this thing that you know so much about. I think you lose your edge on being real careful. I had a very good instructor, but he was sort of casual about things and I could see that there might be a time when he would slip up and he never did with me, but I think they just had that attitude. They had been overseas, they had flown their missions, whatever they were, fifteen or twenty missions, and then they came back and were put in this terrible job of having to teach us young guys how to fly this thing. I think maybe they were angry; maybe they were disappointed that they couldn't be sent overseas again, whatever it was ...

KP: You sensed that they wanted to ...

WK: I think that was part of the reason, because the war was still very much up for grabs. Hitler and Japan could have easily taken this off.

KP: I would be curious if you noticed this. Often in training camp things are very disciplined, very orderly, you were trying to instill discipline. One thing that I was struck by was that the Air Force compared to say the Navy, in particular, was a very casual service as a military organization. There was a lot less of, excuse me, the term from the time, 'chicken shit'.

WK: Yes. There was very little of that in the Air Force. Very little of that. When we started our training, I'd say there was none of it, maybe there was a lot of it at Atlantic City, but even when we got to Waterville, Maine there wasn't much of that. It was like a community. It was like a fellowship. It was like a group of guys who had a real goal and nobody was going to foul up anyone else from making his mark and reaching his goal. It was good. It was probably a little unrealistic in many ways, but it was good. It was a comfortable service to be in. It was very pleasant for me personally. I mean I have never been sorry that I went into the Air Force. I have never felt sorry that I had that training. I have always felt, all through my ministry, I have been a priest now since 1951, what, forty-six years? I find that a lot of this stuff coming out in sermons; it's a way of reflecting back on things that happened that made an impact on me, people I met, experiences I had in the service, in training and overseas.

KP: These guys were coming back from combat ... I get the sense that they could be very casual.

WK: You could call them by their first names! A lot of it was on first name basis, imagine, with these captains and majors. When you got up in an airplane you forgot a lot about that 'chicken shit'. There was a lot of intense programming, keeping your mind on what you were doing. You had to or you would be dead. I remember one instructor saying to me, "If your neck size doesn't increase one full size by the end of this war you'll be dead. If you're not looking around

constantly to see if there's another plane trying to occupy the same place that you are, you're going to be dead." So I've always remembered that. You know, "Look around," and when my wife drives now like this and doesn't look, I say to her "Look around, look around" and she says, "Well you look around all the time, you don't watch where you're going." [laughter]. Yes, but I think you're right, the Air Force was different. It was certainly different than the army. It was different from the Navy too.

KP: ... I've been told by veterans that the Air Force people were incredibly informal. One commander told me on his base, "We didn't even salute each other. We wore whatever we felt like." In fact, he said once a General came in and he stopped him because he hadn't saluted him and he was in this crazy mish-mash of uniforms and he said, "This was just the standard." Imagine someone like that then coming back to ...

WK: Yes, the only comment that was ever made against me, personally, was that I tended to gravitate toward my enlisted men more than the officers. I had more in common with them. I would go to the enlisted men's beach to swim, for example.

KP: Oh, okay.

WK: You were in a bathing suit you know, who cares? And the other officers and sometimes the higher-ups would say, "You're fraternizing too much. If you're going to be friendly with your enlisted men and you tell your gunner to bail out he's going to say, 'Go to hell.' you know, if he's calling you by your first name and he's forgotten you're in charge of this ship, when you're in the air he may not obey you," and that was what they were concerned with, but that was the only thing that they were concerned about, that you would lose control of your crew if you became too friendly. Well, I never would let that worry me, I simply wouldn't, and, you know, the occasion never came for me to tell them to bail out, so I was lucky. Probably they would have been right, if I ... because I'm sure a lot of them thought of me as just, Wes, and I wasn't particularly the commanding type.

KP: This concern, was this when you were still in the States?

WK: Not so much, overseas, I think, well, yes, overseas, I can think of Tinian particularly.

KP: Because you would have separate beaches at Tinian.

WK: Yes, oh, yes. Officers' beach, can you imagine, woo, yes.

KP: I guess ... before going to your last base, you actually trained on the B-29 in Arizona.

WK: That was Davis Montham Field right, yes.

KP: You were in these different parts of the country, you were in Maine, you were in Atlantic City, which was ...

WK: Hell's Kitchen.

KP: Then you went to Missouri, which you made sound almost as good as home because you had this family.

WK: I had the Kempfers in Cape Girardeau, I don't remember too much about Malden. It was a little tiny town. I don't think that there was much for any of us to do. Maybe that's where I learned to play bridge. I learned a lot of things, I learned to play tennis and I learned how to play bridge in the Air Force.

KP: Even though you were on bases a lot, what did you think of these different parts of the country? In particular, you were in the Deep South for a good part of your training.

WK: I had some difficulty in the South, when I was at Maxwell Field. I didn't talk about Maxwell Field did I? I was at Maxwell Field, I must have missed that somehow, I was there just before going to Cape Girardeau, I guess, it was. I can't remember exactly when I was there, but I can remember taking the bus into town, into Montgomery, and being from New York, or New Jersey, I got up to give a black lady my seat and she almost turned white she was so embarrassed and I didn't know why and I said, "Sit down" and she was saying, "No. No. No," and I was saying "Sit down" ... Finally, the bus driver stopped the bus and he said, "If you can't behave yourself you'll have to get off," meaning me. ... I couldn't figure out what the heck he was talking about. You know it never occurred to me, I wasn't savvy to that at all.

KP: In Newark, Belleville, that might not have been an odd thing to do. It was odd at that time.

WK: Yeah, he wasn't going to hear of it, black people had to go and sit in the back of the bus. So I would deliberately go in the back, sit in the back. I was angry about that sort of thing, but I didn't have many others. One priest, a lovely priest named William Thompson, who just died, I wrote to his widow, who's now in her nineties, he had adopted me in one of the places, I guess, it was Montgomery. Yes, it was Montgomery, a little church in Montgomery, and I once was talking to him about race and I realized very soon that I couldn't talk to him about race. ... He would say things to me that other people in the South said, "You just don't understand." That was the stock thing for us from New York or New Jersey, "You just don't understand." Which I, didn't of course, I didn't, but I did.

KP: Because some Northerners had very little contact with African-Americans, you, in fact, had a lot of contact. One of your girlfriends had been black and your mother had blacks to dinner. It was not like, you don't understand because you don't understand. It must have felt very odd.

WK: It felt very odd for me to be told that I could not let a lady sit down in my seat if I wanted to. It seemed to me incredibly stupid.

KP: Did you go to church very often while you were in the service, or at the chapel? It sounds like you always made it a point to find ...

WK: I always found the Episcopal Church, or if I was on base I had a number of chaplains that I got very friendly with and always served at the altar. I always knew how to serve. It was an *entrée*, I could always say, "Would you like an acolyte." I think I always went, if I could, and if I couldn't go to the Episcopal Church, then I would go to the Roman Catholic services to receive my communion, because I always wanted to receive communion, and that was not at a Protestant custom. I would always go to either the Episcopal Church or the Roman Catholic Church and a couple of times to Orthodox churches.

KP: What about other men, on various bases and when you were overseas, how well-attended were services?

WK: Very widely. There was a lot of inquisitiveness about religion and belief. I can remember getting into a lot of religious arguments, especially with Baptists. I remember with a bottle of whiskey on the table one night, with a guy named, Sam, I can't remember his last name and we argued all night about the inherent evilness of that bottle and I said, "That's stupid, that is not an evil bottle." And he said, "oh yes it is," and I said, "Oh no it isn't," and that is the way it went all night long. [laughter] There was a lot of interest in ... I can remember my buddies being always interested in the fact that I was going to study for the priesthood. They wanted to name my plane, something having to do with Wes's ... I don't know ... a religious thing. Actually we called it *The Sad Tomato*.

KP: Some people have confessed that there was also ... I guess, to be very blunt, he referred to a real sense that at some point you realized that you could possibly not survive this, so, as he put it, "There was a lot of playing, there was a lot of whoring."

WK: Yes, I think so. Probably more than I knew, probably guys wouldn't share that with me. Not because I was so pious, but because they just knew where I was coming from. I never did that. I never harped that. If they wanted to talk religion they had to start it, I never did. I can remember my ... a funny story. I guess we were in Waterville at the time, and my friend Teddy came back one night and said, "Well I finally made it. I finally had it tonight." I said, "You did?" He said, "Yeah, I had it tonight. I got it from her." I said, "Well how did you do it?" He said, "We did it standing up in her hallway," and I thought, "How in the world did he do that?" [laughter] I think that there was probably more of that going on than I was aware of, though I heard the guys talking and bragging.

KP: Aviators in the public's eye had a very glamorous image.

WK: Oh, yes.

KP: Wearing your flight jackets and ...

WK: My wife always questioned me about Bunny Boudreau, in Waterville, about how far Bunny and I had gone. It was always her question. I don't think she ever really believed me, because Bunny was definitely a sexy French girl, very sexy and very French. [laughter]

KP: When did you meet your crew? Was it in Arizona?

WK: We got the crew in Tucson, Arizona.

KP: Did you do your B-29 training with the crew?

WK: Yes. I did my B-29 training with my crew. I must have had the crew before we went into '29s but I could be mistaken about that. This is terrible to have forgotten such a significant thing, point in the history of this. I'm quite sure our crew of 11 men was assembled in Tucson when B-29 training began.

KP: That's fine when you get the transcript if you remember you can ...

WK: ... Probably looking through my pictures, also, I will be able to figure that one out and as I think of each base again because having forgotten Maxwell Field, which was a big deal, you know, all the square meals, and all that stuff, and talk about the real 'chicken shit', that's where all the real 'chicken shit' was, "Oh, my gosh."

KP: Was that where you got your pre-flight? I've heard that that's where your bunk had to be made a certain way.

WK: I wonder if I went there really early, sometime really early? That's a complete blank to me now. I can remember Maxwell Field, I can remember the strict kind of discipline, and I can remember them telling me to sit two inches from the back of my chair; sit up like this and eat the square meal. You had to take your food up to the level of your mouth, and in and out, and out and down without moving your head, and I can remember asking the girls, at the end of the meal for more, for seconds, and the black girls in Montgomery, Alabama would say, "T'ain't No Mo."

WK: "T'ain't no mo." "T'ain't no mo." [laughter]

KP: I guess before we leave Maxwell do you remember anything else about Maxwell? The discipline sounds like it left quite an impression.

WK: I can remember it was where I learned that the Air Force can be really stinky. You know, they can really get the picky stuff and swell it up to the max. That's all I can remember about Maxwell Field and the fact that I was so thankful to get out of there. I know I was there at one point, when I finished one point of my training and there was no place for me to go and they sent me, I'm sure it was Maxwell Field, to wait for my next assignment.

KP: Well, actually you raised another question; your wife followed you to several bases. You said she was at Arizona when the plane crashed and in Alabama.

WK: She was in Courtland, Alabama, and she was with me in Tucson also.

KP: How difficult was it to find places to live? While you could eat at the base she was on ration books and ...

WK: It was a hard time and they kept telling us, if you are married, "Don't bring your wife to the next base," and they would paint the picture as black as they could and, of course, hardly anyone ever listened to them. Our wives would always go on ahead and look for a place to live so we would have something when we got there. That was almost always the way Helen did it, too. She was also always in a group like with our crew, ... Ron Gibbs was married, Kent Spangler was married and Don Duncan was married, and those girls would go on ahead, because we would be sent on a troop train, and then they'd find some place to live, and by the time we got there they were usually well settled. At least in some fleabag sort of a place, but it was at least a temporary home.

KP: The housing could be very sparse.

WK: Yes! We had some places that were very nice but in Tucson we rented a little house in Tucson with a couple from Maine, Paul and Marie Radawitz and we bought a little Model-A Ford so that Paul and I would have something to drive back and forth to the field in. ... We had a nice little house, that was very comfortable, but by that time we were commissioned ... we had a little bit more freedom. But, even before that, well, come to think of it, my wife didn't come with me at all, before I was commissioned. We weren't married until after I got my wings. So, she was never with me for the other ... but there were some places like Courtland, Alabama, which was a tiny, little town, which was difficult for her. Lincoln, Nebraska we lived in a little room someplace in town. Because I remember Lincoln University, or the University of Nebraska, I think, is there, and we found a nice little Anglo-Catholic parish in Lincoln, which was very nice. But, some places were very difficult. Some were very nice and some were difficult, you know, those little towns out West or down South.

KP: It sounds like the wives of the crew, bonded a lot.

WK: Yes, yes.

KP: They ...

WK: They really did. It was nice because once the crew got together, we stayed together the whole time, you know all through our training until we went overseas, the wives had a good chance to spend a lot of time together and it was very good for them. It gave them their own little community, because we were always off doing something.

KP: This book is great because a lot of people can't remember specific names. I'll even just go down the list.

WK: Okay.

KP: First, you were the pilot, the second pilot. Kenneth Spangler was ...

WK: Kenneth Spangler was from Pennsylvania and was married. Married, and was a very good pilot, very diligent, very serious minded. He was a good man. I enjoyed flying with him. He was the airplane commander. I was the pilot.

KP: A college graduate?

WK: We never, yes, I believe so. We never got to be close friends because, I think, as I said I always gravitated more towards the enlisted men. I seemed to have more in common with them, maybe because of my roots in Newark, or something, I don't know, some of those guys were more my type of person. But anyway Ken was a good man. He was a good pilot and I enjoyed flying with him. We became "the crew of the week" and that was the picture they took of us when they made us "crew of the week," yes.

KP: How do you get to be crew of the week?

WK: I guess, ... it was after our accident, because that was the very first day, I suppose we just did well. We worked well together. We represented eleven different states, which was interesting. There were no two of us from the same state. We had a partial Cherokee Indian and a kid from Connecticut, Billy Nailor was from Connecticut. Georgie Michael was from West Virginia; Bobby Ritter was from Indiana; Chet Dunning was from Texas, Bud Walter was from Ohio; Frank Karlov from Chicago; Don Duncon from Louisiana; Ron Gibbs from Kansas; Ken Spangler from Pennsylvania, and I was from New Jersey. We just represented so many different cultures and enjoyed each other and just the fact that Pat Pouder, when I got married said to me, "You don't have a wedding band." I said, "Well my father never had a wedding band, I don't want a wedding band." He said, "When you get overseas all those girls are going to think that you're available, you've gotta have a wedding ring." So, he made me a wedding ring. He went out to the dump where they took old B-29s and found a nut, it was stainless steel, something that would last, and fashioned a ring and we put it on my finger and it stayed there for about thirty years. It was amazing, yes, until I had to have it cut off because I had an infection on my finger.

KP: Oh, no.

WK: Can you imagine that? It was worth absolutely nothing but, boy, it was very valuable to me.

KP: Yes. These are all great stories.

WK: Good guys.

KP: Going down the list then, obviously you were the pilot and Frank Carloff?

WK: Frank Carloff was Jewish, from Chicago, and a lawyer. I've meant to write to him before because he's still living, five of us are dead, but Frank is still living. ... The thing I remember about Frank most is when he stepped up to any urinal, any place in the world, and he'd always

say the same thing, "To hell with Coca-Cola, this is the pause that refreshes." [laughter] ... It's funny to remember a really nice guy by such a stupid thing. ... Also, that he was an excellent navigator and he would say, as we were coming back from a flight, he would say, "Look out the front, in thirty seconds you'll see an island; that's where we're heading" and I'd count and I'd look up, there it was. He was an excellent navigator.

KP: One of my thrills in doing this project was a student flew me in his father's single engine plane up for an interview.

WK: Really.

KP: I am convinced that when you fly in an airliner they're nothing like World War II aviation, except that it's a plane.

WK: Yes.

KP: But this flight had much more of a feel, he was looking out for obstacles and stuff.

WK: Sure, sure.

KP: But now even in a single engine plane with the satellite navigation system it's very hard to get lost.

WK: Yes.

KP: But you could really get lost in World War II aviation.

WK: I got totally lost coming in from Cape Girardeau Missouri. I was flying a PT-23 and I lost the Mississippi River. Now, it is almost impossible to lose the Mississippi River, but I did. ... I couldn't find it for the longest time and, I guess, I couldn't remember whether I was on the left side or the right side of the Mississippi River. ... I was running out of gas and it was a horrendous experience. I was lost! But, I finally got home. I finally found the river and I was able to get home as soon as I found the river because Cape Girardeau had a bridge going across the river; I knew where I was. Anyway that was awful. I don't think I ever got lost that bad in any other time, but that was very bad.

KP: One of the things my former student eluded to, and, I guess, I'm digressing because I want to go on with listing the crew but he said vertigo was a real problem when you fly. He even did a test with me. He had me take it ...

WK: Did you?

KP: What is North and South? ...

WK: Yes, I can remember on one occasion I was with an instructor but I lost the horizon. It was a night flight and I got the lights on the ground and the light in the sky mixed up and there's no worse feeling than not knowing which lights are ground lights and which lights are sky lights. Whoa! Luckily, I wasn't alone so I didn't crash. ... So, you could easily, in making a tight turn and sometimes you blackout a little bit, if too much of the blood comes into your head, or if too much leaves your head. ... Vertigo was a serious thing, and if we were doing maneuvers and lost your bearings, ... I always remember them saying, "Trust your instruments. Trust your instruments. Don't trust your head, trust your instruments. If your instruments say you're flying upside down you are." [laughter]

AM: Your planes, the B-29s were oxygenated, though, weren't they, because they flew so high?

WK: Yes, yes, most of the time. Unless you were on a low-level flight, which we often were.

AM: Did you fly at high altitudes during the day, or low altitudes at night?

WK: I think most of our flights in the B-29 were high-level flights. Because once we got our training finished we were on, you know, like even flights when we got overseas we had to do training flights. We flew from, I was stationed on Tinian and we would fly to Wake Island and do some mock bombings on Wake and then come back. ... They were all high-level because you were bombing from say the altitude that you would be flying on if you were over Japan, or the enemy territory.

AM: So in America did you practice flying both night and daytime?

WK: Yes. Night flying started as early as basic training and went all through; a lot of your flying was a night as well, as in the daytime. Because you were going to be flying, if you took off for Japan it was a fifteen hour flight, so you have to be in the dark somewhere, either the beginning or the end of your flight, sometimes both.

KP: Because navigating in the Pacific was difficult you mentioned how good a navigator ...

WK: Oh, Frank was fantastic.

KP: In the Pacific there are far fewer landmarks, you can really just go into the ocean.

WK: Yes, that's right.

KP: And that's it.

WK: A lot of celestial navigation and, luckily, the weather was almost always very good, so we were fortunate we had very little trouble with navigation, very little trouble.

KP: You have this one story about him.

WK: About Frank you mean?

KP: Yes, but anything else you remember?

WK: I just remember him being the most wonderful, jovial, dry humor, Chicagoan. You know, I thought Chicago, being a New Yorker, you know. Yes, he was definitely a real Chicagoan and, you know, he used to think that I must be slightly bestial, because I was from that place, called "New York."

KP: What about Ronald Gibbs?

WK: Ron and I were never close. He was a Kansan. Delores, his wife and my wife were close. As a matter-of-fact when I went overseas, Helen went home with her to Kansas on her way to the East Coast. Ron had always implied that I had had something to do with the crash. That when I ... see, I had told you, I was sitting on George and I had to adjust the engines. Well, you did it, the toggle switches were in a row, four of them, governing ... controlling the engines, but there was a bar, so that you could move them all together. When I moved them it was when the two engines conked out. ... Ron had always sort of implied that I had had some thing to do with that. What had actually happened was the solenoid switch on both engines had both frozen, either open or shut, whichever it was, so that you lost power. It had nothing to really do with this, but I always felt kind of badly that he had to find someone to pin this on. I never thought that was very nice of him, too, ... even if he thought it, to say it, because there was no way in which it could be proven. Actually, there was no way for me to do it. I always had a funny feeling about Ron. There was never anything outward toward each other, but I always had that funny feeling, because I knew he looked to me as the culprit who caused this accident and I didn't think that was fair.

KP: What about Clyde (Walter?)?

WK: Ron is dead by the way. Clyde and I have been in touch with each other.

KP: Oh, you are still in touch with each other?

WK: Yes. He is in Cleveland. He was our radar man. Besides George Michael, who was the shortest guy, Clyde was also very short. We called him Bud, and he was a really nice, easy going, kind of, you know, ... nothing would shake him. He has been a business man all of his life. He is retired now and has grown children. We were going to meet at our reunion in Las Vegas, but I was unable to go and, ultimately, he wasn't able to go either. He was the only one, when I was ordained, he was the only one who sent me a present. He sent me a bookmark with "Faith, Hope, and Charity" on it. I always remembered that. It was nice of him to do that.

KP: Was he Episcopalian, too?

WK: No, I think just ... he always seemed to appreciate me going into the ministry and thought that was pretty neat, you know.

KP: Donald Duncan?

WK: Don is still living. When I went to convention, I have been a delegate to the general convention of the Episcopal Church twice. ... One of the times the conventions was in New Orleans and Don, who is an Episcopalian, was reading a parish paper and the delegates were listed and he saw Wes Konrad's name, and he thought, "I wonder if it is possible." So, he called up his diocese's office, where they have all the names and, sure enough, looked me up and I was the same Konrad. So, when I got someplace, I have forgotten where I was, he called me and we talked on the phone and then we wrote back and forth a couple of times, but that was maybe about eight years ago and I haven't heard from Don since. He is still living, though, I think he is living in New Iberia, Louisiana, or New Orleans, one of those places.

KP: Was he originally from New Orleans?

WK: Yes, I think so. He was from New Orleans or Baton Rouge when I met him and he was also married so we were close. You know, there were quite a few of us on the crew who were married. We kind of had that in common, went on trips with our wives together.

KP: Picnics?

WK: Picnics and out to places, oh, let me see, I guess, when we were in Tucson we would go out to Sabina Canyon, which is outside of Tucson. My granddaughter, who called a little while ago, has multiple sclerosis, and she and her boyfriend live in White Plains now, but they are going to Tucson. They have a thing about going to Tucson and having a life in Tucson. So, I am filling them in on Tuscan because I was there, but they both speak Spanish, and my granddaughter teaches English as a second language to Mexican children. There is a lot of Spanish in Tucson. So, they are looking forward to it and I have told them to go to Sabino Canyon. I don't know if it is even there now, but, anyway, ... it was nice.

KP: Robert Ritter ...

WK: We have not been able to locate Robert Ritter. He was our radio operator, and he was from Indiana. ... Quiet, very, very, shy, hardly ever talked unless spoken to; probably had less to do with the officers than any other member of the crew. He probably mistrusted us a lot; thought we were a strange breed, but Bob was a nice kid, but very shy. I never got to know him very well. He is ... we don't know whether he is living, but when they put this out and were preparing for our reunion they wrote to me and said that the only member of the crew they had not been able to locate was Bob Ritter.

KP: What year was this?

WK: This was about two years ago, I think, '95, was it? Or '94 maybe? It doesn't say?

KP: It looks like '95.

WK: Yes.

KP: The reunion was that year?

WK: Was that year or ... last year. Last year.

KP: In Las Vegas?

WK: In Las Vegas, yes.

KP: William Naylor ...

WK: Billy is dead. The thing I remember about Bill Naylor is that he was a banty rooster, bantam rooster? He was tiny and very, very pugnacious and as he went off for town invariably as he left the Quonset hut he would say, "I am going into town now and the girls won't be able to keep their hands off me." [laughter] He thought very highly of himself, and was loads of fun. ... He was a gunner. He was probably central fire control gunner.

KP: And he wasn't married ...

WK: No, no, oh, no. He was a ladies' man and was not married and the other members of the crew thought he was, you know, a blow-hard; that he had probably kissed a girl and, you know, was impressed.

KP: Some people have alluded to ... that there might have been a lot of talk.

WK: He was the talker. He was a talker and his sexual escapades were always a big part of our fun.

KP: Chet

WK: Chet Dunning. Chet Dunning is also dead. He was also a gunner and a Texan. ... He always talked about Texas and always said the rest of us just misunderstood Texas, "It wasn't all that people said it was, it was better than all that." He was married, but his wife was not with us. Enlisted men were not able to bring their wives, or didn't have their wives with them usually ... I guess, that some of them did, but Chet did not. His wife was back in Texas, so I never met her. I also think he was also the only one who was a father at that point. I am not sure about that, but I think he was. I think that he was the only one who was a father.

KP: ... Pouder ...

WK: Pouder, Pat Pouder. Pat Pouder was part Cherokee Indian.

KP: But it is spelled P-O-N-D-E-R.

WK: No, that was wrong. It was P-O-U-D-E-R ... is his name.

KP: You were obviously very close to him.

WK: Oh, yes, yes. He and I were ... I guess, primarily because he was ... I have always gravitated toward people who were different from me. ... Pat was about as different as he could be. ... He would always talk about his Indian roots with great pride and also the fact he was going to follow his father in this particular vocation, being a jeweler. He was going to learn how to be a jeweler.

KP: Where was he ...

WK: He was ... from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. That was where his home was.

KP: Oh, okay, and his father was a jeweler?

WK: Yes, and he was going to be a jeweler, too. He was just a nice neat kid who never cursed and never told dirty stories. I just liked him, you know, ... he loved swimming and so did I, so we would always go down to the beach together.

KP: Was he full Cherokee?

WK: No. He always talked about his Cherokee Indian roots and, I think, he had Cherokee blood in him.

KP: Did you stay in touch with him after the war?

WK: No, unfortunately, I did not and I have always felt sorry that I didn't, because later on, much later on, I wrote him at an address that I had and the letter was returned, so, I never knew what happened to him. I never knew whether he became a jeweler, or what he did. He was a nice, nice kid. Of all the crewmembers, I think I was closest with him.

AM: Maybe you could find him on the Internet now, if you look under the Cherokees they are registered all the Cherokees, you know ...

WK: Oh, wouldn't that be great.

AM: ... If you look up his name, if he was full blood Cherokee, you could probably find him.

WK: ... He would probably be listed. Wouldn't that be wonderful? Boy, would I love to be in touch with him, because he was much younger than I. ... I was one of the older members of the crew 'cause I had had two years of working at the Prudential and two years at college, so I had four years, which meant that I must have been ... [Reverend Konrad asked the following note be added: After this interview I had a call from Pat Pouder ... more than fifty years after I had

last seen him. He never became a jeweler, but he is an accomplished artist (doing one man shows throughout the West) and his avocation is training young men to box. His students have been in the Golden Gloves Competition and one student went to the Olympics. Pat and I met twice in Texas. He is now a born-again Christian whose ministry with his wife is making wooden crosses, which are given to anyone who wants them.]

KP: You were almost the old man.

WK: ... I was twenty-four. I think that Ken Spangler was the only one who was older than I. The airplane commander was the only one who was actually older than I am, yes.

KP: And then finally George Michael.

WK: Michael, yes. George was that tall and that wide, and the funny thing about it was that his position on the crew was tail gunner and in order to get to the tail of the B-29 you had to go through a hole about that big and we would often say to George, before we took off, "George, did you get yourself through your hole yet? Are you in position, George?" "Yes, I'm here, I'm here." ... He always felt so isolated because, you know, it is ninety-nine feet from the cockpit to the tail of the plane, and two hundred and twelve feet from wing tip to wing tip. I remember a few statistics; not many. George always felt so isolated because he was back there and the only thing he had between him and the rest of us was this little hole. I suppose he could see someone else by looking through the hole, but I am not sure of that. Yes, he was always isolated but he was Mister Five-By-Five, and we always teased him about being in the wrong position, he should have been somewhere else. He shouldn't have had to crawl through that hole all the time. George is dead, also.

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

WK: I never drank. I had absolutely nothing against drinking, and I just, my father had always said, "When you start drinking, drink at home with me," so, I never started because I didn't ever want to drink with my father. [laughter]

KP: He took all the allure away.

WK: Yes, he took all the allure and the same thing with sex. He assumed I was having sex so I never did.

KP: Really, you father just assumed.

WK: He assumed. Yes, he assumed I was; he often talked as though I was, you know, my experiences must be pretty great and I never bothered telling him that they were nil.

KP: Was it because you were a man and he just assumed men drink and men fornicate?

WK: Yes, he was macho, and, yes, and this is what men do. ... I guess, I felt I had to rebel against such a theory ... Because I remember both my wife and I, when we were married, we were now twenty-three, the first time we went out and had to order a drink, we didn't know what to order, and we sort of looked at something and saw 'claret lemonade' and so we ordered claret lemonade. It was wine and lemonade, and that's what we ordered. It wasn't until I had my first church that I learned how to drink. My parishioners taught me and I had a Manhattan and I thought it was great. I started drinking Mannhattans for about the next ten years. Then graduated to martinis and that's where I am now.

KP: Please talk about your orders sending you overseas.

WK: Okay, where are we now in terms of the story? I've got my crew.

KP: How long did you train together in the States?

WK: Yes, well we were sent to Davis Montham Field in Tucson, Arizona. Before that we were in Maxwell Field waiting for assignment. Then we went to Tucson, and had all of our training for flying a B-29 at Tucson. Then went to Lincoln, Nebraska, where we got all of our equipment, to go overseas, and then that's where I said goodbye to my wife and she went back to the East Coast. ... We went on the train to Hamilton Air Base outside of San Francisco and got on a transport from there and headed for Hawaii. We were halfway to Hawaii when we lost an engine. They didn't know whether they were going to continue on or go back because they were halfway and had to figure out which was better and then were telling us all about this, which I wish they hadn't. So, they decided to go back and we went back, got into another plane and started back, in another plane, by that time. Then we reached Hickam Field, in Hawaii and we didn't stay there very long; then went on from there to, I think, we landed at Johnson, or one of those little islands and then finally got to Guam.

KP: So you flew the whole way out?

WK: Flew out, but as passengers in a transport, to Guam, and, I think, we stayed maybe a couple of days in Guam because I remember a little bit about Guam, not much. ... Then flew from there to Tinian, where we were based, the Tinian Air Base. We got there probably late in June, or early July. I remember the atomic bomb was dropped on the sixth of August? So, we were only there, or we were only overseas about a month, or a month and a half, and in that time we flew training missions to Wake and then the war ended, so, I never actually got to drop a bomb, which I was pleased about. The crew was very disappointed they weren't able to have some contribution to wiping out the Japanese, but I didn't feel that way. I was glad the war was over, and then they put us on these mercy missions, which I thought were great. They sent us to Japan, to China, where the Japanese had prisoner of war camps and we dropped supplies, medicine, food, and clothing to prisoners of war, American prisoners of war. I can show you pictures where prisoners took great big rocks and painted them white and made a white cross, and then, Americans with their sense of humor put "drop here" underneath them. So, I have a picture taken from our plane with drop here in the background of the picture with our parachutes about to open. Meaning that we were doing what we were told. Yes, so we went overseas and went

almost directly to Tinian and we're there for, from July until the next spring, I guess, until they decided what to do with us, and some of us didn't have enough points. I didn't, if I had a child I would've had enough points but we didn't have a child so that then they had to send some of us and I went, I think, alone I don't think my crew went with me, any of the crew, but I went to the Philippines and that's where I spent the rest of the time until I was sent home.

KP: Although you didn't see combat, you were in a combat zone and there were crews that were flying bombing missions.

WK: Lots of them, lots of them. Yes, well, the *Enola Gay* was in our outfit. We didn't know anything about it. It was kept totally secret. The crew didn't even know. I think only Colonel Paul Tibbets; the airplane commander, knew something and then they knew a lot more after they took off for Japan. I think that we were mostly involved by our training missions. ... We were constantly busy getting ready, not knowing that the war was going to end, getting ready to go on a mission. Mostly standing on the airstrip watching the planes come back at night because when they came back at night they would drop their landing gear, they would drop their landing lights, and it would look like a highway in the sky, because they would fall into line; you could see them for miles. You could see these two lights off into the distance. It was really exciting and then watch them land and watch them take off. We had, I think, 8,000 foot runways, very long runways, four, I think I have a picture of it. I think that four takeoff at the same time and they always did because the '29 was always, always had trouble with over-heating and with a full bomb load it was always much heavier than it ought to have been to takeoff. So, they would takeoff from this airstrip just a few feet above the water and drop down closer to the water, so, as you were standing back watching this the planes always disappeared as they gained speed and cooled off the engines a bit before it started to climb when they needed more power. It was always kind of scary 'cause you would watch them disappear and wait with your breath, holding your breath to see if they would come back up again.

KP: But you would fly off that same ...

WK: Oh, sure, but you didn't have that feeling when you were doing it. It was when you were watching someone else, especially people you knew, fellows you had gotten friendly with.

KP: Did you know of any crews that did go off and do missions against Japan, or were there so many that you didn't know each other?

WK: No, we were mixed up with crews that had been there longer. We were all mixed up with crews that were ready to go home and crews that were in the process. I think crews were sent home after twenty missions, or maybe it was less than that, I don't remember exactly because I never even got close to that. There were crews that were close to their maximum number of missions, and those that were in the process, and then those like us who were just beginning, but we were all mixed up. We weren't separated so we did get to know crews, and got to hear experiences, "I had flown over Japan" or "dropped bombs."

KP: It sounded like with the separation of beaches there was some effort to keep the separation.
...

WK: Yes. In the Air Force, I think one of the things they were concerned about was what I mentioned before; you must not lose control of your crew. If you are an airplane commander you are going to have to ask your crew to do something that they don't want to do and they must trust you enough, and feel confident enough about your leadership. That may not happen if they get to know you too well, or too involved with you on a personal basis.

KP: ... It strikes me as hard to enforce. In England, even if you enforce it on base, you go off base to the pub and if you wanted to fraternize, it seemed like a very natural thing, but on Tinian ...

WK: You had an officers' club and an enlisted man's club and the only thing enlisted men and officers would be able to ... well, we would, you know, we would have to meet at the beach or, you know, or go for a walk or do something. There was nothing to do. You couldn't do anything socially together. There was just no provision for that.

KP: How often could you get, a hot shower in Tinian?

WK: I think we almost always had water that was heated by the sun, because it was a pretty, it was a pretty hot climate and the sun was pretty intense. I don't think there was ever a problem with hot water. I can't remember. I can remember taking cold showers, but I don't remember it was ever a big deal. I don't remember ever feeling that I didn't have everything I needed to be comfortable.

KP: You weren't uncomfortable.

WK: I wasn't uncomfortable. I had my own little bunk and I had my own little area, in my Quonset hut, you know, we had one of those little huts like this shape, you know. I don't remember, we must have been billeted together, come to think of it, because I can remember Billy Nailer. I guess the officers weren't put in a hut by themselves.

KP: So you were in the same hut?

WK: We must have been because I can remember Billy talking about his sexual escapades. It must have been when we were in a hut together unless ...

KP: Unless you were visiting him?

WK: Yes, I don't know. Isn't that funny? I can't remember. I can remember the hut, but not the members of the crew who were in it.

KP: What about the food? Since you are on an island way out in the Pacific, how good was the food?

WK: ... I think if you got accustomed to K-rations and you got accustomed to pretty simple fare ... I don't think we ever felt deprived. Maybe it was because we were officers overseas and got more things. I think, we even had certain rations that others didn't have.

KP: I know you had a liquor ration.

WK: I know we had a liquor ration. There may have even been other things that we had, I don't know. It is terrible to think about, but I bet it was true.

KP: I have heard some of the enlisted men gripe about the officer's rations which, particularly on an island, make a big difference. There is no where else ...

WK: That is right, and things that were sent to you may or may not have reached you in that part of the world.

AM: Did you ever experience any really bad weather on the island, like a typhoon or anything?

WK: I was never in anything serious, no. Although I know we were in a part of the world that had typhoons, we never had any really bad storms, not when I was on Tinian, or Saipan, or Guam, or in the Philippines. Never.

AM: Did people have problems with the heat there?

WK: Heat, lots of heat, yes, salt pills. Constantly popping salt pills because you were perspiring so much, yes.

KP: In terms of the heat, what is striking talking to pilots I have interviewed, a few people in the CBI, but no one that I can remember from Tinian or any of these other places, was how warm it was and how when you fly it is the complete reverse. You go from a tropical climate to below zero.

WK: You see it is because there is a two-degree decrease in temperature for every thousand feet, so, if you were at 30,000 feet you were sixty degrees cooler than you were on the ground. ... I can remember when I wasn't flying, because you could fly with just one pilot and on most of our long distance flying our plane was on automatic pilot anyway. It only took one pilot to keep us, to keep the automatic pilot going straight and the other guy would usually go; the B-29 has a long tube over the bomb bay, and that tube you could crawl through it to get from the front of the plane to the back of the plane, where the gunners and the radar and the tail gunner were, and halfway through that tube there was a big blister and I'd always crawl through especially at night, crawl through that tube until I got under the blister so I could lie back and look up at the stars. It was gorgeous, but it was not warm, you know you'd have your flight suit on; you'd be dressed warm, even though you were in the tropics.

KP: People have talked about frostbite and your, oxygen masks freezing.

WK: Never had any problem with that, but I suppose it was because, you know we ... we had controls, we had temperature control in the '29, so, that you always had the kind of temperature that you wanted.

KP: So yours was a much more comfortable plane.

WK: I think so, it was very sophisticated for those days. It had the Norden bombsite, which was the first time a real sophisticated bombsite had been developed, and we had that. We had the best navigational equipment. It was certainly a sophisticated plane. I suppose from these points of view today it was pre-historic but we thought it was pretty great.

KP: You mentioned you did these practice runs, did you have any close calls on any of your practice runs, or in any of your navigation? You mention earlier that you had a good navigator so there's little chance you could have gotten lost.

WK: No, I think we, the only time that we had any problem was one time when we were flying to Weihsein in China. After we had dropped medicine, food, and clothing to American prisoners, it was a place where they had a prisoner of war camp. On the way back, we lost an engine and we landed in Okinawa. ... We were there for a week because they had to fly in an engine. They didn't have one there. They had to fly an engine to replace the engine that couldn't be repaired. ... I can remember that was the only really close call. It really wasn't a close call because, as I said a '29 under the best conditions will fly, certainly on two engines maybe even one. So, we had a wonderful time on Okinawa, it was a great place. We all stopped shaving for one thing, so we all took pictures of ourselves, by the time we left Okinawa we all looked like a bunch of bearded wonders. That was fun, and then, I think, we flew back to Tinian from there. We were on our way home, but on the way we had landed at Iwo Jima, which was on the way. It was when you left Tinian the next island where you could land was Iwo Jima. The next one was Okinawa, then you reached the mainland of Japan, and Inland Sea and Honshu and, you know, the Japanese islands. When the peace was signed there were so many of us in the air, it was amazing that we didn't have close calls because we were flying so close, and they wanted to get every B-29 in the air that they possibly could to show the Japanese that we were still so strong.

KP: So did you take part in the fly over?

WK: Yes, I was over the *USS Missouri* September 2, 1945.

KP: Yes, yes.

WK: '45, yes, I was there. I was doing a lot of the flying because practically everyone was taking pictures. It was like a picnic. You know, all we were doing is scaring the Japanese from ever thinking that they had done the wrong thing by capitulating. But, it was very relaxed. People taking pictures. I have a lot of pictures of that flight because I got a set of them and everybody wanted to take pictures of the big day, because they knew that fifty or sixty years later that this was really going to be a big day in history. But America can be so smug, when you

think of it, we had just beaten the hell out of these poor guys and then to rub it in, we got all these, everything that would even fly they got into the air and put up over Japan that day.

KP: This was really your first fly over Japan?

WK: No, I had been over. We had flown over Hiroshima a week after, exactly a week after the bomb dropped, because there were still fires burning.

KP: That must have been a very vivid scene.

WK: That was to me the most devastating because to see that large area of nothing but charred, you know, everything charred. It was very, very hard to take. Although by that time it seems to me we knew the war was about to end, or just about to end. I can't remember just what stage it was in, but it was exactly a week, so it must have been about the thirteenth of August. I can't remember whether they had actually given up by then or not.

AM: The day after, wasn't it the fourteenth that ...

WK: And I think ... didn't Nagasaki come ...

AM: Three days after.

WK: Three days after Hiroshima, so we were there within four days after Nagasaki and there were still fires burning.

KP: And your mission was over?

WK: It was a mission to drop supplies and to see, by that time it must have ended, gee, I get my sequences all mixed up, but the Japanese didn't give us coordinates of prisoner of war camps until after they had actually thrown in the towel, so it must have been after that.

KP: You did mercy flights even over Japan.

WK: Yes.

KP: Not just China?

WK: Yes, Weihsein was the one I remember best, but I do remember getting lost a little bit over the Inland Sea looking for coordinates. Yes, but I remember the feeling of devastation, you know, the feeling of how horrible it was, what we had done. You know, I guess I was still ambivalent about whether Truman should have done this. ...

KP: At the time.

WK: At the time, I think I really I didn't, when I heard about so many thousands of people dying with one bomb, I guess I, maybe my conscience really did kick into high gear at that point.

KP: Well, one of the things Alexia and I were talking about was that there's been a range of reflections about what happened in the war. I said you must have, as a minister, even if you weren't a conscientious objector, there must have been a lot of reflection.

WK: I can remember on Tinian we had a prisoner of war camp, of the Japanese on Tinian. ... I don't know whether it had anything to do with my own personal bent but I found myself gravitating toward those people and I would stand outside the fence and talk with them in a language that I couldn't understand and they couldn't understand me, but we would talk back and forth, probably with sign languages, and, you know, but I always felt that somehow that we needed to be more humane than anybody else. That somehow we had to show, whatever else we showed, no matter how strong we were we had to show humanity. I always felt that, and I think perhaps that was one of the things I was able to transmit to the men on my crew. They sensed this also. Maybe they didn't agree with me but they sensed this. That it was necessary for us not to lose our humanity, because if we lost that we might win the war but lose everything. ... I had a feeling of that and I can only say that because I know that these prisoners, I used to feel very sorry for them being so far away from their home, and being separated from ... the prisoner of war camp, the camp was so horrible.

KP: There were a lot of harsh feelings toward the Japanese, I mean, it was ...

WK: We were programmed. Remember, we were told that they were much less than human. You know, those films that they showed us, we all had all of that programming which put us, under the spell that Germans were, well, capable of the Holocaust and the Japanese were capable of almost unbelievable atrocities. We were trained to believe that, and, I guess, we did believe it, I suppose. I don't know how much of that I believed of that, and I don't remember where I lost it. I don't think I ever lost the idea that they were human beings, maybe because my grandfather came from Germany. My father spoke German. Maybe, I had that part figured out pretty well. But the Japanese part, I don't think I ever spoke to a person from Japan before I went into the service. ... I kind of felt that there must be humanity there, there had to be, and, even though I was trained not to believe that.

KP: How crucial was meeting these prisoners because it sounds like that was fairly significant?

WK: It was significant for me, personally, because I had to keep in touch with my own humanity and, I think, I was trying to do it through them; trying to say, "We're all caught in this together. We can't speak to each other, but we're all trapped in this." Here I am on this little rock in the middle of the Pacific and I want to be in seminary, ... I have two more years at Rutgers before I can go to seminary, and I want to go home and make a baby with my wife, and all of that was, you know, going through my mind and every time, oh, I had my senator writing to get me out of the service, you know, as soon as the war ended I wanted to go home and I didn't have enough points and they sent me, instead of sending me home, they sent me a couple of thousand miles in that direction and I thought, "Oh!"

KP: Actually, it's a point historians have looked at, I mean, well, some people got home very quickly.

WK: Right away, yes.

KP: Right away and even ...

WK: Saying goodbye to those guys was very hard for me. Some of them were going back to, something that I thought was very rather commonplace. Being very smug about what I was going to be doing with my life. I thought, "Geez, don't they understand, I've got to get about my Father's business, to quote Jesus, you know, but I felt that way and nobody was listening to me.

KP: In fact, there were even protests in the Pacific.

WK: Well, I was one of them. I was writing. I had my Rector writing to my senator, and I had my wife writing to my senator, and I had my parents writing to my senator, saying, "Bring this kid home. He fought the war, he's finished, now bring him home. What's the matter with you, don't you know any better?" You know, and they, I was over there a whole year after this.

KP: There was even a march in Manila ...

WK: Oh, was there?

KP: A GI protest march ... you don't remember that?

WK: I don't remember that because I didn't get to Manila until much later. I got there and then you know, didn't spend a lot of time in Manila, some, but not a lot.

KP: No, that's why, I just asked because ...

WK: Yes, I don't remember any protests in Manila. I remember feeling very put upon. I never felt that way during the war, ever. I never felt as if I were wasting my time, naturally, there I was, in the middle of it. But after the war ended, I kept thinking, "What am I doing here?" You know, they made me adjutant of my squadron, which meant I was second in command of a squadron, and I didn't have the slightest idea of what the military was all about. You know, I wouldn't have been able to be a real good adjutant under wartime circumstances. But they were scrapping the bottom of the barrel. I was the bottom! [laughter]

KP: What did you do as adjutant?

WK: I don't remember, I think I signed some papers, I don't know. I can't remember what I did. They said, "You're the adjutant," and I said, "Oh. What does that mean?" They said, "Oh, don't worry about it, you report in every morning and then go for your swim." [laughter]

KP: When you were sent to the Philippines what was it like?

WK: Well, when we left, well, when I left, you see, then I was completely separated from my crew, completely separated from everybody I knew. They sent me to the Philippines, to Clark Field, which was sixty miles, or sixty kilometers, or sixty something, north of Manila. ... I remember that I needed to fly four hours a month to keep my flight pay, which I did, gladly. ... I can't remember what I flew in, it certainly wasn't a B-29. I can't, I suppose it was something, probably just went up with somebody else and flew around for four hours and then came back. ... I remember being bored to death. Oh, oh, because I was adjutant I had a jeep. Ah ha, the answer to my problems! ... I would leave whenever I had time off, I would drive into Manila and, of course, head for the first church which turned out to be Saint Luke's Cathedral, an Anglican cathedral in Manila, where I met Bishop Robert Wilner, W-I-L -N-E-R, who stayed there during the war. The main bishop of the Philippines had come back to the United States, Bishop Binsted, but Bishop Wilner stayed there until the war ended, and was in all of the occupation, and all of that. He was a wonderful old gentlemen, wonderful, and I asked him, "Could I serve at the altar?" "Yes." So, I would go weekends and stay at, oh, Saint Luik's Hospital, which was right next to the cathedral. I'd stay in an empty bed and then serve at the altar on Sunday morning at the cathedral. ... When I left, Bishop Wilner gave me a little prayer book in which he wrote something nice about, "To my lieutenant acolyte," or something like that, "To my favorite lieutenant acolyte." But I saved my sanity in the Philippines by doing a lot of getting into the culture through Bishop Wilner, through Annunciata, who was one of the nurses and I had a spell of a bad sinus headache. ... She put me in the hospital and gave me codeine and knocked me out because the pain was so intense. She introduced me to people around town and ... there was a little Chinese community right there, and it was a joy ... to know some of those people and then, I was able to get into some of the lives of the Filipinos and I got to like them very much. They were really nice people; very different from anyone I had ever met in my life. ... They were a combination of all kinds of Asian, you know, peoples. ... As a matter-of-fact, when later, much later, when I finished Rutgers, and when I finished at the seminary, which was now, then five years later, I said to my bishop, "I want to go to the Philippines to work." ... By that time we had two children, and I think Janey was on the way. ... He said, "You can't go to the Philippines with two or three children." He said, "It's not right, you have to stay here in the United States," and I was very, very angry with him because I thought. I was being called to do missionary work in the Philippines and I liked those people. ... Our church was very active in the Philippines. We had a lot of work in the Philippines, and we were very smart going to the Philippines. We went nowhere where the Christian church was already located; that was the first rule. So, we went into all the barrios, and all the little villages where there wasn't any church and started an Anglican church there, so, we never competed with the Roman Catholic Church, which was the great big church on the island, or any of the little protestant sects. We were always indebted to a great man ... and that was a man named Charles Brent, who was the first bishop of the Philippines. ... That was his theory, too, and then we joined forces; there was a big break off from the Roman Catholic Church, about a million and a half people broke off the Roman Church and formed the Philippine Independent Church, and then came to our bishop and said, "Can we join you?" So, we went from being a hundred thousand to being a million something, and even to this day the church is very, very active there. Anyway, that was where I wanted to go, but the bishop said, "No," so I went back to New Jersey instead.

KP: It sounds like it was this experience, in the Philippines that came out of sheer boredom, was fairly significant.

WK: Very significant.

KP: Because even though you didn't get a chance to go to the Philippines as a missionary you got interested in the Caribbean.

WK: Yes, I think that is where it started, actually, because I always felt I should be doing some sort of missionary work. ...

KP: No, I am quite comfortable.

WK: Yes, I think the feeling that I wanted to do some kind of work outside the United States started then, although it didn't occur for a long time.

KP: I have been very interested in American GI contacts with the natives. I used that "the natives," when I am talking about England and the Philippines.

WK: People who belong there.

KP: I have been intrigued about how people reacted so differently, in countries so rich in its culture.

KP: The Filipinos were so rich in culture. Standing on the corner of Rizal Boulevard and something else, I would stand there by the hour and watch the people in those little buses, where they would put "eighty-eight people" in a bus that would hold ten, you know, and they would be hanging out all over the place and then that bus would bang into a little car and the fenders would crumple and everybody would get out, look at it and they would laugh and joke, and pat each other on the back, and then they would get in and drive off. ... I would compare that to what would happen in New York if I smashed into somebody's fender, and he would try and kill me, you know that used to amaze me. I thought, "These people are made different from me." I would be out there fighting with the guy who bumped my fender, but these guys, they look at it and ... "Ha, ha, ha" and they would get back in and drive off, you know. I thought, "Gee, that's nice. I like that."

KP: In the Philippines I remember other peoples comments ... who looked at Filipinos and Filipino culture, especially after World War II, when they had just been occupied, didn't have a lot of money, lived rather primitive, and these other people really were very dismissive of Filipino culture and thought they could see the market flies on the meat, they couldn't really see past that. Did you notice that, because you obviously saw past that.

WK: I saw a lot past that and I don't know whether it was because I grew up in Newark, you know, I had pretty humble beginnings ... I think, also, because I got into the church culture,

which tended to be a little bit more, you know, the bishop didn't live in a mansion but he lived in a very nice house, you know, and even the hospital was well-equipped. Whenever you see Saint Luke's Hospital, it's got to be an Episcopal hospital, you know, and our hospital was well taken care of, the people were. So I saw a lot of successful Philippine life and the Chinese community there. Our church had a separate but integral Chinese community and they were very well-heeled. They had nice homes. They were right in the middle of Manila, surrounded by poverty. There was a lot of poverty all over the place, but there was also some very real culture and, you know, things that you could feel proud of.

KP: Have you ever been back to the Philippines?

WK: Never. I correspond, I have a sort of adopted son named Virtue Sarmiento. ... I correspond with him. He's a young lad, I don't know how I got in touch with him, but he's been, we've been writing back and forth now, he must be, I guess I started corresponding with him when he was about fifteen. He must be at least thirty now, and he's finished school and, you know, I follow through his career and everything, very interesting kid. That's the only real, good, firm contact that I have with the Philippines now, because none of the people in the church there are people that I know. My best friend was a Philippine missionary, but I met him in the Caribbean and he's now living in Texas. Although he always felt that the Filipinos were head and shoulders above the West Indians, he never, even though most of his life was in the West Indies, he felt the Filipinos were the greatest. ... I have a feeling that there is something about them that's very strong because of the mixtures. You know, they're very strong people, very strong.

KP: Manila was very devastated by the war; I've read only Warsaw was more devastated.

WK: I was there just afterwards, of course. It was in rubbles, there was nothing there, nothing there. There was nothing in Manila that you could really speak of, everything was in ruins, but, boy, it came back so fast. I got pictures a few years later and everything came back very fast. Very, very fast.

AM: Do you think when you saw the damage in Hiroshima and in the Philippines that it sort of dampened your patriotic spirit, as far as seeing what both sides had done to each other?

WK: Yes, there are no winners in this kind of thing. You know, there really are no winners and it's hard to say that to anyone who's proud of the fact we won.

KP: You were willing to do what you were trained to do, you were ready to do your part, but you didn't have to actually kill anyone.

WK: No, I never wanted to kill anyone and, I don't know, I suppose I would have. Well, I would have had to because if you drop a bomb you don't see the people you're killing, but you know your doing it.

KP: Yes.

WK: But I've never stopped being thankful that I didn't have to, you know, and I'm sorry that there were those who did and whose lives were changed by the fact that they knew that they had massacred somebody.

KP: One of the things I invariably ask is about the atomic bomb and how you feel, or what did you expect? A lot of people volunteered how great the decision was to drop the atomic bomb, partly responding to the whole controversy. What were your feelings both at the time of the dropping of the atomic bomb, and about the whole controversy? It could have been your crew.

WK: Yes. Very easily.

KP: It could have been your crew; you must have given this a lot of thought.

WK: I gave it a lot of thought and I kept my sense of well-being by saying, and I'm not sure whether this was pure rationalization, or what it was but this is my thinking, "I trust Harry Truman. If he had to do this, there was a reason that he had to do it that I don't understand. I just don't understand, but he must have had to do it because I trust him."

AM: How about the second bomb, over Nagasaki? It was three days later. Did you know about that at the time?

WK: Sure, oh, sure we did. No, I didn't know when it was going to happen, but I, of course it was common knowledge by then that this was happening, you know. Of course, it was coming back to us, probably not as soon as it was coming to places over here, but it was coming to us. ... The very fact that the Japanese did not capitulate after Hiroshima, you know, "Why didn't they just say, 'This is it?' Why did they let this happen?" I guess, we blamed them, instead of us, you know, "They did it, they didn't give up. Why didn't they give up? Why didn't they save themselves? They did it." You know, "Harry knows what he's doing." Because when Roosevelt died, remember I grew up, Roosevelt was elected when I was twelve, I was on my way overseas when he died, so, I didn't know any other President and when he died I was on a train going to Lincoln Nebraska. It was the twelfth of April 1945, and I thought the country was going to go down the drain. I thought, "Who's this guy Truman?" "Who can lead us? Nobody's going to be able to lead us; only Franklin knows how to lead us." "Why did God take him now? Doesn't he know that the war's not over yet?" And then, I guess, slowly, I came to trust Truman, for whatever reason, and maybe it was because I was going overseas and had to; if you've got nobody else you better trust the one you've got. I think that was it, but I don't ever remember questioning seriously the integrity of the President of the United States when he dropped that awful bomb and yet, when I think about it now, why I didn't; why I wasn't a little more discerning, or compassionate towards the Japanese, or thinking you know, there must have been another way? I didn't, it never occurred to me. It just never occurred to me.

AM: Had there been talk on Tinian of Majestic [codename for invasion], the possibility of invasion of Japan?

WK: Of course, of course, that was the thought. The thought was that we were paving the way for the invasion. That's what we were doing; we were blasting the hell out of them so that the invasion could take place. We knew that. We were going to go in there, and it was going to be in a couple of days, and it would be all over, because we were leveling everything, cause our bombs were pretty strong, too, even if they weren't atomic bombs.

KP: What have you thought of the whole controversy since? I mean, you obviously still put a lot of faith in Truman, but you obviously realize that it's still a complex issue.

WK: Sure.

KP: And then ...

WK: There were a lot of things going on that we didn't have any idea about.

KP: What have you thought of the reaction of veterans that you served with, because some of them have really been very ...

WK: Outspoken.

KP: Outspoken and to them it's a very clear issue.

WK: Yes, I think any position you take on this is a good position, as long as you can live with it. War will never be the solution to anybody's problems, but in seminary I learned after the war, that war is not the least, is not the worst thing that can happen. There are other things worse than war, and you'd better follow your conscience, which is the only thing you've got to determine if you've come to the point where something else is worse than war. Which I suppose, without saying, is what I had come to, the conclusion of earlier on, I think that's the conclusion I came to. This is an awful thing but I can think of things that are worse, you know.

KP: You obviously have given it a lot of thought.

WK: I thought of it a lot. Because, as a priest, I had to preach during some, many wars since then. I had to counsel young men, who didn't want to go to war, and I had to counsel young men, who did want to go to war, whose parents didn't want them to go to war. All of that has been so much a part of my life since then. You know the Korean War, the Vietnam War, oh, God, you know, I mean, I've been in those wars; I've been a part of those wars, at a very deep level, and with many, many, people and I have found myself being very contradictory with myself. I've been vacillating back and forth, you know, from being able to say, "Go and fight the hell out of them, to saying go to Schmolensk, but don't go to fight."

KP: You said, about Vietnam, you had a lot of ambivalence.

WK: A lot of ambivalence. Well, I had a lot of ambivalence during all the Civil Rights stuff. I went to Selma; I went to Selma and was told by the men who arrested me, "What are you doing

here? You New Yorkers don't know what's going on down here." I'd grown up during very troublesome times, and my ministry had been during very troublesome times, on into times like the '50s, when we were such a rosy glow it was disgusting. I mean, so naïve. We've run the gamut from being almost like beasts to being totally naïve, and, I guess, that's a part of being an American, really, that you vacillate back and forth, and if you're comfortable you don't know what's going on. If you're happy, it's because you haven't opened your eyes lately.

KP: I want to ask you a little bit more about counseling young men in your ministry; and the fact that you had been in the armed services, it must have helped a great deal.

WK: A lot, I think it did. I can certainly understand what people said about [President] Clinton. I always was sympathetic of Clinton because I always said, "Go bad boy. If you could avoid it, avoid it," Why should anyone condemn Clinton simply because he wasn't drafted but, on the other hand, I thought to myself, "Gee, I can always talk to kids who are facing this, I can go up to my own son, who had to go through this, and wondered what to do."

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KP: You were eager to get home, that would probably be an understatement, after asking everyone you knew to write letters.

WK: Nobody listened to me for a whole year.

KP: How did you get home?

WK: The Marine Jumper. I had the choice of flying home or going by ship and by that time I said to myself, "You have pushed all the buttons you are going to push. You are going to take it real safe and go home in a boat." Suddenly I became very suspicious of things that go off the ground and fly like a bird and I said, "No more of that for me," and even to this day, while though I fly a lot, because I have gone back and forth to the West Indies a hundred times, ... I wish I were flying it myself. Isn't that terrible? I couldn't fly a jet to save my life, but I am always a better pilot than the guy up there, I know I am, and that is a terrible feeling. If he makes a mistake of, say, we are having a little difficulty with this, I want to rush right up there and show him how to fix it.

KP: Do you miss flying at all?

WK: Yes, yes, I do. I have a son-in-law, as I told you, and, until quite recently, I have been able to be at the controls with him.

KP: That must be fun.

WK: Yes, that's fun. That's fun and my son got the bug and got his pilot's license and I sort of surreptitiously, through him ... had some fun out of that, watching him solo, and everything. I loved flying. I always felt very close to God, not because ... I suppose because ... I can

remember being very prayerful in my flying around. Especially in the small plane, when I was up there alone, flitting in and out of clouds, and, stuff like that, I would become very ethereal, you know, it was very easy for me to sense that God was real. People used to say, "Did you get your inspiration to be a priest, in the airplane?" And I would say, "No, it brought things into focus, but it didn't start there. It did certainly get focused there."

KP: The troop transport took a while to come home compared to flying, I mean, how was the voyage home?

WK: It was great because I was going home. It wouldn't have mattered had it taken six months as long as I knew we were going home. They were going to land us in Oakland. They came into Oakland and underneath the Golden Gate Bridge, across from San Francisco; I can remember how happy I was to be there, even though I was on the other side of the country, you know, and then we took a train across the country to get home. It must have taken a long time. ... I think it was over a week we were on the ship. I think it was. ... I can't remember exactly. I know it was a long time, but it didn't bother me because I knew I was going home.

KP: What semester did you return to Rutgers?

WK: Well, I got back in, ... say, maybe June. It was warm, because I told my wife that what I wanted to do was go right down to the Jersey Shore. I wanted to see if the ocean was still there. See if the Atlantic, my favorite spots and, you know, and we did go. We went right down to the Jersey shore, she remembers that better than I and then I may have taken a summer course. ... We went down and they were going to have the Hillside Campus ready for us, but it wasn't ready, so we went into a little apartment in Bound Brook. It was such a small apartment that my wife had to get in bed, if I came home to study, because I couldn't pull the chair out from the desk, to get to the desk, unless she was in the bed. ... After five years of no studying, well, pretty close to five years, and I wasn't a particularly good student to begin with, that was horrendous. Getting back into studying was unbelievably difficult, but that was September, 1946, I guess, ...yes.

KP: You had been an officer, you had privileges as an officer, people called you on occasion "Sir."

WK: "Yes, Sir."

KP: What was it like to go back and just be a student on campus? There were a lot of people like you but still ...

WK: yes, it didn't bother me. I was never much of an officer. I never took it seriously, I really didn't, you know, ... I never took it seriously. I think the Air Force ... I think you would have to be in the Air Force not to take it seriously, although there were moments as we discussed before.

KP: You found studying very hard when you went back.

WK: Terrible, terrible. I just never thought I would make it. I had taught in USAFIT for a while overseas, that's United States [Army education classes conducted for military over seas] It was courses you could take to get credit and I had had enough English and enough history I was able to teach a couple of courses in USAFIT. As I mentioned, I was probably a half a chapter in front of everyone else. So I was keeping up with a little bit of academic stuff, but it was still very hard to get back into it again after so many years. ... When I came back they said I would finish because I had gotten some credits in USAFIT courses by taking them. I had two years to finish, so I finished in three and a half years, but those two years were difficult. Karen was born the next July and so I had one full year with a child. We were in Hillside Campus, that was like a world of its own, did anybody else discuss this? ... Has anybody else? ... I wonder if anybody I know has described this to you.

KP: There was I think Bill [Halladay?].

WK: Oh, I know the name, I know the name.

KP: Yes, I interviewed him and he talked at length about that.

WK: ... Whatever Rutgers ever did that was right, that was right. It was perfect for us. We were all poor. We were all living on a hundred and twenty dollars a month. We all had our first little jalopy, which was constantly breaking down. We all had new babies. We were all having marital problems, because we had been away from our wives and we're back and some of the guys came back to a stranger, you know? Or a stranger came back to her, whatever it was and we were going through all kinds of things.

KP: What were some of the problems? I mean you mentioned obviously the people who didn't know each other.

WK: People who were married to each other but didn't know each other. People who were accustomed to having a really nice life and now were living on a hundred and twenty dollars a month, you know, who had grown up with a little silver spoon in the mouth, and, suddenly they were there, and remember, the trailer was this wide and about over to that chair [twenty-four feet by eight feet] and that was it. We had our daughter at one end of the building. So we had to close off that part in order for us to even play a game of cards at night, or anything like that, whatever we were doing.

KP: They didn't have ...

WK: No, running water, of course, no, toilet. ... One time when my wife was about, I don't know how many months pregnant, she fell on the ice outside. I almost had a fit. I thought she was going to lose the baby on the way to the john in the snow and ice. When I think of it now, carrying buckets of water in, and emptying the water from under the icebox, *ica-boxa, oi*. When I think of it, it never occurred to us that this was ... this wasn't hardship. This was gravy after Tinian.

KP: Our students have read in the *Targum* how great these days were back in these trailers because you had ...

WK: Twenty-eight dollars a month.

KP: You had sinks. You had iceboxes.

WK: Yes. We had an icebox. We had a sink. ... You could close the doors at one end, so if you had a baby the baby could be sort of separated, so you could have a conversation. But I remember one time we had a party, I must have had a birthday, or something, my wife gave me a birthday party. There were maybe twenty people. We were sitting in the trailer, lined up with ten on one side and ten on the other, with knees together, looking at each other. That was the party, maybe music going in the background. They were perfect. They really were perfect for us. I can't remember anybody feeling this was a crummy way for the University to treat us. They had put roads in up there and they had put a community center. Gus was our policeman. Did anyone talk about Gus?

KP: No, no.

WK: Well, Gus was an institution and he loved the guys who would talk to him. My neighbor Pete Martens and I got very close to Gus and we got him into our trailers and we would have a cup of coffee with him. He was employed by the University, I suppose.

KP: Was he a security guard?

WK: I suppose so. I thought of him as a policeman, but I don't think he was a policeman. I think he was a security guard, but he rode around and kept us from being put upon, and would rejoice with us at the birth of our children, and just a wonderful guy. Pete Martens kept up with him until Gus died. I never did, but Pete Martens kept up with him. Pete was a 4-H club agent in Monmouth County.

KP: You have stayed in touch?

WK: He and I have stayed in touch all these years, yes.

KP: I think it was in the *Targum*, ... the birth rate at the trailers was ...

WK: Oh, yes, it was unbelievable.

KP: It was remarkable.

WK: Yes, you would have babies being born all the time, because, remember we were all veterans, we had all just come home from being overseas. We were all older. I was by that time, twenty-five, I guess, ... and we wanted to have a family. I always believed you should have your family when you are young and my wife had always said, "I will have all my children before I am

thirty-five,” and she did, she had four children. Our fourth child was born in October and she was thirty-five in November, so she just made it under the ... she just made it. Well, you know, we all had so much in common. It was like a whole bunch of people being thrown together and you didn’t have to worry about breaking the ice. It was all broken before you got there. You all knew a lot about each other.

KP: If you were single ... and lived on campus, you could room with someone who was eighteen, who had never been overseas, that had just come from Bound Brook High School, whereas you were really in a self-contained community ...

WK: Right. We were. Pete has been in the Navy, Connie Lindeman was in the Coast Guard. On the other side was a fellow, named Hal, who had quite an interesting Army experience and next to him was Danny Sutherland, who was my boyhood friend from Grace Church in Newark and went to Rutgers. I was in my ... junior year and he was a freshman, but he had been in the service. It was really an unbelievable community. We felt so good about it, you know; we had a lot of good friendships that grew up there. But the University, I don’t know where they got those trailers, they were army surplus, or something, and then they brought them up and put them up on little platforms. ... It was a good idea, a really good idea. I wonder how long did they last. Do you know? We were the first to move in ...

KP: I think they lasted through the early ‘50s, but I am not sure of the precise date. I haven’t really interviewed anyone who was past ... maybe one or two past the Class of ‘50 and they didn’t live in trailers, so ... that is a point I will eventually get to.

WK: Well, I graduated in ‘48, they were still going strong then, and I graduated from Seminary in ‘51, but I don’t remember going back to see them at all. Well, I guess, I just never went back, I don’t know ... as I told you, I was never much for reunions.

KP: You mentioned that you had your own mayor and government at Hillside. What were some of the issues ...

WK: Well, the issues were things like protection, things like babysitting, things like the cost of things, and finding ways to cut corners so that you could survive on a hundred and twenty dollars a month. Twenty-eight dollars rent was not very much, but it was a sizeable chunk out of a hundred and twenty. I can remember the one Christmas Eve we literally had no money, and Helen’s aunt had died, and her mother and father arrived on Christmas Eve with a five hundred dollar check. We thought we had died and gone to heaven; suddenly we were rich again. But there was a lot of that. We were not unusual. There were a lot of us who had come from ... Rutgers had a lot of people from very modest homes. We weren’t upper crust. We were very different from Princeton, very different. In those days, I don’t know how it is now, but in those days a lot of us came from middle-class, hard working, European, Asian, families.

KP: That’s been very clear in the interview and I’ve been struck by how modest some people’s backgrounds were, particularly the GI Bill people, some of these people, would have never gone to college and you are clearly on track.

WK: Yes, I probably would have gone anyway, because I had the State Scholarship and a church behind me with a rector who would say, you know, "If you need any money come to me." All those things I had, even though my father was opposed to all this, I had lots of other people on my side.

AM: Did the church ever help you out to continue your education?

WK: They never had to, you see, cause I always had the GI Bill.

AM: The GI Bill was enough for you to continue to the seminary?

WK: My GI Bill, I had forty-eight months of GI Bill and my forty-eighth check was my last month in seminary. I mean, you talk about working out ... I was five years but over five years I only had forty-eight months of schooling.

KP: So it even paid for seminary.

WK: Oh, it paid my seminary. I made money all through school. My schooling never cost me a penny. By working at the Roger Smith Hotel ...

KP: So you continued to work at the Roger Smith?

WK: Oh, not after, no, then I was in churches. My bishop was sending me to different churches and I had a little church on Sunday and I'd preach a horrible sermon and they'd all say, "Oh you're a nice young man," and probably say, "Oh, God, he's gonna be awful," you know, but I always had a little income from that. I was manager of the Glee Club, I got a couple hundred bucks for that. I was able to do things like that.

KP: Well, when you said your bishop would send you out ... when you were back at Rutgers ...

WK: When I came back by then, well, of course, I had a lot of experience and although I was, still had a lot of training to go through, I had had enough experience that I was able to be put in charge of a little parish in Trenton. I had a church in Trenton for a whole year ... every weekend we went, my wife and I went to Trenton with our first daughter, and my first daughter got to know an aunt and uncle of mine because I put my daughter with them for the weekend, while we went out to this little church, and my aunt and uncle, who happen to be lovely people anyway, took our daughter, she must have been about a year, year and half old by then, not even that, she was younger than that, but they took care of her while we went and did this church work.

KP: I'm very curious, partly because you've done a lot of counseling and you were observant about what was going on at the trailers in terms of post-traumatic stress with veterans; veterans who had a hard time readjusting, not just marital, but war related adjustments, particularly for veterans who saw traumatic things. Did you know of anyone at Rutgers, or later in your ministries, who, the war really left a deep imprint and it wasn't very positive?

WK: I think there were a lot of disillusioned men who felt that World War II had to be the last war, so that when conflicts arose after that, and when it was obvious there wasn't going to be "peace on earth, goodwill towards men" that there was something wrong with all this and that we had been falsely used. We had been put upon as a people, you know that. "Why did we do this" was the attitude towards a lot of, a lot of men, I think, felt this, maybe I felt a little bit of this, "If my father had to fight a war to end war and then I had to fight a war to end war, what the hell was going on here?" You know, does that mean that none of this makes any sense? I think there was a lot of that. Now I can't think of any specific ... I can remember conversations where there was a lot of bitterness, where there's a lot of anger, but it wasn't so much anger that we had fought a war, but anger that it hadn't solved the problems. That there was no real indication that anybody was listening.

KP: I've gotten the sense that there was a lot of faith in the UN. For example the U.N. Ball one year at Rutgers, in Newark, in '47 or '48, which students now wouldn't have, and a lot of interesting international relations after the war.

WK: We were singing things like Randall Thompson's, *Testament to Freedom* you know, and we were singing patriotic songs all the time. The Glee Club was always doing patriotic stuff, without blinking ... Nobody said, "What the hell are we singing this for?" Nobody ever did that and I can remember and I'm sure I was close enough to them that I would have heard something of that. So, what it's right for America to be doing about; what it's not right for America to be doing.

KP: You mentioned that your father wanted you very much to go to the America Legion hall, would that have been a bond between you two?

WK: Oh, boy, we would have bonded the way we never bonded.

KP: Then you didn't really want at least one additional ...

WK: I think I may have gone to one meeting with him. I think I did go to one meeting just to keep him quiet.

KP: Of which he must have been delighted.

WK: Oh, I think so, yes. I should've been more sensitive. If I had only been, you know, thinking about it, I would have done better by him, but I didn't. I should've really swallowed my pride and said, "Oh, what the heck, what can they do wrong to me?"

KP: Did you say you would think of joining, or did you know about the American Veteran's Committee, which was a World War II group.

WK: I've never even heard of it.

KP: Really, you've never heard of it on campus?

WK: Never heard of it. I didn't know it existed until this very second.

AM: Just to jumping back a little bit, I noticed that in 1947 you had a job with a Professor Boroughs typing. Were you working all along and when you returned to Rutgers?

WK: Let's see, I don't remember him at the moment, you mean, work that I was doing on campus?

AM: Yes, well, it said that one of your part time jobs was typist for him in '47 and I was just wondering if he was a professor or if there was another professor when you returned to Rutgers that sort of helped you get back into the swing of events.

WK: Well, I think, I suppose, it was probably Don McGinn primarily, from the English department. A Greek fella in the history department and we sort of, I don't remember, he had a Greek name, he was instrumental in giving me a lot of sense of putting things in historical perspective, you know, I had some very good people at Rutgers, who were very sensitive to us, both before we went into the service and when we came back, and I always had the feeling that the teachers that I had, after the war particularly, were sensitive to the fact that we were no longer children; we had lost our innocence and they couldn't treat us the way they treated us when we were there the first time. That we were different people by then and we had had too much experience to be able to take inconsequential things seriously. I think there was a lot more seriousness to our approach to things and, I think, the professors realized that and encouraged that. I felt very mature when I went to Rutgers the first time because I had worked and had experience, but I felt even more so when I came back and was living at Hillside Campus and sort of had my own church and had the Glee Club that was doing great things and was involved in success story after success story. I didn't fail at anything until long after I was ordained, you know, I was always successful in anything I did, and always bragged about the fact that I never flunked at anything. I never was refused a job. If I went for an interview, I always got the job. Whatever that says about me, I don't know, but I always did and so it wasn't until much later in my life that I tasted failure. But in terms of coming back to Rutgers, I always felt supported by the faculty in who I was trying to be at that point in my life. I think that was your question, wasn't it, pretty much?

AM: Yes, pretty much. Was there any faculty that helped you?

WK: Not particularly, except maybe Don McGinn, and the only reason was because I was an English major and I did a lot more work with him, and I felt, you know, he encouraged me to take the exam for honors and things like that.

AM: So really you'd come back from the war feeling very confident and in control of yourself and stabilized?

WK: Yes, yes, I was married; I was a married student and married student put you in a class all by yourself. You didn't try to be married and be a student. I mean, if anybody would ... that was stupid, and here a whole bunch of us were doing that and we had a great community to prove that it was working. We had our own government; that put us in a different, in a whole sort of different social strata.

AM: Did you have your own social activities?

WK: Oh, gosh, yes. Oh, I have pictures of our parties, wild parties, wild parties.

AM: Yes, I've seen some of the pictures from the Archives and it just ...

WK: Yes, wild parties. I mean, things that you ... We had fun in such simple ways. There was no drinking, I can't remember ever having a drink. As I told you, I never drank until I became a priest.

KP: Bill Bauer, a professor in Ceramics, he spoke so fondly about the parties that the Ceramics Department had with the GI Bill people. He said, they are one of his most delightful memories of being a professor at Rutgers because of how much fun the GIs could have on very simple ...

WK: Right. The parties we had, just when a baby was born, any excuse, you know, Halloween, New Year's Eve, wow, just great, great times.

AM: You were all back from the war so you must have really been celebrating life. I mean, it is just like, "We're all here and we're alive."

WK: Yes, I think so. We all felt very good about, very privileged to be back and to be able to do this. It never occurred to me not to go back to Rutgers. For example, it never would occur to me to go someplace else and by that time, I suppose, I could've gone any place I wanted to 'cause I had had that experience, I suppose, and was, you know, going into my junior year.

KP: Your wife became a public health nurse in White Plains, New York. When did she go to school?

WK: Well we read in the paper, I was rector of this church here, in White Plains, and we were both forty-nine.

KP: Oh, so this is much later.

WK: Much later and Helen read that she could train at Grasslands which is out here in Valhalla it is now the Westchester County Community, Westchester County Hospital. It was then called Grasslands; it was at a nursing school and small hospital. Now it's a huge hospital, huge, big place. She read that if she could start before she was fifty, she could get her nursing degree and she was forty-nine, plus, so, she enrolled right away and the children, by that time, you see, were all in their teens, or older teens, and she went to school and got her nursing degree and right after

that I left and went to the West Indies, where they had very few nurses, and she was able to run clinics and she had enough training to be able to do all kinds of things that she wouldn't have been able to do here in the States. Because of, sort of living almost in a Third World, with her training, she was, you know, really used, much more so than she would've been used here.

KP: Then in a sense she had a second career, I mean, first she had children and then ...

WK: She had her career of being mother to our four children. There never was a time when any of our children came home from school and didn't find her there, ever, you know, until we left completely. My son always teases, he was eighteen when we went to the West Indies, and he didn't want to go with us and he said, "Usually kids leave home but my parents left home."

KP: You've alluded to being a parish priest in the 1950's, when ... church attendance was at record highs, there was a certain glow to the church.

WK: Couldn't do anything wrong. Couldn't do anything wrong. I had the best parish in the world; I had Calvary Church, Syracuse. We were a little Anglo-Catholic parish and most of our congregation was Anglo-Saxon girls married to Italian boys and they solved their religious problem by coming to the Episcopal Church. We were the middle church, halfway between Rome and Calvin and, boy, I had dozens of families that, loved the fact that it was High Church with half the families saying, "Oh, I really don't like that incense but he loves it so I better stick with it," you know, and, "Make my confession, what are you, kidding?" You know, "Only Roman Catholics make confession, but my husband makes his confession because he's Roman Catholic." All that stuff was going on, and then the sense that the church was involved in life. We were having all sorts of things. Then some vandals broke into my parish and arsonists and burnt my parish down and I had enough engineers in the parish so they hooked us up to monitors and I had church in a schoolhouse with fifteen different classrooms and the congregation went into fifteen different classrooms and watched me on television and I was in a little room over there celebrating and preaching and for communion they all came out of their classrooms and into this tiny little chapel, which seated about twelve people, and received their communion and went back in, and we did this for over a year, and the kids used to say to me, "If you're not good we're gonna switch the channel to Fulton Sheen." He had a great following.

KP: What had happened that arsonists would burn down the parish?

WK: Well, we were quite a well-known church in the community, small, but sort of loud, and we had had a big festival and we put all of our money into a safe and they broke in and stole all the money, and it was a big amount of money for those days, and it was in the paper that they had stolen, I don't know how many, thousands of dollars. So a few months later somebody said, "Hey that's a rich church, let's go in there and steal from them again." So they broke in, took the safe, and as they were leaving one of the men said, "We left fingerprints all over." What he meant was, "I'm gonna burn the place down." So we had a big gold curtain behind the altar and he set it on fire and they left and, of course, the church was closed up and it was the middle of the night and it didn't get discovered till the fire broke out the stained glass window that was above the altar.

KP: What year was it?

WK: It was the same day that President Kennedy was assassinated. That was a great day. This happened at one o'clock in the morning and the president was assassinated the next, noon, I think it was.

KP: It must have been a very memorable day for you.

WK: It was my wife's birthday and we were having lunch with some friends in town and they said, "The president's been assassinated," and I didn't think I could take anymore. I didn't think I could take anymore.

KP: I have a good college friend who's a priest, in fact we're scheduled to have dinner with him Sunday night.

WK: This coming Sunday?

KP: This coming Sunday.

WK: Oh, good.

KP: And we've talked at times about his being a priest, and so forth, and he both enjoys it a great deal but also he's found aspects of it very troubling. You know, one of his congregations was very divided and that's been one of those problems. What have you found most rewarding about being a priest and at times have you thought, "Why did I do this?" There are various ministries you could've gone. I think he wouldn't mind being a college chaplain, or maybe I could go to graduate school and teach for a while. What have you found that? You've stayed with parish ministry.

WK: Yes.

KP: What have you found most rewarding? What have been the headaches? Obviously, having the church burned by vandals ...

WK: That was a big headache, because I am not much of a money raiser. I don't know how to ask people for money, even if I know they should give it. It has never been easy for me and it really was, which was a lot of money is '63, that is what it was going to cost us to rebuild, and I really wore myself out. That's how I happened to go to the West Indies, 'cause I really wore myself out. I was then a young man and I was a basket-case. So a friend of mine said, Come work with me in the West Indies, and you can build up your strength again," But I think the most important thing that has happened to me was the variety of ministries. I had a very small, sort of suburban parish in New Jersey, in Paramus, my first parish. I had that first. It was a little town and I was the first priest there so we sort of built up that. Then I went to Syracuse University and became the chaplain there. I had five years as a college chaplain. I loved working with young

people. I loved the atmosphere of being a chaplain in an academic community. That was tremendous for me. I loved it and then I had this small parish in Syracuse which I thought was the best thing that could ever be. I have had good experiences. I suppose, the people I met, the friendships I have made, the fact that I can go to almost anywhere in the United States and have friends there, because I have had such a vast experience in so many different places. Having the whole business of the West Indies open up when I was just barely, barely fifty-years-old, so the last twenty-six years have been spent mostly in the West Indies and coming back to the United States to sort of touch base with my roots, and then going back again and coming back.

KP: How long were you in the West Indies?

WK: I have been there, I went first for two years, and then came back here for five. Then went back for ten, and then retired, and since I retired, which was '86, that is ten years, I have been back there more than I have been here. Because I started a group called Caribbean Ministries, which is a group of people who are determined to help parishes in the West Indies who are too weak to help themselves. So we go to parishes that can't afford a priest, and I recruit retired Episcopal priests who have, who are on pension, so they have enough money to volunteer, 'cause there is no money involved in this, (or very little) ... I have gotten to know all of the bishops in the West Indies. There are eight of them in the different eight dioceses. This is from Guiana, to Nashua, from Belize, to Barbados, if you can visualize that area. There it is right there. The eight bishops I know personally. When they have a need, they write to me personally and say, "I need a parish priest for such and such a parish ..."

KP: You will get a request for ...

WK: I have a whole list of men who have contacted me because I put little ads in the church papers, and I say, "There is a church in Trinidad that needs a priest. Would you like to go? They need someone for a year beginning in July," and some guy says, "Yes, I'll go," or "I can only go for six months" and then I find two men to go each for six months and six months; I cover it some way. We have had over a hundred priests go. They have served on all of those islands listed there with an English history. Not Guadeloupe, French; not Martinique, French; not St. Lucia, mostly French, although there is some English there, too, and all the rest. Not Puerto Rico so much because most of us do not speak Spanish, but I have had one or two men who speak Spanish who have gone to parishes in Puerto Rico. Of course, all of the Virgins, all six islands, you know, the three American Virgins and the three British Virgins; St Kitts, Nevis, I just came back from Nevis four weeks ago. I was there for a long time. Montserrat, where they are having that big problem with that volcano right now. A lot of work on Antigua, Barbuda, St. Barts, St. Martin-Anguilla. A lot on Dominica, which is down farther ... do you see Dominica there? A lot on Barbados, St. Vincent, Granada, Trinidad, Tobago and one man even went to Caracas, two men. I went to Caracas and one other man went to Caracas and he ended up being the temporary dean of the cathedral in Caracas, while they waited for a dean. Because he spoke fluent Spanish and, his first language was English, but he spoke fluent Spanish, he was able to take the cathedral in Venezuela for about a half a year until they got a dean. So we have been doing that work and it has been one of the best things that could ever happen, 'cause usually in retirement people play

golf, or read books, or try to figure out how to pick lint out of their navel without being an embarrassment to the community. I have never had that problem because I have been so busy since I retired that people say, "When are you going to retire?" And I have been retired for ten years.

KP: In other words you spend part of the time in White Plains and part of your time ...

WK: I keep this ... this is my base. I have a humble, simple, not that I could afford much more in the community anyway, where homes run at three hundred and fifty thousand dollars, this is my home. This is all I own, and I don't own this, I rent it, but when I go out that door to go to the West Indies, my superintendent says, "Where are you going this time?" and "Who is going to be staying in your apartment." He gives me a real ... I am not suppose to do it, but I always have someone staying here. I don't charge them rent, which is the difference. I don't sublet, but I always have someone stay here. Someone who needs an apartment at that point, and I say, "Use my apartment for six months, I am not going to be there and feed the fish, and water the plants. That's all you have to do, and I'll pay the rent." But, yes, ... we went down in August, the last one, we went the August of '95 and I told the archbishop, who was the bishop of Antigua, he's also the archbishop for the West Indies, I told him I would stay until he got a priest, if I could, if he would try to get a priest and he said, "Yes." I went in December. I came back in May because both my wife and I needed some medical care and we stayed until September, then we went back again to the same parish and, in the meantime, I got three other priests to come for a month each, or two months each, to take services. I went back and stayed until four weeks ago, three weeks ago, whatever it was. It was, I guess, it was March, the beginning of March.

KP: The image in popular culture of the Episcopal Church being ... one of my great lines I can remember reading, to do with the Republican party ...

WK: At prayer. The Republican prayer, the biggest fallacy in the world.

KP: No, I've since learned, it's a very complicated church.

WK: It's a very complicated church. ... It has that reputation because all, you know, Jefferson, you know, all the early fathers all came from England and all belonged to the Church of England.

KP: There are certainly probably congregations that fit that, like my good friend, one of his congregation definitely fit that.

WK: The upper crust.

KP: It was a great church, I went to his ordination there and I thought it was very nice.

WK: Where is it, what state was it in?

KP: It was in not Ramsey, the town by Oradell.

WK: Oh, Paramus?

KP: No, not Paramus, the other.

WK: Riverdale? River Edge, Rivers Edge?

AM: Saddle River?

WK: Oh, Saddle River I bet. That is an uppity place.

KP: I forget but, yes, it was in that area.

WK: Yes, okay.

KP: And it was very ...

AM: Ridgewood?

WK: Ridgewood.

KP: Yes, Ridgewood and ...

WK: Oh, I was there for his...

KP: Oh, you were really?

WK: His wife was our priest here.

KP: No, no, his wife isn't a priest, she's ...

WK: Wait a minute, now, wasn't he married to Brenda Hussen?

KP: No, no, that's someone else. The ordination was in the '80s.

WK: Oh, no, okay, then this was after that then, because the John I know and I can't even think of his last name, because she never took his name and they've since divorced and she's married someone else, but she was our priest here and we went over with her to her husband's ...

KP: Ordination.

WK: Not ordination, his installation as rector of the church in Ridgewood, that's what it was. Yes, he grew up there probably under a Father Miller, who was there when I was at Paramus.

KP: No, he grew up in another ...

WK: But he was ordained there at Ridgewood.

KP: Yes, he was a curate there.

WK: Oh, I see.

KP: I've learned from him how diverse ...

WK: Very diverse.

KP: But I think in the '50s, in particular, it had that image.

WK: No question.

KP: If you could speak about that, particularly, because of your ministry in the Caribbean and also you were at Selma and, in fact, my friend reminds me of how liberal Bishop (John Shelby) Spong is.

WK: Yes, I think that the church got that reputation because it certainly started out that way. In our country, the leaders in government were Anglicans and it was a church for the carriage trade, there's no question about that and a lot of the parishes started that way. An instance is our parish right here in White Plains. It started out when White Plains was a real fine community with people who came first in carriages and then in their Rolls Royces or whatever, their touring cars, and it was the very proper church in town, and the priest there had a reputation because he was the rector of Grace Church, and it was all white. The first black family that went there were all but told that they didn't belong there and it was sort of elitist. Then others began to come in ... people from the West Indies who aren't so aware of their blackness as Americans are, American blacks, I mean. They didn't have to fight the fight that American blacks had to fight. They weren't told that they were less than human the way American blacks were and so West Indians began to come into the parish and even though they were not invited in socially, they were more and more accepted and now the parish is seventy-five percent black. It has wealthy people but it has people who, you know, are hard-working, middle-class, poor people. It now runs fourteen programs for people in the community who need help. It now has about a three million dollar budget; most of the money coming from government resources to pay for our programs. They do the work, we pay the bill, sort of thing. This is the parish that has completely changed. That's happened to a lot of parishes. Some of the ones in New York, which were St. Barts, and St. James, you know really, many of them are still the mink-belt-type of parish, but many of them have and, I think, our church has tried to, has learned how to appeal to people. West Indians their appeal was always the ceremonial, the beauty, the dignity, the singing, our emphasis on music, our emphasis on art, our emphasis on beauty, on mystery, on the mystique, all of those things, that's always been appealing to West Indians. They've always loved that, boy, and a service that may last longer than an hour, too. You know, a West Indian goes to church for less than two hours, he thinks he's been cheated and so now in our parishes up here, you can preach for a half hour and you're not told "Sit down!" ... You know, in the West Indies, if I preached for

less than a half hour, they said “What’s the matter? You got somewhere more important to go?” And here, it’s just the opposite in many places. So the church has learned over the course of its long history in this country to be more flexible ... we’ve managed to at least broaden the base. Maybe not as much as we could have

KP: But it sounds like you were a part of that group in the church.

WK: Yes, I was definitely a part of that group. Because I would invite people to church and I’d have parishioners say, “They’re not our kind of people,” and I’d say, “Just a minute now, let’s take a look at this. What do you mean, not our kind of people? What does the scripture say to you about, you know, unity in Christ? You know we are all one in hindsight” ... and pretty soon, at least you could break down some of the preconceived ideas about who’s proper and who isn’t proper. You know, do you have a degree, or don’t you have a degree? With my background I had a pretty good chance of showing that a lot of the stuff that you think is important really doesn’t count for much and then the Selma experience, of course. I had a Republican congregation, totally Republican congregation at ... at Calvary. They loved me; they hated my politics, and they said to me over and over and over again, “Why are you rocking the boat? Why don’t you let somebody else do that? Stay home and take care of us,” was what they were saying and I was saying, “I’ve got to go to Selma. I belong down there.” “Well, those people can take care of themselves.” “No, they can’t because they’re black and black men can’t fight the black battle by themselves, they’ve gotta have us. We’re the ones who are causing the problem we’ve gotta get in there. You know they can’t solve their own problem by themselves, anymore than a hungry person can solve his problem sitting out in a gutter someplace. He’s got to have help and that’s all there is to that.” So they hated my, “Why are you rocking the boat?” was their attitude, but, because I had a good relationship with them, I was able to get away with it. I had five years with them before any of this began. You see I started there in ’58, so by ’63, or ’64 when this was really getting wound up I had a tremendous relationship with them. I could have danced down the aisle naked and they wouldn’t have said much more than, “Isn’t he cute.”

KP: Two questions in terms of the church that come up, I think, unfortunately it’s the only time the media covers it, but the ordination of women did not come easy.

WK: No, two thousand years to overcome two thousand years of tradition that’s all it amounted to.

KP: It’s still apparent that there are still some bishops who won’t ordain...

WK: Very few now, but, yes, it’s still an issue. We have probably almost a thousand women in this church of ours that have been ordained and yet it is an issue and it’s going to be an issue for a long time, because you don’t overcome two thousand years of history overnight. It’s normal and the same way with the whole attitude toward homosexuals. Our church is trying to be very understanding about every, you know, we’re there for everybody. If you’re going to be there for everybody, the same way as during the Civil Rights movement, if you’re going to say, “We can be there for you if you’re white but we can’t be there for you if you’re black,” we’ve got to get out of the church. We’ve got to find another way of making a living and the same thing now

with the whole gay movement. Either we're going to be there, or we're going to get out, and yet there are some who, of course, who go back to the Scriptures and use it against that philosophy, but that philosophy is going to prevail because the basis of our religion is "love one another as he loves you" and that's the fundamental. Everything else has got to fall into place around that and if it doesn't, it has got to go. It's got to go and, you know, that sounds terribly liberal but it's not liberal. It's not liberal, it's saying "judge not, lest ye be judged" and let him take care of this. Let him take care of the lesbians and the homosexuals is what you're there to do.

KP: Do you think a gay or lesbian should be ordained?

WK: Oh, of course, ... I've presented a number of outwardly gay men and gay women for the bishop for ordination. I have gotten past that long ago.

KP: How about women? When did you think that it was okay to ordain women?

WK: I came to it sooner than my wife. My wife had much more trouble with this than I did.

KP: Really.

WK: I was shocked at first ...

KP: That your wife thought women shouldn't be ordained?

WK: No, no, I was shocked that a woman would want to be a priest, cause I grew up in an Anglo-Catholic parish where the only thing that women did at Grace Church, Newark, was to keep us men amused and they couldn't sing in the choir, men and boys choir. They couldn't serve at the altar because only two or three very select women, most of whom were nuns, worked at the altar. So all the women did was be there in support of the ministry that the men did, when you think of it. ... So I had a little trouble coming to this, only because of my background. My wife had trouble coming to it, she should be telling you this, but, I think, it was primarily because she always felt as the priesthood was a masculine job and how could a woman do a masculine job? How could you say, "Forgive me, Mother, for I have sinned?" How could a woman stand there and ask that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ? That has never been. How could she do that? What right does she have to ask that? I think once she began to see women doing this, and doing it well, and being good at it, she had to come to it, and she did. So it is no problem with us. ... We grieve over the fact that it's been such a problem in our church and that it is going to continue to be a problem for sometime. It is probably going to be THE single problem of the century when historians write about us. They'll say that was the century when women got out of the kitchen, and the bedroom, and the Anglican Church, while it was a leader of this in many ways was also the one that had the most trouble, probably because we allow things to come into focus easier than some others. We have encouraged the controversy, I think, in many ways. I certainly did as a priest. I was the first one to welcome a gay group into Grace Church. I almost lost my head over that. A gay group had been tossed out of many of its places for meeting when I was rector of Grace Church ...

KP: When was this?

WK: This was in 1972-73.

KP: This was Grace Church in White Plains.

WK: White Plains, here, where I am rector emeritus now. This is why I am living here, because I am still a member of that parish and I am on the staff, but as a retired priest. It is sort of my home. I will be buried from there. I will be put into the little crypt in that building when I am dead. But this gay group, whom I had gotten to know because they had asked me a couple of times to celebrate the Eucharist for them, which I did, and I saw them as men and women, doctors and lawyers, and other clergymen in this group. ... They came to me and said, "We have no place to meet because we have been kicked out of every place because the police raid us and kick us out," and I said, "Well come here. I'll have to check it with my board, but I am sure it will be all right." It was like asking them to jump off the Empire State Building. We came down to the end of this meeting, which was where this was discussed, and it passed, with one or two abstentions, and two or three negatives, but it passed and the group started meeting there. I was called a lot of things. I was ... you can imagine what I was called.

KP: This was pretty early. I mean, this was not ...

WK: This was about '72 or '73, so there was a sense in which we thought the time was right ... Now after that, one of the men who came in with that group got so interested in the church and saw that he could start to worship there, before I left, he became my warden, who is the head layman in the parish. That all happened within a few years. A door had to open. The door opened, he came in, and everybody learned to love him. They thought he was the best thing that has happened since cornflakes and, you know, they accepted him and they didn't care whether he was gay, or not, and he turned out to be real good. That's where it started and since then, you know, it has not been a problem, the Grace Church, in White Plains, and people look to us either with disgust or with admiration. We're either loved or hated by the rest of the church, many of whom have not come anywhere near this, have not had anything to do with gays or lesbians, have not anything to do with women, and are not into the social issues, are not doing what we're doing; not serving a hundred-fifty meals at noontime to hungry people in White Plains, which we're doing, and they don't have a hotel, which we're running, for battered women. They don't have a halfway house for alcoholic men, which we have. They don't have a summer camp for kids, who can't afford to go to camp. All the things that our parish is doing are things that people say, "Gee, I wish we could do that, but we can't."

AM: I had a question about when you go to the Caribbean, whether you find native religions that were there, kind of, ...

WK: Yes.

AM: You're saying they were attracted to your religion because of the ceremony and how that mixed well with their native things, do you find that they've added or changed anything?

WK: Well, remember now, the church I just left, on St. Kitt's, Antigua, St. Thomas, this year celebrated its three hundred fifty-third anniversary.

AM: Wow.

WK: Now, that means that the Anglican Church has been there for three hundred and fifty-three years ... so when you talk about the native religion, you're talking about us. There's not much before us, there may have been voodoo, you know, we were the religion of those islands 'cause when they were inhabited by the slaves from Africa, the British were right there with their church and their government and their way of life and their everything, much of which was bad, but they were there with it, and those churches down there are all much older than our churches up here.

KP: They're very high church.

WK: And very high church... I mean, the bishops are still called "My Lord the Bishop" and "His Grace," you know, all of which is very British and, you know, goes against the American grain completely. I mean, I have a hard time calling the archbishop of the West Indies "Your Grace" although I love him dearly and we worked a long time together, but, and we are good friends and he loves people to call him His Grace, but he doesn't mind if I don't call him His Grace. I find it very hard 'cause I think, "Gee, if only you'd give up all that British stuff and come down-to-earth like a good American should," you know.

AM: When you work on some of the islands, you've been on Tortola and ...

WK: Oh, yes, Road Town.

AM: I know there's a lot of Spanish influences. They have the Festival of the Dead there and how that must ...

WK: Yes, there's a lot of mix now and you get, of course, on Jamaica, you get a lot of the ...

AM: Rastafarians.

WK: A lot of the, well, all through the islands now. I've lived long enough to watch islands forbid the Rastafarians, I mean, literally, say, "If you grow locks, you're not welcome on this island," to where they're in government now. You know, they've come a long way and I've had, now, I've lived also to see Rastafarians worshipping with me down there, who keep their Rastafarian way of life, in a way, their natural foods, their simple way of life, their many children. But raising their children as Anglicans and being in church with them and being very receptive to the gospel, while holding onto this other, you know ... being able to span that very comfortably, the way others span voodoo and Christianity, or you know, whatever else is down there. All of the cult things, lot of cult stuff and there is a tremendous mixture and the church, it's right in the church, I mean, a lot of our, a lot of the stuff they ask me to do is all strictly voodoo stuff, you know, "I won't move into my house unless you bless it," is a big deal down

there. "I've built a new home but I will not live in it one day until you go in there and get rid of all the evil spirits."

AM: Of course, the Catholics do that, too.

WK: Oh, sure. Well, see, we are Catholic; Anglicans have a Catholic heritage. While we have a lot of Protestant stuff about us, our theology is basically Catholic, so we go in there with the holy water and scare the hell out of all those demons, you know, and I'm not sure we believe that but it's a part of being with the people and where they're at and there's nothing wrong with it 'cause it's done in the name of the Lord who, isn't on the side of evil.

KP: Is there anything else?

AM: No, I don't think so.

WK: We've run the gamut.

KP: I feel we could do a whole interview on the history of the Episcopal Church but I don't know enough. Is there anything we've forgotten to ask you about? I mean, we've only touched a little bit on the ministry but that could be a whole other interview.

WK: I think, I'm glad to have been a part of the Rutgers scene, as a part of the preparation for everything I've done since then. Because, I think, while I wanted to go to a small church school, which would give me that good Anglican base, which I felt I needed because I didn't have it from my birth, I felt I needed some of that ambience, you know, some of that stuffiness. I needed some of that. I'm glad I didn't. I'm glad I went to Rutgers; I'm glad I was forced to go to Rutgers. I'm glad that it worked out that way and I hope that a lot of the men today are having the experience in the Glee Club that I had, where it became my college experience, you know. It was for me Rutgers University and I didn't need more than that. It wasn't that I was so closed-in but I just didn't need more than that. There wasn't time for more than that, especially not after we were married. I had barely enough time for what I did in the Glee Club, and running the church, and having a family, and getting my last two years of college. That was about all I could handle, so I didn't get into other thing like the Greek life and I did go to games but I never got gung-ho. But now, I was chaplain at Syracuse, I told you, and now my grandson plays football for Syracuse and I go to the homecoming and who are they playing but Rutgers, you know, so I said to Jason, "What side do you want me to sit on?" And he says, "If you sit on the Rutgers side I'll kill you." So I have to sit on the Syracuse side because I was chaplain there, and my grandson goes there, but my alma mater was being beaten to death. I kept praying, "Please make one touch down, just one," but they wouldn't do it. It was bad. Was the rest of the season as bad?

KP: Yes.

WK: When I went back for the reunion what was it?

KP: The Old Guard.

WK: We sang out on the field, were you there that day? Were you at that game? Who were they playing? Was it Temple, or somebody?

KP: I wasn't at homecoming last year.

WK: Soup [Watters] had a hundred and twenty-five of us go out for the hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the Glee Club and we sang, I think, it was *Brother, Sing On* and, of course, the *Star Spangled Banner* and *On The Banks*. Oh, it was thrilling ... I was surprised I could sing, still belt it out the way we used to.

KP: Are you coming to reunion this year?

WK: No, I'm not going to and I'm very sorry about this because the reunion is, the Glee Club part of it, is very interesting this year because they're closing with a concert at Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center and that night, that day, my wife and I are leaving. We've always wanted to, we spent all of our money, whenever we had any, going back and forth to the West Indies, we've decided this time to spend our money doing something completely different. We're going to go across Canada on a train, which is something I've always wanted to do and so has Helen. We're going to fly that day to Toronto and get on a train and go to Vancouver and I'm missing that wonderful concert at Alice Tully Hall that night.

KP: But it sounds like a wonderful vacation. Well, I have to say, you've given me a wonderful idea for the alumni office to do a reunion of all the people that lived in the trailers on Hillside Campus.

WK: That would be a tremendous idea. You better hurry up, though, we're all getting on now. I was not the oldest but, I guess, I was up there. I'm seventy-six and I think anybody who was living there has to be a least seventy by now.

AM: But you're more lively than most of us students now.

WK: You sound like my West Indian friends who say, "What do you mean? You're not old."

KP: One last closing question, when you're here how often do you preach?

WK: Every Sunday I do something. Sometimes I celebrate the Eucharist. Since we are kind of high church we have a Eucharist every day at Grace Church, so they often ask me to do something during the week and I also help out around. People have associated me with the West Indies, "We have at least fifty parishes in the Diocese of New York that are mostly West Indian, because he knows these people. He talks their language he talks funny like the West Indian." So, I get a lot of opportunity to do that.

KP: It sounds like since you retired, to take the week off you can if you really don't feel like doing anything.

WK: I'm doing everything I used to do except now I don't get paid for it, and sometimes I do get paid for it, but it's good to be able to. I never looked forward to retirement. I always thought it would be a bore and so this has been a very good thing. A lot of the things that have happened to me have happened because I didn't take retirement very seriously. I thought, "Well, maybe this is just a chance to shift gears and maybe do something different, or do something that you enjoy doing," and, of course, the West Indies was a natural because there was so much need down there and so many resources up here. I sent a little one-by-one ad in a church paper, it's called *The Living Church*, I don't know whether you know that, but it's a paper that goes out to a lot of clergy anyway and I got a hundred and fifty responses, from that tiny little thing, saying, "We're interested." Where we are, there is so little we can do, because there are so many retired priests in the community and nothing for us to do, so I've been able to put them in touch with something that they could do, that they'd really enjoy. It has been fun. It's been nice to do something in retirement that's been helpful to people.

KP: Retirement probably gave you the time to do this.

WK: Oh, I would not have been able to because the correspondence is unbelievable. I have to get all the papers from them, and send them all the information, and send it all to the bishop. Bishops in the West Indies are notorious for not answering letters, so I get on the telephone and spend a small fortune calling the West Indies, but it's fun. It's wonderful. I thank you so much for coming to me personally because I just feel so good about being able to be a part of this oral history.

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Reviewed by David Whitman 05/17/05

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 06/10/05

Reviewed by W. Wesley Konrad 12/05