RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM F. LLEWELLYN

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

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

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Sandra Stewart Holyoak: This begins an interview on February 7, 2004, in Hilton Head, South Carolina, with William Frame Llewellyn and Sandra Stewart Holyoak. Mr. Llewellyn, first of all, you have my thanks for coming out this morning and taking time to sit for this interview. To begin, I would like you to please tell me where and when you were born.

William Llewellyn: [laughter] I was born on October 16, 1919, in Germantown, Philadelphia.

SH: Can you tell me about your father and how you came to be born in Germantown?

WL: [laughter] Well, my father, Charles Benjamin Llewellyn, was born May 20, 1883 in Pennsville, Ohio and grew up on a farm … just outside of Salem, Ohio, and he had hay fever and he had asthma and he could hardly wait to get off the farm. … In those days, the way off the farm was to work for the railroad, and so, he wanted to work for the railroad and the only thing that stopped it was, he was colorblind. … So, fortunately, he ended up much more prosperous … in his later years than he would have if he'd gotten with the railroad, I think. So, he apprenticed as a machinist at the Buckeye Engine Works in Salem and, in later life, … I said, "Don't you want to have a shop or something like that?" He said, "I had to work with my hands and with tools when I was a kid." He said, "I never want to touch them again."

SH: Really?

WL: Yes. So, he never wanted to go back to them. …

SH: His apprenticeship was in Salem, Ohio.

WL: In Salem, Ohio. I think that's where the Buckeye Engine Works was. I was … the child of their old age. He was thirty-six, I think, when I was born and my mother was thirty-nine, and so, I heard most of the anecdotes from my sisters, who were … seven and eight years older than I was, knew them [his parents] as younger people and knew more than I did. … So, he finished his apprenticeship and little Quaker kids, in those days, when they wanted to get off the farm and get to civilization, went to Philadelphia, where all the wealthy Quakers lived, and my father went there and got a job. … His first jobs were as night boiler-room operator, this type of thing. … In those days, they mostly had their own generator, I think, and so, there was a boiler and, perhaps, some steam engines operating in some of these buildings and he worked in those. … One of them was for one of the restaurants in Philadelphia and … the Quakers in the community didn't think it was a good idea for a young Quaker boy to work for a restaurant which served booze. So, they got him a job with Powers-Weightman-Rosengarten Co., who were manufacturing chemists in Philly. One of the things I remember, they refined a lot of quinine in one of their plants there, and so, he worked for Powers, Wightman and Rosengarten, but they were taken over, in 1927, by Merck's, in Rahway, New Jersey, and then, he was transferred to Rahway. That's how we got into North Jersey. I remember my mother mentioning once, during a casual conversation with me when I was a boy (probably in my early teens?), that there had been a brief period when she any my father had thought they might be <u>rich</u>! Now I realize that would have been just after the First World War; when they conceived me, and bought the fine colonial home at 202 Elm Street in Cheltenham. They expected to live out their lives there as part of the Philadelphia Quaker community. … But almost immediately, things began to go wrong. My

mother contracted tuberculosis when I was less than a year old, and had to go to a sanitarium in the Poconos for about nine months. Then we had Cousin Esther Winder move in to run the house and-of course-take care of me. And we always had domestic help after that so she wouldn't get over-tired and have a relapse. Then in about 1925 or '26 my pancreas burst one Saturday when he was working in the big vegetable garden we always had. I can remember the ambulance taking him away, and of course-at five or six years-had no idea how close we came to losing him. But they sewed it up, and he never had diabetes and lived a normal life until he was eighty. The final blows to the Cheltenham "dream" were the Merck buyout in 1927 of Powers-Weightman-Rosengarten Co. who he had worked for, for many years, as Chief Engineer; and his transfer to the Merck operations in Rahway, NJ as their Chief Engineer.

SH: If my math is correct, you were six or seven when you moved to Rahway.

WL: Well, yes, he was transferred there, but he commuted and we stayed in Philadelphia until 1930 … So, I was ten when we moved to Plainfield, and so, the first ten years, I lived in Philly…

SH: Can you tell me about your mother?

WL: Well, she came east, too. [laughter]

SH: She was also a Quaker?

WL: She was a Quaker. She was born on April 10, 1880 and grew up in Barnesville, Ohio, and Quaker girls, in those days, came east and they got jobs as domestics with the Quaker families in Philadelphia and got off the farm that way. … That's the only conversations I remember with my mother where she talked about what she did. [laughter] …

SH: Did they meet in Philadelphia?

WL: … They met in Philly. Well, no, they had met in Barnesville, because there's a "Friends Boarding School" there, that was built in the early 1870's (The school opened on January 1, 1876 for its first class of twenty girls and twenty-five boys). My mother's grandfather, Aaron Frame, had been a leading figure in the school's construction: he led the committee in the local Friends (Quaker) Meeting that decided to build the school; he sold some forty-two acres of his farm, at one hundred dollars an acre, for the school campus and associated farm; he was in charge of construction and the head-carpenter for the original school building! So my mother was closely associated with the school; lived in the vicinity much of her childhood and attended school and graduated from it. And my father attended home the first two years of High School (which was the end of his formal education) … So they surely became acquainted with each other during this period. But my father was three years younger than my mother. So when he was in school there, she was working in the school kitchen, where she stayed for two years after graduating and before moving east to Philadelphia … Where they met again and the courtship began!

SH: Do you know any of the history of either side of your family, such as how they came to this country or why they became Quakers?

WL: No, I can't go back very far. My mother got into genealogy towards the end of her life and [her work] traces it back, but I really don't know anything back beyond … my mother's grandfather. My father's father, I never met. He died before … I came along and I just didn't know anything about his ancestry, that way, no.

SH: You did know your mother's mother and father.

WL: Yes, yes.

SH: Were your parents from large families?

WL: My father … was the oldest of three. He had a sister, Mabel, and a younger brother, Bill, and my mother was one of, Lura, Emily, Joe, I guess there were three there, too. No, there were four children (My mother was second oldest of four kids).

SH: They did not start dating until they came to Philadelphia.

WL: Yes, that's my understanding, and my mother's family, … they were sensitive and quiet, almost arty type of people. My grandfather was a machinist and carpenter and a good craftsman. My father's family were farmers, I think, and he was a kind of a rough go-getter. … My mother used to talk to me, because … my sisters left home when I was ten, eleven, twelve. I can remember [the] stories she told me and she wasn't sure she wanted to marry Charlie. He was successful and a hard worker, but he just was kind of a gruff type of a guy, and so, she took a job for a year at the Friends Indian School in Tunesassa, NY … just outside of Buffalo, New York, … the year before they got married and she told me, basically, she just wanted to decide whether … this is the way she wanted to go, you know, and he won out. [laughter] … He visited her regularly and she was a beautiful woman in her time, I think. …

SH: What interesting stories she must have had.

WL: Yes. … Then, they got married on April 5, 1907 back in a Barnesville meeting house, yes, Quaker ceremony, and I didn't realize how much they were tied to Barnesville until they sent all of us, my sisters and I, to Barnesville for our freshman year of high school.

SH: Did they?

WL: And then, we went the last three years to Westtown School, which was outside of Philadelphia, which was a lot closer, obviously, to where they were living, but, when I got to Barnesville, I remember, I got sick one time and the nurse started talking about my parents and I didn't realize [that] all these people knew my parents out there, you know. [laughter] … I didn't realize I was a city boy until I got out there and saw where they'd string a pig up by its hind legs and hit it with a sledgehammer to kill it. … They ran a farm in conjunction with the school, and so, everything was kind of interesting. … I took a walk one Saturday down a dirt road about a

mile from the school, down a little hollow, and [there was] a little house there and a woman came out and I got [to] talking to her. … Gosh, I can't think of her name at the moment, but she asked me my name. She said, "Oh, yes, thy father was Charles Llewellyn and thy mother was Emily Frame," and I thought, "My God," you know. [laughter] Her name was Hattie Hartley and years later I found her name where she had signed my parent's wedding certificate! So she had been at their wedding and I met her in the middle of nowhere! So, we all went there for a year, to kind of find out where they came from.

SH: That is wonderful.

WL: Yes.

SH: Were these boarding schools that you attended?

WL: Yes, they were boarding schools.

SH: Was the school in Philadelphia a boarding school as well?

WL: Yes, yes. The Quakers kind of pushed this boarding school idea, I think, and that's where we went. [laughter] …

SH: Did you understand why they did that?

WL: Yes, yes. We sort of knew that [was the reason]. … Actually, when my sisters went to Barnesville, eight years before I did, which would have been, … I went there in '33, so, they went there in 1925, or somewhere around there, why, the girls still had to wear bonnets when they went to meeting and it was still the old Quaker plain dress. One of the last holdouts for that behavior by Quakers was at Barnesville.

SH: However, it was coed education.

WL: Always coed yes. The Quakers had coed schools. We treated our women as equals in the Quakers, long before anybody else did. [laughter] Turn that off [for] just a minute.

[TAPE PAUSED]

All my family [members] were Quaker. I just don't know much about … going farther back, … except that I do know that my great-grandfather was involved with building [the] Barnesville School in Barnesville. I think they moved west … as the roads opened up from the North Carolina region, but I'm not sure, and then, I know, … later, in my great-grandfather's lifetime, why, the road opened up further and he moved on out to Iowa, where there are a lot of Quaker, or Friends, communities. … Then, after his wife died out there, he came back to Barnesville and my grandfather … was one of these guys that was an excellent mechanic and craftsman, but he didn't want to be management. … The minute he'd begin to get a little too much responsibility, why, he'd move. … In the late, I think when my mother was a little girl, so, it would have been, when was she born? about 1882 or something like that.

SH: You wrote 1880 on the pre-interview survey.

WL: Yes, so, it must have been about 1890 and '91, when she was ten or eleven, … my grandfather took a job in Lake Elsinore, … California, and they went [out west]. … She said they went by train to Los Angeles, and then, they went by stagecoach from Los Angeles down to Lake Elsinore. … He was a patternmaker and machinist in a pottery works there. … She tells stories, [such as], her mother would never let the girls leave without the dog they had, because the dog would kill rattlesnakes, and so, she always kind of loved the desert from that experience. I think they were there maybe five or six years, and then, my grandfather went back to Ohio again, … but he ended up going out [to California again] and he retired, eventually, in Pasadena, died there in 1940, I think. … So, he had a little *wanderlust* in him. [laughter]

SH: The West was opening up at that point, which must have been very attractive to them.

WL: Yes, yes.

SH: I would like to talk about your education before Barnesville, starting with your elementary school education.

WL: Yes. Well, I had three years or four years of elementary school in Cheltenham, right outside of Philadelphia, and then, we moved to Plainfield. … I was [in the] sixth, seventh and eighth grades in Plainfield. So, I had five years in Philadelphia. [laughter]

SH: Was Cheltenham a public school?

WL: Yes, that was a public school. No, I didn't go to a Friends school until high school, which is what we all did.

SH: That was just for the one year.

WL: No, then … four years.

SH: You stayed there for four years.

WL: Well, one year at Barnesville, and then, three years at Westtown, right outside of Philadelphia, near Westchester, which is where I graduated [from].

SH: Your family was living in …

WL: Plainfield.

SH: You just went down to Philly for school.

WL: Yes, yes.

SH: How often did you return home?

WL: Not too often. …

SH: Did your family come down to see you?

WL: Of course, when my sisters went to Westtown, we were living in Cheltenham, so, they saw them quite frequently, but [I went home] on just vacations. … Well, in my senior year, I messed that up by [virtue of the fact that] I fell in love with a girl in my junior year and was kind of rejected and my teeth needed straightening. … It wasn't terrible, but it was an overbite there that I was very aware of. So, I went home and, … in the end of my junior year, I told my parents [that] I wanted my teeth straightened. So, my father said, "Okay." So, I went to Dr. Minez who had offices in Plainfield and Newark and New York City, I think, and got started that summer, and then, I had to come home quite frequently for adjustments during my senior year, and then, I got the damned braces off … before I went to Rutgers. [laughter] During the summer before I was a freshman at Rutgers, I still had the braces on and a couple of guys came from the DKE [Delta Kappa Epsilon] House looking for pledges and I never heard from them again, after they saw me with braces on. [laughter]

SH: You did not fit the image.

WL: No, no. [laughter] …

SH: As a high school student, what were your keen interests? Were you on a certain path? Did you know that you would be going on to college?

WL: Oh, yes, we always [knew]. … Yes, from [the time we were] little kids on, it was [expected that] we were going to go to college.

SH: Really?

WL: Yes, and, of course, my parents never had. My mother graduated from high school. My father had two years [of high school], and then, he'd gotten most of his education after that, I think, in correspondence classes. … He was just a good, hardworking, honest guy. …

SH: Education was very important to them.

WL: I ran into a guy at Rutgers one time and he heard my name and he said, "Do you have a father at Merck's?" or something, and I said, "Yes, that's my father," and he kept looking at me. He said, "He was quite a guy." … I could see him sizing me up, wondering whether I was like my father, and I'm not too much [like him]. [laughter] I take more after my mother's, the Frame, side of the family, I think. [laughter]

SH: It is interesting that he knew your father.

WL: Yes. He'd worked at Merck's for my father, as I recall. I just remember the long look he gave me as much as anything else. [laughter]

SH: Did both of your sisters go on to college as well?

WL: Yes. The one sister graduated, my sister Ruth, who was; let's see, I was Class of '37 at Westtown, she was '31, so, she was six years older than I was, and then, … my oldest sister was seven years older. She was the Class of '30 at Westtown. That's the way little kids figure this out, from their older sisters. [laughter] … My father felt that girls should be able to type or do something like that. So, they went to, was there a Drake College or something? I think, [for] stenographic [courses], typing and shorthand, and they went there for six months or so, after they got out of Westtown, and then, worked as a secretary for a while. … Then, Esther went two years to NJC [New Jersey College for Women, now Douglass College] and they commuted from Plainfield, and then, my sister Ruth went four years. She got her degree in chemistry at NJC and, also, had the typing and shorthand thing. … So, when I got out of Westtown where my father said, "You know, I spent a lot of money on you. You can go to college near home," [laughter] and I said, "Okay, but I don't want to commute. I want to live there." So, he said, "All right." So, I always lived there and my oldest sister resented [the] hell out of it. [laughter] My younger sister didn't mind too much. … My oldest sister always said I was spoiled rotten and got anything I wanted. [laughter]

SH: I think that is normal. [laughter]

WL: Yes. So, they had two and four years, and then, I was in [Rutgers].

SH: What did your sister do with her chemistry degree, at that time?

WL: Yes. Well, she got a job as a secretary to the head of research, I forget where, at Western Electric or something like that. … She got a job as a secretary to somebody, to a scientific type, yes, and used it that way.

SH: I am interested in discovering where women found employment in those days, particularly one who graduated with a chemistry degree during the depths of the Great Depression.

WL: Yes, yes.

SH: Did you apply anywhere else or was it a foregone conclusion that you would go to Rutgers?

WL: No, I didn't apply anywhere else. I wanted to take mechanical engineering and Rutgers had a good engineering school. …

SH: You had known in high school that you were heading towards engineering.

WL: Yes, yes.

SH: Was your coursework geared toward that field of study?

WL: No, no. I mean, it was just college prep. … As a matter-of-fact, … my sophomore year at Rutgers, I was feeling so left out of anything but just technical crap that I took an elective in … Middle English literature or something like that and there were only about eight or ten guys in the class. … It was a study of some of these authors or writers … after Shakespeare, in that area someplace. … So, I remember the first day and the guy who was teaching it said, "Well, you know, what's your major?" and I said, "Mechanical engineering." "What in the hell are you doing here?" you know, [laughter] because my contemporaries in engineering were taking an extra math course or something like that. I just didn't want it. I never considered myself a very good technical engineer. I'm a better "catalogue" engineer. … When a problem comes up, I look around [and say], "I wonder who knows something about this," whereas some guys I worked with, [when] a problem comes up, they say, "Oh, boy, this is just what I want," and they start solving it themselves and I never took that attitude. [laughter]

SH: You graduated from high school in the 1930s.

WL: '37, yes.

SH: How did the Great Depression affect you, economically? You said that you knew that you were headed for college. Many people found that difficult to do at that time.

WL: Yes. Well, I was lucky that way, because, as I say, my father went with Merck's and Merck's prospered during the Depression, as they have since, but their big item, during the worst part of the Depression, was, what is the Vitamin? What did you get from cod liver oil?

SH: D?

WL: "D," I think. Well, they made it synthetically and were the first ones to be able to do that. … They could still sell it almost for the price of being refined from cod liver oil and it paid for the whole damn operation, really. So, they prospered and my father was chief engineer and his salary during the worst of the Depression was about five hundred dollars a month, which was very good pay in those days. So, we didn't feel the Depression, really. I remember, I was a pretty good draftsman and they were looking for somebody to do some sort of work for the college and the head of the Drafting Department recommended me to do the work. … So, I went over. It was at some New Deal agency that paid for these kids doing this work around school.

SH: The NYA, the National Youth Administration.

WL: Yes, something like that, and I went … to sign up for the thing and I talked to the guy for a few minutes. He said, "I can't give you a job." He said, "Your father makes too much money. I can't do it." [laughter] So, I said, "Okay." [laughter] So, I was relatively well-off. … I knew about the Depression, but it didn't affect me personally.

SH: Did you see its effects on others at home or in Philadelphia?

WL: Oh, I saw it, yes, sure. I saw it all around me, sometimes. … [There was] a kid I lived across the street [from] in Plainfield and his father was, well, he was an older man, too. I think he … would have been in his late sixties, perhaps. I thought he was awfully old. It doesn't seem very old now, [laughter] from the standpoint of eighty-four, but, anyway, … [the son was named] Donny (Smythe?) and Mr. Smythe worked on Third Avenue in New York, … in one of those antique stores, and he was quite an antique expert, but he got laid off and my father ended up buying his house. … He paid more than he had to, so that the Smythes could get something, and he could have just picked it up [cheap]. So, my father lived Quakerism. He tried to be fair to people, and so, then, [the] Smythes moved to a different part of town and I never saw Donny [again]. So, I was aware of the Depression and it affected a lot of people. …

SH: Did you work during the summers, when you returned home?

WL: Oh, yes. No, I always worked and at first, well, I had paper routes for a couple of summers. Somebody asked me [about this] the other day. … [The man] who was later my brother-in-law, [who] was [then] going with my sister, … worked in the circulation department for the Plainfield *Courier News*. So, he'd get me a summer replacement job for the paper route and I think I delivered about one hundred papers a day, … with a bike, obviously, and I think the pay was a dollar-forty-seven a week or something. [laughter] If you helped out loading the trucks, why, you got a dollar-sixty-five, and then, if you helped out loading, forty-seven [cents]. Then, you got about a dollar-ninety-five if you helped out some other way, for a week. So, I did that for two or three years, and then, … I wanted physical labor. So, my father got me jobs. Well, the first one was as office boy for the American Chimney Corporation in New York City. … That would have been '36, when I was between my junior and senior year at Westtown, and that was in Union Square on 14th Street, New York. So, I had to commute to New York, run to the ferry, and then, run off the ferry on the other side and get on the BMT [Brooklyn-Manhattan Transit] or the IRT [Interborough Rapid Transit] and go up to 14th Street. … I worked as an office boy there for a Mr. Walther who … owned and operated the company. … Just by chance, they were building a 225-foot chimney for Merck's, which my father [had] ordered. So, obviously, that's how I got the job, [laughter] but that's when I decided I was never going to work in New York City. I'd see these guys commuting and, every night, they had their little set-up with bridge and card and they played bridge on the rattley, old … New Jersey Central coming back. … So, I said, "No way. I will work anyplace but New York City when I get done," and I avoided it for a long time. [laughter] So, I did that each summer, and then, two summers, I worked for the Loizeaux Lumber Company in Elizabethport, New Jersey, and that was just stacking lumber and cement there and that was a great job. That was … before my freshman year and before my sophomore year [at Rutgers], when you want to build muscles anyway, if you're a young guy. [laughter] … The owner/CEO of the company was Charles E. Loizeaux, a NJ State Senator at that time. Merck did a lot of construction during the '30s.

SH: Were you involved in sports in high school?

WL: Yes, yes. I played everything in high school. I was lousy at basketball, I was pretty good at baseball and … Westtown had soccer. … Some kid had been killed twenty or thirty years earlier playing football, and so, they decided they really didn't have the kids who were big enough to field a football team. So, they dropped football and it was just soccer. So, when I got

to Rutgers, the only thing I knew how to play was soccer. … Coach [G.W.] Dochat was trying to get soccer started at Rutgers when I arrived there. So, it was … not a varsity sport the first year or so, and then, they made it a varsity sport and the guys, at the end of the season in which we, I think, won one game and lost all the others, … elected me captain. … I forgot all about it, really, until, your coach now, at Rutgers, is [Robert] Reasso, yes, and he's been very successful with his soccer program, and so, he kind of wanted to make [a showcase]. I think he'd been there twenty years in 2000 and he wanted [to highlight the program]. So, he had some … all-star teams or something like that, and then, he had a legacy team, which … went back to the beginning of soccer, and it turned out that I was the first captain of a varsity soccer team at Rutgers, and so, it shows up on all these lists, "William Llewellyn, first captain of a soccer team at Rutgers." So, I've had a lot of fun with that. Kids call me sometimes for a donation, you know, to the soccer program and I'll say, "You know what? Do you know who you're talking to?" I said, "You're talking to the captain of the first varsity soccer team at Rutgers," and they go, "I didn't know that," and then, I'd get a confirmation note and they say, "Yes, you were." … So, I've had a lot of fun with it [laughter] and I went up to Reasso's celebration in mid-October, I guess, of 2000. … He had the all-legacy team there and we … had a golf game, and then, went to the soccer game in the evening and I got introduced and they were very kind. They said that I contributed to the start of Rutgers' program, and with limited success. Boy, it was limited, all right, you know. [laughter] We didn't win anything but just one.

SH: One game is a start, right? That is fun.

WL: So, I have fun with it, but I just played soccer at Rutgers. By the end of the soccer season, I was so far behind in all my engineering studies that I had to spend the rest of the year catching up. [laughter]

SH: Was soccer played in the spring or the fall?

WL: Fall, yes. I guess it still is, I don't know. I don't know when the girls and little kids play it. …

SH: You mentioned earlier that men from the DKE House visited you before you came to Rutgers. Did any other fraternities visit you beforehand? Did you visit Rutgers?

WL: No. That was the only one I remember coming around looking for pledges beforehand.

SH: Your sisters had gone to NJC. Had anyone else that you knew, any of your friends, gone to Rutgers already?

WL: No. It was basically, I think, [due to the fact that] my father had hired some guys from Rutgers at Merck's and he just said, "If you want to take engineering, they have a good engineering school. I can afford it," [laughter] and I said, "Okay."

SH: Where did you live when you first came to Rutgers?

WL: Pell Hall, in the Quadrangle. … You're going to talk to Charlie Prout this afternoon? Well, Charlie and I were thrown together as roommates. That's where I met him, in the fall of our freshman year, and he was all *gung ho*, for some reason I'm not quite sure [of] anymore, for the Beta House, and so, he pledged Beta right away and everything and that kind of pulled several more of us in. So, I ended up being a Beta, as did several others, but … he moved into the Beta House in the middle of the year. So, I got a second roommate the second half of the year in Pell Hall. … Charlie and I go back to our freshman year together. [laughter]

SH: Who was your roommate after Charlie?

WL: A guy named Frank Whitby. … Charlie's seen more of him than I have, lately. He was a Beta as well. …

SH: After your freshman year, did you move into the Beta House?

WL: Well, I was going to live there and they had a dormitory in one big room on the third (top) floors, then they had desks in all the rooms on the second floor. … I had about three or four months there and I said, "If I stay here, I'm going to flunk, because [laughter] I need a place to call my own when I study," … and a couple of others were having problems, too. So, we rented an apartment downtown, over a florist's shop. … People didn't rent apartments to young men in those days, or young women, either. You almost had to be married, but this gal that ran the florist's shop kind of liked us, and so, she said, "Okay," and so, we had a great time in that florist's shop. … The florist's shop was closed evenings and weekends, so, she didn't hear some of the things that went on up there, just as well. [laughter] … Then, I had a room in the top floor of Ford Hall in my junior year, and then, they had some rooms on the second floor, two-bedroom suites, two bedrooms and a living room, and a guy named Rollin Thorne and I rented [and] lived in one of those my senior year. … So, that was kind of nice. … I went by there when I was there in 2000 and they've got so many locks and things on the doors anymore; you know, back in the '30s, they were wide open. It was a nice building, nice place to live.

SH: It was fairly new back then.

WL: I think so, yes. I'm not quite [sure], yes.

SH: What about mandatory chapel?

WL: … Did we have to go to that? I think maybe we had to go to a certain number [of services], but not too many. I don't recall.

SH: Do you remember any of the speakers?

WL: No.

SH: What other activities were you involved in? I know that your course load was intense.

WL: [laughter] Don't excuse it. I can't think of anything else, really, between the Beta House and soccer.

SH: Do you remember any dances or music programs?

WL: Oh, yes. You went to the Junior Prom and the Soph Hop and all of those. …

SH: What about the freshman initiation?

WL: … As a pledge, you mean? Oh, yes, you wore a beanie cap, you wore a little freshman cap, but, other than that, I don't recall, really, anything and I avoided the crap that the fraternities [did], carrying little thunder mugs, you know, and wearing bibs and the stuff that they did to the freshmen. I didn't pledge until either late, at the end of, my freshman year or the start of the sophomore year, and we got some of the paddling and some of the stuff, but none of the more obvious stuff. I managed to avoid that part of the initiation.

SH: The initiation of the freshmen was run by the sophomores.

WL: Yes, yes. …

SH: As you entered Rutgers in 1937, how aware were you of what was going on in Europe?

WL: Oh, you know, we were aware of it, but it seemed a long way off. … I did read President [Robert C.] Clothier's address the other day. I forget where I saw it, but it was in some of the stuff my mother kept and I think I still have it, his commencement address to us when we graduated in '41, and he knew we were all going to war. We didn't yet, but he knew it and it was quite a speech.

SH: It pointed towards what was coming. The draft had been instituted the year before.

WL: Well, I was going to tell that story, … because I was the age that I couldn't avoid the war. … We registered for the draft, the first draft, on October 16, 1940, … anybody twenty-one or older. So, that was my twenty-first birthday. So, they had it all set up in the gym, "L-M-N," and "P-Q-R," you know, and so, I went to the "L" table and sat down with a guy and he goes along and he said, "When's your birthday?" and I said, "October 16, 1919." "Well, were you born in the morning or the afternoon? Maybe you're not twenty-one yet, you know," [laughter] and so, as I say, … I was the age. … The war was going to affect me one way or the other, and then, that was followed up by when I was working in Charleston, South Carolina, on December 7, 1941. … My first job was in a paper mill outside of Charleston, Westvaco Paper Mill, and there were four of us, that Sunday, playing golf on the Charleston Municipal Golf Course. We were all twenty-two and single and we came back and heard about Pearl Harbor. … We stayed there and got drunk and wondered where we'd be a year later and we were all gone to someplace, you know. I joined the Navy and I've lost track of the others, [where] they went, but twenty-two and single on December 7th, or being twenty-one on the day the draft is instituted, you know, [the war was unavoidable]. [laughter]

SH: Had you taken ROTC at Rutgers?

WL: No. I stayed out of that. I was still a Quaker at that point, and so, they had some physical education class or something we had to take for, I guess, the freshman year.

SH: Did you suffer any grief from any of the other students?

WL: Oh, no, no, there was no stigma attached to it at all, you know, but, along the way, I decided I really didn't feel strongly enough about it that I should stay out of the military. … It was rather obvious that something needed to be done about Hitler and a few other things, by the time the need arose. [laughter]

SH: Were you shocked that the Japanese attacked us, that it was Japan that pushed us into the war, rather than Germany?

WL: How did we feel, surprised? It was the luckiest thing that ever happened to Roosevelt, because … we jumped into the war to defend ourselves. I'm sure, at this point, that George W. Bush wishes … they'd done something, because starting a war is the toughest thing to justify a little while later, no matter how right it is, I happen to think. [Editor's Note: Mr. Llewellyn is referring to the 2003 War in Iraq.]

SH: Was your family politically involved?

WL: No. … Quakers, over the years; … they weren't activists. … Quakerism is, as I like to think of it, they weren't activists, … they just said, "This is what we believe and this is the way we're going to live and we're going to live it, no matter what you say," you know, and so, they taught by example and by the way they lived. … Some of the Quakers today, … they're more "convinced Friends," as we say, rather than "birthright," and they tend to be activist types who say, "Oh, boy, … I can get in there and I can talk about these things with people," and so, they're much more activist and not exactly the way Quakers used to do things, okay? [laughter]

SH: How did your family feel about Roosevelt and the New Deal?

WL: Oh, my father hated his guts, [laughter] because Herbert Hoover was a Quaker, as you know, and the New Deal and all the rest were [not good]. You either hated Roosevelt or you loved him, and my father hated him. [laughter]

SH: Before you left the campus in 1941, would you have said that the majority of the students at Rutgers were Democrats, Republicans or did not care?

WL: I think didn't care. I wasn't aware of any real activism on campus very much.

SH: Did anyone talk about being isolationist or supporting the America First movement?

WL: We weren't talking about it, no. … There was really no politics on the campus, that I was aware of. …

SH: Did you have any friends at NJC?

WL: No. We tended to avoid NJC like the plague, you know. You wanted a girl from any place else. [laughter] So, you only went there in desperation. [laughter] So, Dave Heacock, a fraternity brother and also from the Pell Hall group that went to the Beta House, who took engineering, he [dated] … Kat [Kathryn] Griggs, her name was, at NJC and they went together for, I guess, at least three years, all the time, and married [laughter] and Kat's father had, … I think, the Ford franchise for Northern New Jersey or something. So, they prospered under that arrangement. So, he was a good engineer, too, for RCA.

SH: Were you dating anyone while you were at Rutgers?

WL: Not regularly at all. I brought Anne [down], a gal named Anne Satterthwaite, a girl I knew in Plainfield, and she was a lot of fun, when I'd bring her in for the weekends and things, and then, I had another one, (Bobbie Joseph?). [laughter]

SH: As you entered the job market in 1941, you had already signed up for the draft. Was it difficult to find a job, knowing what was coming? Was the economy already gearing up for war, with lend-lease, and so forth? Were there more opportunities for mechanical engineers?

WL: They were able to get deferments, … because of your employment, for engineers, in those days and Westvaco had me deferred until, after Pearl Harbor, I decided [to leave]. I applied for a commission … as an engineering officer in the Navy. So, they immediately dropped any deferment for me and I went 1-A and I had rolled a Model A Roadster over in my sophomore year at college and knocked out my four front upper teeth.

SH: After you had them straightened.

WL: Yes, my parents weren't too happy about it. [laughter] and I had a partial. … You had to get a medical dispensation, I guess, to be an officer with any replaced teeth in those days, because officers are supposed to be able to talk no matter what happens, but … I did get it. So, I got the commission, but it kind of delayed the process. … I was 1-A and I was looking over my shoulder on this a little bit. So, I went and applied to the Air Corps as a flight engineer and I figured, "If I don't get the Navy commission, I'll get a commission in the Air Corps and I'll take the first one that comes," and the Navy commission came on, I don't know, I think, I guess, a day in the summer, in June of '42, and so, I went and got sworn in, but … the Air Corps commission came in a week later. … I always wondered what my life would have been [like] if it had been the other way around, because I'd have been in the Air Corps, rather than the Navy, but that was the only time I began to worry about the draft. …

SH: After graduation, you immediately went to Westvaco in Charleston.

WL: Yes, I had the job down there in Charleston. … The reason I took the job was, it was the farthest one from New York that I got an offer [for]. [laughter] I wanted to get out. I figured, "There's got to be someplace better to live than North Jersey." [laughter]

SH: Before we get into your Navy career, had your family ever gone on vacations? You were familiar with Philadelphia and New York. Had you done much traveling outside of New Jersey as a young man?

WL: Not too much. … When I had my summer jobs, … I had a Model A Roadster. That's a lovely car at that age. [laughter]

SH: You were very fortunate. Were you very popular?

WL: [laughter] Well, there were certain girls that I dated and they'd ask, if it was the winter, they'd say, "What car have you got?" and if I said, "The Model A Roadster," they'd say, "No thanks." If I said, "I've got my father's car for the weekend," why, they'd say, "Okay," and they used to have valet parking at some of these nightclubs we'd go to around Jersey, and I can remember going up in this thing. …

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

SH: This is side two of tape one. Please, continue; you were telling me about the Roadster.

WL: Yes, so, we'd go up to these nightclubs. … [For] the valet parking guy, we'd take the thing [the top?] off, … but there were only a couple of girls that were willing to do that with me. They wanted the other car. [laughter]

SH: What are some of your fondest memories of Rutgers?

WL: Oh, well, you're talking about traveling [before]. … I'd work [during] the summer, and then, I'd quit two weeks before I had to get back to college. … I did it with a couple of different friends, but … we'd go up into the [mountains]. One year, we went into the White Mountains and drove out on Cape Cod and, another one, we went up in the Adirondacks, and then, we did backpacking, and so, I saw New England on [these] vacations. My parents had gotten in the habit, while I was at Rutgers, of spending some months in Sebring, Florida, and I hitchhiked down one winter and spent a week with them and drove back with them and saw that. … Mostly, we went, drove, back to Ohio to see relatives. So, I knew the Lincoln Pike and (Tuscarora?) and all the mountain ranges in western Pennsylvania pretty well, [laughter] but, other than that; … oh, and my mother, when I was about a year old, got tuberculosis, and so, … what they had to do then [was], they had to go to sanitariums. … She went up to (White Haven?) Sanitarium in the Poconos, … when I was, say, about a year old, and was there, I think, … nine months, but I'm not really sure, and then, after that, why, my father always had domestic help. … I think his conscience hurt him a little, that my mother worked her tail off with two daughters and me, [laughter] and so, he had a little guilty conscience and we always had either a cousin from Ohio or something [staying with us]. Cousin Ester, I mean, helped raise me, I remember, when I was a little baby. … So, when it came time to move, in 1930, from Philadelphia to Plainfield, my father found a house and decided [to rent it]. Then, he sent my mother and me off to California, … for her to visit her family, who all lived … either in Pasadena or nearby, and I went along. So, that was a great train trip, all the way to California

and stopping at the Grand Canyon and Royal Gorge. … Then, my grandparents were living in Pasadena. My Aunt Laura, my mother's older sister, who never married, lived with them and had a little Chevrolet that she ran around in, and so, we went down to Lake Elsinore and some other places and my Uncle Joe lived in Pasadena. He worked at an organ factory, I think, in the … '20s and '30s, and ended up as the … head of maintenance for Mount Lowe Observatory and retired from that job, I guess, in the '40s some time. … All of that side of the family were good with their hands, as craftsmen, and then, my mother's other sister was married to a lawyer up in; yes, … can't quite grab the name of it. [laughter]

SH: North of Pasadena. In Bishop, California.

WL: Yes, up in the [San Fernando] Valley, and so, we spent the summer there and that was because my mother had had tuberculosis and my father didn't want her getting upset by all the moving. … So, when we came back, we lived in Plainfield. …

SH: Did your Cousin Ester continue to live with you and help your mom around the house?

WL: I think she went on to something else. … I mean, Cousin Ester lived in and we had a big house in Cheltenham, … but, in Plainfield, we had day help, … I mean, a black woman … from [town]. You know, Plainfield, for three blocks on either side of the railroad, it was black, and then, it was white farther away from the railroad, and so, help was available and that's the way we did it. …

SH: It is interesting that you did so much traveling. I was going to ask how traveling during your military service affected you.

WL: … When I found out, in the mountains of New England, that you could actually just stoop down and drink water out of a stream, and I'd never seen a stream around North Jersey that I wanted to drink out of, [laughter] so, I decided there must be someplace better to live. … That's why I took the job in Charleston. It was the farthest away. I had offers from things like New Jersey Public Service and right around there and I just didn't [want that]. I wanted to go see the world and get away.

SH: When you came down to Charleston, did you have an apartment? Did you live in the city? Where did you find accommodations?

WL: [I] started out in the YMCA, for a little while, and then, you couldn't rent apartments in those days unless you were married. You couldn't rent anything. … You weren't supposed to do it. So, if you were a man, you had to room someplace. Well, then, there was a couple that worked out at the mill that had come there, Lou and Evelyn (Drum?), a couple of good Baptists from upstate someplace, and they wanted to rent a house, and so, [the] three of us said, "Okay, you rent the house and we'll pay you rent, and then, live in a couple of the bedrooms." … So, we were out on the edges of Charleston, across the Ashley River there, and lived with them for about, oh, four or five months. … Like I said, they were good Baptists, … and so, [there were] a lot of things we couldn't do, like smoke and drink, while they were there and they left on the weekend, and so, I mean, … we did it because we didn't want to upset them. We [were] paid

back, had a party while they were gone, but … Evelyn interpreted that as sneaking behind their back, you know, and she had the neighbors, a couple of neighbor women, keeping an eye on the place. … So, she threw us out [laughter] when she came back, and that was the best thing that happened to me, because, by that time, I knew what the deal was and I got a room with a Mrs. (Glover?), down in 94 South Battery, which is way down in the nice part of Charleston, and she was a widow. I talked to her once, about fifteen years ago. She was eighty-something and she said she'd married again and been widowed again. So, I forget how many husbands [she had], but she rented to people, … men that she knew and [who] were going to be [there] not just a week or so, but permanent, more or less permanent. … She had two daughters, "Tunkie," twelve, and Beverly, sixteen, and she and her two girls lived on the third floor, and then, she had four bedrooms on the second floor that she rented out to have a little income, and so, there was a friend of mine that was already there, and then, another room became available. So, I moved in there and lived in 94 South Battery from some time in the fall of '41 until I left in '42 and, that winter, Beverly was chairman of the debutante committee. So, the debs would meet downstairs in the living room and plan all their parties and everything and they needed escorts in those days, and so, they'd holler upstairs, "Anybody want to go to a party?" and I'd say, "Yes. Formal or informal?" If they said formal, I said, "Give me twenty minutes to get in my tails," [laughter] and I went to every coming out party, every wedding, everything that happened south of Broad Street in Charleston that winter and there was no other way that an outsider could do this. So, I've always looked back on that year with great pleasure; had a lot of fun in Charleston. [laughter]

SH: It is generally a closed society. I am going to ask you to begin taking me through your Navy career chronologically, but, before we get into that, I would imagine that Charleston had to be a hubbub at the time.

WL: … Yes, and that was another thing that made me decide to go in the Navy, because, … by the summer of '43, why, there were a lot of Navy and Army uniforms around and the girls looked at them much better than they looked at us [laughter] in mufti or whatever you call it. So, that was an incentive, too, but I did get commissioned in the Navy, and then, my first assignment was indoctrination school, which was at Princeton, and that was a two-month deal, from October 5th to December 5, [1942], and so, that's where I first began wearing a uniform and that's embarrassing, when you first get it and somebody salutes and you don't know what to do. [laughter]

SH: That was before you had any basic training.

WL: Yes, nothing. … You know, you're just in a uniform and, once you get to indoctrination school, then, you get into the thing and you're okay. … I remember, I was in uniform … for a few days before I got to Princeton and I saw a parade coming down the street, with a flag in the front of it, and I turned in the doorway and looked at something, because I didn't know whether to salute or what. [laughter] I thought I had to do something, but I wasn't sure. [laughter] I felt awkward as hell. … So, I had two months at hated Princeton, which I rather enjoyed. …

SH: I was going to ask, how did a Rutgers man do at Princeton?

WL: [laughter] I enjoyed it.

SH: Did Rutgers win any football games while you were there? [laughter]

WL: I don't recall that. I wasn't aware of it, you know. They kept us pretty busy.

SH: I hear many stories about the Princeton-Rutgers rivalry.

WL: Yes. Well, I was at that first game in the new stadium in 1938, when we won 20-18 (only the second time Princeton played at Rutgers) because they played the first game in, what? 1869 or something like that, at Rutgers, and then, we were always a warm-up game for Princeton, over the years. … Then, we built the new stadium in '38 and they agreed to come up at the dedication game for the stadium and we won 20-18. … We got a little drunk that night, too, as I recall. [laughter]

SH: There was a celebration.

WL: Yes. That was quite a game, but I don't remember anything about sports the year I was at Princeton. I was doing other things.

SH: What did your family think about your decision to join the Navy?

WL: … For my father, it was [like] he lived it vicariously with me, and then, one of the reasons [was] because, actually, he was a Teddy Roosevelt Republican. [laughter] … I can remember statements he'd make, like, … early in the war, when the Italians got into the war, he was saying, "The British ought to just go up and down the damn coast with their battleships and knock those damn Italians out of this thing," or something, you know. … So, he was anything but a Quaker when it came to military things. So, he was delighted and enjoyed every minute of it. … When I came back from the Pacific, … just when I got out of [the] service, my sister, who always grumbled that I got to live at Rutgers and she had to commute, … she said, "Dad thinks the sun rises and sets on thee right now. If thee wants anything, ask him," [laughter] but I didn't.

SH: I assumed that your father had not served in World War I, given his Quaker faith and the age of your sisters.

WL: … No, he'd wanted to and … it was no way he could. … It was [enough that] I did it for him and he enjoyed it.

SH: Did you get to come home on the weekends when you were at Princeton?

WL: Yes, I got out a couple of times, I think, yes, yes.

SH: Did you visit Rutgers at all?

WL: Like I say, I was awfully busy. I don't remember a heck of a lot of what I did. [laughter]

SH: I was just curious. I know that the campus had started to empty out by that time.

[TAPE PAUSED]

WL: … No, I think I stayed in a place called (Adams?) Hall, if I remember correctly, and we got all our shots and it was kind of fun, and then, … we who were engineering officers were assigned, were sent out, to diesel school … at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, but I forget when it started, later in December there some time.

SH: Right. You then had two weeks off.

WL: Yes, sounds about right.

SH: Actually, you only had a week off.

WL: … Except for that one trip to California with my mother, I'd really never been west of Ohio. So, that was into a different area and Wisconsin, … to a New Jersey/New Yorker, always sounds awfully cold and everything. … The nice thing about it [was], we … still traveled by train then. In an airplane, you get in, and then, you're dumped some place, you know, but [with the] train, you kind of see it coming.

SH: Your body has time to adjust.

WL: Yes, yes. … I arrived in Chicago and I was looking for … where I got the connection to the train to Madison, which, actually, was to Milwaukee, and then, about an hour, or, so, two or three-hour layover over there, and then, the train from Milwaukee across to Madison, but there was an Air Force lieutenant near there. … I asked him and he said, oh, he was going to Madison and he'd show me where [to go] and I got [to] talking to him. His name was Freeman Heim. … Then, he said his wife was in Madison and she … [was] living with her family and he … mentioned a sister-in-law who was single and I thought, "That might be an interesting connection," but, then, we had this two or three-hour layover in Milwaukee and I went to the Schroeder Hotel and wrote some cards, and I think one of these letters to my mother, and he went off. … He and his wife had lived in Milwaukee, so, he was … visiting friends, and then, I got on the train to Madison and I got about halfway there and I said, "That might be an interesting connection." So, I walked down through the train and I found him and got [to] talking with him and he mentioned, again, that he had this sister-in-law who liked servicemen and was single. … I agreed [that] I'd like to meet her, and so, he set up a date and I met he and his wife and his sister-in-law, Stella Bazan, a couple of days later, in one of the hotels, and she was cute, [laughter] and then, I proceeded to fall madly in love with her. So, that made the ten weeks at diesel school rather nice, until mid-February. … I was burning the candle at both ends and dating and we got engaged. She wasn't going to take everything at face value that I said. She wanted to come east and meet my parents, you know. [laughter] She had a friend who believed everything she heard from a guy in a uniform; it didn't turn out that way. [laughter] So, she came east in October, later that year. I'd gone out, back to Madison for leave, for a couple of weeks in the summer, and so, everything checked out. We bought a ring in … Washington and went up to Plainfield, spent a couple of days with my parents. … She was a little embarrassed

when I asked my father if I could borrow the money for the ring I'd just bought, [laughter] which was 440 dollars, as I recall.

SH: Had you already written to your parents about Stella?

WL: Oh, yes, they knew about Stella, and so, that worked out very nicely. We got married when I got back from the Pacific. …

SH: When did you meet Stella?

WL: It would have been December '42, right?

SH: Right.

WL: Yes.

SH: The following October, you brought her home to see your parents.

WL: Yes, because I had been in training … down in Solomons [Island], Maryland, and Little Creek, Virginia, and there was a period … in early '43 … [when] their personnel program got ahead of the shipbuilding program. … They'd run us through a series of training things, and then, they'd set up another series, and then, hope they'd built some boats, so [that] they could ship us out. [laughter] So, we finally shipped out in August.

SH: Your time in Solomons and Little Creek was all part of that waiting period.

WL: Yes. …

SH: Were you assigned to a new LCI, [landing craft, infantry]?

WL: Yes. … They built the thing and we left Solomons as a crew. … Chet Gebhart, he was an old man; he was thirty-two. … He was a lieutenant and he was skipper, and then, there were two [ensigns]. … I think there might have been a third guy in there, but John Wallerstedt and I were the two ensigns, and then, there were about twenty-five seamen for the crew. … We left there as a crew and got on the train in Washington and went up to New York and the LCI was built down in Barber, New Jersey, on the, is that on the Kill Van Kull? or whatever that thing is that goes around behind Staten Island, down in there somewhere, and that was commissioned.

SH: Was the ship already completed? Were you part of the final refit?

WL: It was just being done, and then, we were the first Navy people on the thing, yes. We found things; like, in the bilge under the engine room, why, it looked like it was a nice, smooth paint job. … The paint was about an inch-and-a-half thick and we found whole paint brushes underneath that you didn't see, you know. [laughter] A few things like that needed cleaning up. … So, we went up to Pier 42, I think, yes, and cleaned things up and put in stores and got it ready to go to sea, at Pier 42 in New York City. … Then, we were given orders to sail to Little

Creek, Virginia, and so, a pilot came onboard and took us out to the end of the channel. Then, he got off on the pilot boat and there we were. … Of all of us, three officers and twenty-five men, there was only one guy that had ever been out of sight of land before and that was a machinist's mate, third class. … The rest of us had just had it in books, you know, and so, this was in the afternoon, as I recall, and I had the mid-watch that night, from midnight to four in the morning. … Fortunately, it was fairly calm and kind of a glassy sea. It was kind of nice out there and we were supposed to come to a bell buoy at some point or other and, by God, there it was, you know. [laughter] I was never so glad to see a bell buoy in my life, [laughter] and so, we got down to Norfolk, and then, got to Little Creek, but that was the first time most of us had ever done anything like that, so, it was an exciting deal.

SH: Including the skipper?

WL: Yes, yes, and then, we trained there and did a lot of training in Chesapeake Bay. … Chesapeake Bay has these pound nets for fishing and they put telephone pole piling-like things in the bottom [of the bay] and it'll go out a couple of hundred yards, and then, … they put a net there, and then, it leads into a pound, where the fish are held with a little cluster of telephone poles. On one of our trips between Little Creek and Solomons, Maryland, … we thought the … gyrocompass … hadn't been running long enough and was off. So, we were working on a magnetic compass and we did our corrections a little wrong, and so, we were about twenty degrees off course. … All of a sudden, the lookout on the bow says, "Fish nets," [laughter] and we see the telephone poles go by on each side as we went through their net. [laughter] I understand they had a lot of damaged nets during that time in the history of Chesapeake Bay. We weren't the only ones that didn't know where we were going, but everything turned out all right. [laughter]

SH: During this time, you were able to get a leave and introduce Stella to your parents.

WL: Yes, yes, on a leave from there in October. I met her in Washington. …

SH: That was very brave of her, to come east to Washington.

WL: Yes, yes, she was quite a gal. … In today's world, she would not be just a housewife. [laughter] She was better organized than I was. … Later on, I used to have fun; you know, there are people, there are women, who … have almost a fetish about the condition of their house. Our house was always perfect and I kidded her that, you know, "I'm going to get some stands and some velvet ropes around this place." … Let me go back, if I can; her mother grew up in Madison, Wisconsin, and she married Maximino Antonio Quentin Bazan, who was Argentinean. … He had been sent up to … get his degree in Madison, from Argentina, and then, he was to get a, I think he got a veterinary doctor's degree at the University of Chicago, after he graduated from Madison. … So, he fell in love with Stella's mother, (Lilah Fredrickson?), in Madison and, oh, he came around and serenaded her and everything else, you know. [laughter] So, she married this handsome Latin, and then, they lived in Chicago for a while, where some of Stella's older brothers and sisters were born, and then, they went back to Argentina. … They had a home in Buenos Aires, and then, they had a ranch out at Chilecito, which was, oh, just sort of the foothills of the Andes, in western Argentina, and that's where Stella was born, … on the ranch, in an

adobe ranch house, and so, she came from this [background]. … He drank some bad water and he got amoebic dysentery, when her mother was only thirty-two, with six kids, and it killed him. He died. … So, she'd had it, by this time, with her [in-laws]. She had relatives on his side who were bishops and priests and everybody was Catholic and the women sat over here and the men did what they wanted. She was a pretty liberated gal. She didn't want to fool around with this. So, she wired her father, "Send me some money. I'm going to get out of here. … I don't want to raise a family down here, without my husband," and he sent her ten thousand dollars in gold, as the story goes, and she got out. … So, she raised the family in Madison and she translated and did all kinds of things and she was quite a gal, but they didn't have much and the grandfather was there. He'd been a lumber salesman, come from a good family, and he was kind of the [black sheep]. I think his brother still had a lumberyard or something, but they threw him out when he was young, but he was a hell of a salesman. … So, he had a good income, and so, he helped out some. … They lived only two or three blocks from Grandpa, but, basically, they didn't have much and Stella always had slept on what she called a trundle bed and it was in the living room and she had to move it out of the way in the morning. She never even had a bedroom, and so, [she] sort of lived in a disastrous situation. So, when she got her own house, she wanted it nice and she enjoyed it, but she didn't make a big deal out of it. She was just so damned efficient. She had things scheduled for every day and I knew that, no matter what, [the house would be immaculate]. So, the game I was leading up to [was], the game I used to play on people, sometimes, … for some reason, we'd be near the house or something. I'd say, "Well, look, … let's stop over at my house. We'll have a drink or something," and they'd say, "Your wife know we're coming?" "No, but that's all right." "I wouldn't take anybody home to my house unless my wife knew." [laughter] I could walk in that house anytime and it was fine and she would be fine and we'd have a nice drink. Now, I wouldn't do that with my second wife, [laughter] and I love her dearly, but I didn't marry her because she was a duplicate of Stella, [laughter] but, anyway, where was I before that?

SH: We were discussing how brave it was for a single woman to come to Washington, then, meet your parents.

WL: … As I say, she would have been an executive, I think, and she was so well-organized and she was smarter than I was. [laughter]

SH: Did you save any of the letters that you wrote to Stella while you were overseas?

WL: I think I destroyed those. [laughter] I looked at some of those a few years ago. …

SH: Your children probably would have enjoyed them.

WL: I only had two boys. So, that's a bad thing, too. You should have a girl. [laughter]

SH: Please, continue. Where did your ship go next? Did the LCI go only by its numbers or did you give it a nickname?

WL: … No, it's the LCI-444. … Yes, that was home for, … let's see, from August '43 to, I got released [in] April '45. I was in Manila, on a tanker that I'd gotten on for transportation back to

the States, and it was about a week after I'd been detached from the LCI to go back to the States, and that was when Roosevelt died. So, I heard about him dying when I was in Manila Harbor, I know. …

SH: In April of 1945.

WL: Yes, but, anyway, so, it was just the LCI-444 and we trained down there from; … we sailed on the day before Stella's birthday, … so, it was October 19th. My birthday's October 16th. She was four days younger than I was. She was October 20th. … My mother was almost three years older than my father. Both of my sisters were older than their husbands. I said I was not going to marry a woman that was older than I was, and I was close, [laughter] but it was on October 19th when we sailed out of Norfolk and there were, I think, four LCIs going together, 442, 443, 444 and 445, yes. … They got orders to sail on … the 19th and I'd gone off … to file some sort of a commissary report, and then, I … stopped at the dentist for something and I got back about three or four in the afternoon and the four LCIs had been tied up at … some area in Norfolk Harbor. We'd been waiting for orders for some time to join a convoy and the Skipper, Gebhart, was at the gate … [and yelled], "Come on, come on." I held them up for three hours. The other three LCIs had already left and he'd waited for me, and so, we took off and we left Norfolk at full speed, trying to catch up to these other LCIs that had left and joined this convoy out at sea. … Right when they got to the end-of-the-channel buoy, and everybody's traveling without lights, … the Skipper was on watch at that time and there was another ship nearby. I was in the sack, but I came on watch an hour later, and the ship turned to go north and we were going straight, and so, the Skipper put the engines at flank speed, to get out of the way. … When I came on watch an hour later, they were still at flank speed. He forgot all about it [laughter] and that's how I heard the story [of how] we almost got run over by this other ship. … So, we went out, and then, we couldn't find the convoy, … but there was a flying boat flying around. So, we signaled [that] we were looking for the convoy and they signaled back, "Take this course," and, pretty soon, we found it and joined it. … It was a six-knot convoy on the way to Guantanamo, Cuba. …

SH: Can you describe the LCI? What were its functions? What were your duties?

WL: Yes, well, it was a troop carrier, with two ramps. Some of the later versions had one ramp, but in the center, with some doors that opened up, but [we had] two ramps. It would carry about 250 troops, … but you could only have them onboard maybe a week, or ten days at the most, because it was pretty crowded and … you couldn't carry supplies for that many troops for much longer than a week. So, most of the time, we were just by ourselves and it was kind of nice, you know, but, then, once in a while, we'd be [crowded]. … [As] a matter-of-fact, … I'd just moved into the, they had a troop officers' quarters, and the Skipper and I were in one cabin and I smoked and he didn't and he wasn't too happy when I stamped cigarettes out on the deck. I'm surprised he didn't throw me out, but, anyway, I don't think about it anymore. … So, I moved into the troop quarters, and then, I'd stay there, except when we had troops, and that wasn't very often. … We had eight GM diesels clutched to two propeller shafts and they had to be balanced, … so that they shared the load. … If they didn't, why, you had one diesel smoking to beat heck and the other's loafing. … We had things to do to keep us busy, to keep the thing afloat, but we managed.

SH: Where was your crew from? Were they all from the East Coast?

WL: Yes, or a lot of them came from the Chicago area. They'd gotten signed on at the Navy Pier, is it? at Chicago, I think, where so many of them went into service, but, yes, there was one [sailor] from North Carolina. I remember, his name was (Lassie James Kirkman?). … You know, when you're on watch and you get to know these kids, you hear some pretty interesting stories and you're talking and I asked him, one time, I said, "Where the heck did you get the name Lassie James?" Well, he said, "Just before I was born, my mother was reading a book, *Lassie James Goes Round the World*," and he said, "When I arrived, I got named Lassie James." [laughter] … I had an electrician's mate who … had never heard of electricity until he got in the Navy and I knew a heck of a lot more than he did, which was a good thing, but I'd ask him if something was … hot or not and he'd say, "Yes," after touching it, you know, standing on a steel deck, [laughter] but he had dry skin, so, he didn't get hit too hard. … Well, they came from the eastern half of the US, almost all, I guess. … My gunner's mate was Brown. What the heck was his first name? I don't know. I just always called him Brown, but he was from Brooklyn [laughter] and he was the guy that always woke me for watches. He'd come in, "Come on, Mr. Llewellyn, get up, get up," [laughter] and we'd talk a lot on night watches. … During the Depression, why, … he'd tell stories of sleeping under newspapers in Central Park. He just had nothing. … A good meal for him was some lard spread on bread, you know. … So, I learned some stories about … growing up poor in New York from Brown, but he was quite a guy. … We had one guy who was, I can't remember his name, but we were frequently in [port]; when we get out in the South Pacific, why, … rather than anchor out, … we'd pull up on shore and put the forward line around a palm tree and leave the stern anchor out and have our nose on the beach. … So, rather than being confined to the boat, we'd have a ramp down and men could … go ashore and visit between LCIs and this kind of thing, … in various ports, and, one day, … the guys were swimming off about the middle of the boat. I mean, the nose is on the shore. You know the water's going to be not very deep here, but this one kid comes up and, as I say, … he looks, "Oh, boy, swimming," and he dives in and you see him go in … with his feet up.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: Please, continue.

WL: So, anyway, he dove in and he stopped when his hips were about at the waterline, [laughter] you know, and then, his legs slowly went over and we wondered whether [he had broken his neck], and then, it didn't hurt him, you know. [laughter] Yes, he was fine. No, but that's the way he learned how deep the water was, anyway. [laughter]

SH: How did you control twenty-five seamen when you went into port? Did you have to worry about them, take care of them or give them advice?

WL: … No, not really. … In those days, it was really miserable; a black man couldn't be anything but a steward's mate and we had a young kid, Sam something or other, who was our steward's mate, and he lived in the crew's quarters, where everybody else was white. … In those days, that was [the norm], you know, but they all got along fine. … I can't tell that story. Well,

he got sick one time and his pecker was swollen and he was so innocent. He'd never peeled it back, you know. He hadn't been circumcised and … he never cleaned it, and so, obviously, he'd never had any sex or anything else, either. Most of us hadn't, men, in those days, but he was just a real nice, innocent young kid. … He was transferred at some time or other and we got an older black guy and he didn't want to take authority. He was a miserable bastard. So, we had a little trouble with him and I, in some ways, didn't blame him. They were really put down in those days. … No, these were nice, clean, young kids and we were very seldom in a port that they could get in much trouble [in], anyway. Of course, in Panama, they all got tattoos. [laughter] I held off. … So, as we're going through the Galapagos, after we leave Panama City, why, they've all got these festering, miserable things on their arms or someplace, you know. … Half of them weren't worth a damn when the scars got cleared up. … So, every time I see some guy with a tattoo, I always ask him where he was and, "How drunk were you the night you got it?" because that's what they all do. [laughter] They got drunk and got tattooed. … We had one big, strong kid, Verlin Creed, C-R-E-E-D. I think he came from [the] Chicago area, someplace, and he was a motor machinist's mate and, you know, they always tell you, on hexagon nuts, you use a wrench that fits. Otherwise, you chew it up, and you don't use a pair of pliers on it for anything. … We were lucky on the 444. We had a skipper who was thirty-two, … rather than just another one of us who was about twenty-three or four, so, he was old enough to [know better]. He had his idiosyncrasies and we joked about them, but he was an older guy and had been around and we all respected him. The rest of us were twenty-two or younger, and then, … oh, we had a cook, Bruseau, who was from Leominster, Massachusetts. … He was a seaman when he came in and we decided, [since] he'd done a little cooking, so, we made him the cook and he'd worked in a short-order place at one time or other. He was in his early forties, but he got mad at his wife and said, "The hell with you," and went off and joined the Navy. … You know, everybody had to have their mail censored. He'd bring his letters in to me. He'd say, "Here, Mr. Llewellyn, I don't want any of these … other kids reading my mail. You censor them for me." So, I read all of his letters home and he was very sorry he got mad at her that night. [laughter] … When we left Guantanamo, Cuba, it was the tail end of a hurricane and there were forty or fifty-foot swells coming by and these LCIs would come up on the top of them and about a third of the keel would show, because I was looking at the others, there were several [LCIs], and then, they'd hang there. … Then, they go down on the bulkheads and they'd go out and they'd slowly crawl up the next one and start it [all over again]. Well, the whole time we were doing that, Bruseau was … in his lifejacket, standing out on the fantail, hanging on to a stanchion, watching these swells (waves) go by. … We'd go by there, going up for our deck watch up in the con, and he'd say, "Son of a bitch is going to sink, Mr. Llewellyn, son of a bitch." I'd say, "No, it isn't, Bruseau. It isn't going to sink. It's going to be fine." "Yes, son of a bitch is going to sink," and he'd watch another one go by and he did that for about a day-and-a-half. … From then on, that bugger could cook food when I couldn't eat it, you know. He's in there cooking it and I'm so sick that I don't even want to look at it. … So, we had Bruseau, the cook, he was older, the Skipper was older, then, Joe Peppitone was an older guy from San Francisco and he was my chief motor machinist's mate and he was just a gem. He was a nice guy and he was in his early forties, I think, and a little older. … He had these six kids keeping the engines running and I didn't have to worry about it. I spent most of my time on the deck, even though I was the engineering officer, and I got the stuff and Peppitone, well, he was just a good, solid guy. … We had a nice crew that way. There was enough age in there, here and there, to hold it together, … but I was going to tell [you] about Verlin Creed, one of Joe

Peppitone's [crew], big, strong kid, and Joe was telling me one day [that] he saw him and he had a pair of pliers on a hexagon nut and he [said], "Hey, you're not supposed to do that," but he said, "You know, he's so damned strong, it never slipped, so, he doesn't mark up the thing." So, he said, "I let him use it," you know, but Verlin Creed always said, he did some training or [something or] other in Denver, Colorado, … "When the war's over, if I'm still around, I'm going to live in Denver." So, back … when we took Peter [to college], in 1965, I guess it was, maybe '64, he insisted on going to Brigham Young University his first year, because he had a couple of friends who were Mormons, and so, we took him out to Brigham Young, Salt Lake City, and then, coming back, we went through Denver. It's the first time I'd ever been there and I said, "Verlin Creed always said he was going to settle in Denver." So, I looked in the phonebook and I found Verlin Creed and I called him. …

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

SH: This continues an interview with Mr. William Llewellyn in Hilton Head, South Carolina. This is tape two, side one. Please, continue.

WL: Okay. So, we called Verlin Creed and he came over and we visited for a couple of hours, but he did exactly what he said [he would]. He went back there and, of course, he'd been working with diesel engines on the LCI, and so, he got a job with; what's the big, yellow building equipment [manufacturer]? …

SH: Caterpillar?

WL: Caterpillar, yes. He got a job with Caterpillar, … and they're all diesels, and [he was] working on them. He was … the shop manager for Caterpillar Company in Denver. So, he was doing real well. It was fun to talk to him.

SH: For the most part, the crew got along.

WL: … Oh, yes.

SH: You were together for days and days. What did you do to pass the time?

WL: Yes. I played an awful lot of solitaire. [laughter] Oh, I don't know, you always [find something]. If you're at sea, you're busy, but we were not at sea a lot of times. … Mostly, we were on the beach, when we were just waiting around, and so, that let you get ashore, but you're chipping paint and that's the way to keep the crews busy, always repainting something.

SH: That was how you kept the men busy.

WL: Yes, yes.

SH: How well supplied were you? Were you ever worried that you were going to run out of something that you needed?

WL: No, only I made one mistake one time. … When we were still in the Guadalcanal-Solomons area, we were called over [to an area]. … That was when rockets first came in, these banks of rockets they'd shoot, and they had mounted some rocket launchers on some LCTs, [landing craft, tank], which are these big things you called "floating bedpans," [laughter] and they wanted an LCI, … because we have the con and the height to observe and control the things, and have a little demonstration on shooting the rockets on a deserted island off Guadalcanal. So, for some reason, they picked us, I think, maybe, because Gebhart was older, an older skipper. … So, we went in and beached and we picked up Lieutenant General Harmon and Admiral [William F. "Bull"] Halsey, that's right, he was there, and somebody else, and then, all these captains and colonels were running around, putting chairs under Halsey and the Lieutenant General and everything. … We got on the beach, but, the day before, one of the other LCIs had run out [of gas]. We needed gasoline just for the bow winch and the stern winch, which were gasoline-motor-driven. Everything else was diesel. … We'd been tied up next to another LCI and they were out or something, … so, I guess I gave them our drum of gasoline. … We got all these guys aboard and we're just starting to pull off and the stern anchor, which we needed to pull off, winch ran out of gasoline. … So, we rushed around and … drained a bucket of it out of the bow anchor winch and got it back there and got them off, but I never gave [away] my gasoline again. [laughter] … Where was I?

SH: You had gone through the Panama Canal, when all the guys got their tattoos.

WL: Okay.

SH: Before we move on, when you were at Norfolk, when did you know that you were going to the Pacific? Had you always known that, as an LCI, you would probably end up there?

WL: I don't remember. … Well, I guess we knew because of the green camouflage we were getting painted [on]. I guess we knew, somewhere along there, that we were going to the Pacific and not [Europe].

SH: When you left the States, the D-Day invasion still had not taken place. [Editor's Note: Mrs. Holyoak is referring to the invasion of Normandy on June 6, 1944.]

WL: No, no.

SH: Did you ever think that you might be ordered to Europe, rather than the Pacific?

WL: … No, I think, for some reason, we knew we were going to the Pacific, for … most of the time there, [at Norfolk], and I really don't know why anymore, but we did.

SH: Did you ever go to any meetings or briefings that dealt with the bigger picture?

WL: No, we just had to run the LCI-444. [laughter]

SH: They simply said, "Here are your orders. This is where you are going."

WL: Yes, yes. …

SH: Did the orders come in for the LCI-444 as a whole or were they issued to each one of you, such as you as the engineering officer?

WL: Just the ship was ordered, yes. … I was interested [in the fact that], sometimes, [during] the few landings we were involved in, … these Army units would come aboard. … They had these fantastic operations manuals that had been made up for … the job they had to do, you know, … but we didn't have anything like that. … When their jobs started, ours was over. [laughter] …

SH: You spoke about your shakedown cruise and joining your convoy. Did you participate in any practice troop landings, either at Guantanamo or Florida?

WL: Oh, yes. … Mostly, it wasn't with troops, but we did a lot of practice beachings and we did them during the summer of '43, yes. We did some of them out at Virginia Beach and we kind of would fight for the binoculars, so [that] we could look at girls, sometimes, out there. [laughter] … No, there wasn't any [troop landings].

SH: You wrote on your sheet that you were in Tulagi, Florida Island, in the Solomons, in December, New Year's Eve of 1943.

WL: Florida Island in the Solomons. Yes, that's when we arrived at the amphibious base there.

SH: You joined the LCI Flot [Flotilla] …

WL: 22, I think it was. … They sent a guy out, it was kind of a political thing, I think, to be the commander of LCI Flot 22. … That would have been in early '44, when we were … operating off of New Guinea, and this plump, little guy came along, William, I called him "Wee Willie" (Exton?), William Exton, and he was a consultant, from New York City, in something or other. … Evidently, he had some political connections, and so, he went in the Navy as a commander and they gave him this job as commander of LCI Flot 22. … About fifteen years ago, ten or fifteen years ago, I stumbled [up]on the obituary of William Exton in *The New York Times*, who had just died at eighty-something-or-other, and it said that he was always very proud of [the] service he'd done in the Pacific as commander of a landing [craft], [laughter] I forget quite how they said it. … Four or five of us were cruising along the coast of New Guinea while William Exton was commander, hadn't been there very long, and he'd never been to sea before. You know what the score was and we were ahead of him, … going west, and the sun was setting. So, the steam, which is basically steam coming out of our diesel engine exhaust, looks black when you see it in that [light]. So, I happened to be on deck watch and I'm rather sensitive about how my engines are evaluated and the blinker opened up back there and said, "Why are your engines smoking, Com, LCI Flot 22?" and I went down and looked and looked and it teed me off and I thought of a lot of things to say. … I had the signalman send back, "Your engines are smoking more than ours are," and the blinker came back, … "Com, LCI Flot 22, has no engines," [laughter] and so, that was the end of the communication, and then, that night, a few hours later, we pulled into some harbor or other and the blinker opened up, "Captain of LCI-444, come

aboard," you know. … So, Gebhart went over and he came back and said, "God damn it, Llewellyn, don't you ever send a message to the officer on Com, LCI Flot 22, [again]." [laughter] He'd had his rear end reamed for my snotty message. [laughter] …

SH: Apparently, this sense of humor kept you going.

WL: Yes, oh, dear. [laughter]

SH: It took you nearly two months to get to the Solomons.

WL: That was a great trip. That was the trip of a lifetime. …

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: We were talking about your experiences in the Galapagos.

WL: Yes, and riding with my fellow ensign, … John Wallerstedt. Well, then, I met a Rutgers guy there.

SH: Okay, of all the places to meet someone from Rutgers

WL: Yes, I know, [laughter] and I only met one other Rutgers guy, unexpectedly, and that was, … probably, six months later or so, at some port along the coast of New Guinea. … We were staying a few days, so, we were pulled up on the shore, as we normally were. So, there seemed to be some construction going on. So, I took a walk, one afternoon, and there was a bulldozer and … I thought I recognized this guy and he was, and I can't think of his name at the moment [Stan Peters, civil engineer]. [laughter] I could yesterday, but not right now, but he was a civil engineering student that I knew at Rutgers and he'd gone into the SeaBees, and so, we had a visit there, for a few hours. … That's the only two Rutgers people I remember, but, anyway, Wally drove the first time and he was right; he'd never driven before. …

SH: The gentleman who was driving for the first time was your skipper, correct?

WL: No, no. … John Wallerstedt, that's the picture; yes, that's it, John Wallerstedt. … Now, when you talk to him; he was kind of a little odd anyway, but I liked him. … Now, when you talk to him, he says, "Uh-huh, uh-huh," and Connie listened to that for a couple of hours and, every time I mention his name, she says, "Uh-huh, uh-huh," drove her nuts. [laughter]

SH: That is amazing, for someone who had never driven before to learn how in the Galapagos Islands, of all places. The fact that Ens. John Wallerstedt had never driven a car before we arrived in the Galapagos Islands has always fascinated me. … But it's true! I had been driving cars since I was thirteen (whenever my father would let me). Had my first driver's license when I was sixteen. My first car when I was seventeen. … I thought all my age group probably did the same; at least until John ("Wally") and I went ashore together on November 8, 1943 in the Galapagos Islands! My diary entry for 11/8/1943 reads: "I spent the morning organizing work on the bad engine (piston and liner shot) and in the afternoon I went ashore with Wally to see the

sights. There were lots of pelicans, and a seal feeding on some tiny fish by the pier. At the naval base we got a jeep and went over to an Army Air Feld (with a PX) to buy some clothing items. I borrowed the jeep and we drove--just two or three miles, I think--to the air field over a flat, deserted gravel road. When we came out of the Army PX, Wally asked if I minded if he drove and, of course, I said I didn't. Well. … I no longer remember any specifics but the ride was pretty awful, and when I commented … he told me it was the first time he had ever driven a car of any kind! He told me, in conversations over the years, that he grew up in Kansas City, his father didn't have a car, he came directly into the Navy from college. … He just never needed to drive! I took over the driving again, about half way back to the base. … And we arrived safely! I think I was twenty-four when all of the happened, and Wally was about two years younger--21 or 22, I think.

WL: … I put this [sheet] together for you. 10/19, we left Norfolk. 10/25, we arrived at Guantanamo. 10/26, we left Guantanamo in a convoy of LCIs and LSTs. 10/29, we arrived at Coco Solo Naval Base. That's in Colón, on the Caribbean end of the Canal. 10/31, I finally got ashore and spent an evening in Colón and saw all the girls and things, … which I didn't patronize, [laughter] … though some of my compatriots did, and then, on 11/1, … that was the following day, I went into Colón again, … a couple of us, and we decided to take the train across. So, we took the train across the Isthmus [of Panama] to Balboa and looked around in Panama City and looked around there for a little while, and then, took the train back again. … Then, on 11/2, we were traveling with four other LCIs and the five LCIs went through the Canal. … They're so small and the locks are so big that they'd put all five of us in one lock, and then, they'd open it up, and then, we'd all proceed to the next one, … and so on, and then, we anchored in the Gatún Lake for a while, before they could let us down on the Pacific side, but it took us all day, that way, to get through the Canal. … You know, when you get to the Canal Zone on the Caribbean side, the tide is about two or three feet, you know, it's like this, and then, you go through the Canal and you get to the Pacific side and the tide is about thirty feet. … You're on these docks and you've got to have men on the lines all the time, because, if the tide's going out and you don't loosen the lines up, why, pretty soon, the thing's [the ship is] hanging on the dock, you know. So, it was a totally different ballgame on one side than the other. Then, we shoved off on 11/4 for the Galapagos, and then, you have the rest of it there. So, that's the trip to the Pacific.

SH: Can you tell me about your first invasion, preparing for the operation and so forth?

WL: Well, again, we had a Commander [McD] Smith for a while, in the Solomons, and he took us out at night and had us holding station and [he] trained us. … He was an old Annapolis man that had screwed up, so, … that's why he was dealing with amphibs, rather than something that he wanted to be in, but he knew his business. … So, he did a good job, took us on a lot of interesting training cruises. … Then, the first invasion we were on was the Green Island thing, that I showed you the pictures of, … which I think was February 15, 1943, and we loaded up troops, went across to Guadalcanal and loaded our troops, and I think we had them onboard about two days, maybe three. …

SH: Were these Marines?

WL: Let me look at that picture. Were they even ours, or were they Aussie Troops?

SH: At one point, you were operating out of Hollandia, but, then, you went to Australia to train with the Aussies.

WL: Yes. These are Aussie troops. I can tell from the helmets. They had the old World War I helmet. So, it was Aussie troops that we …

SH: That you took to Green Island.

WL: To the Green Island [landing], yes, and, as far as I know, nobody shot at us in anger while we were there. …

SH: While crossing the Pacific from the Panama Canal, were you ever worried about submarines? Were you in a large convoy? Did you lose any ships?

WL: … No, no, we went by ourselves and the theory was, "Nobody's going to mess with us because we're so small and, if they happen to see us, probably, the torpedo will go under us and won't hit us anyway." So, we were just, you know, … expendable. [laughter] If we made it, great; if we didn't, why, it wasn't any big deal. [laughter] …

SH: How often were you able to get mail in the Pacific?

WL: Mostly, within every month. Yes, I don't think we went much beyond that before finding an APA [attack transport] or somebody that had a bunch of mail for us aboard it. It worked out pretty well, yes. …

SH: How did you pick up the Aussie troops?

WL: We went over to Guadalcanal and beached, and then, they came aboard there.

SH: Had they been part of that operation?

WL: I don't know, … but that's where they were. [laughter]

SH: Did you talk with them at all? Did they have any opinions for or against Americans?

WL: [laughter] Oh, they were "one of us," you know. … I never heard [of] any friction, at that time. … No, the main thing was when we went to Cairns, Australia, the next year, for a couple of months on a training thing. … Then, we had the LCI up in the dry-dock for a couple of days, because, when you're beaching all the time, sooner or later, you mess up your skegs and your rudders on the bottom of the ship, and so, when we were in dry-dock, why, the enlisted men were living in a barracks where there were a lot of British and/or Australian sailors. … They came back and they said, "These guys are filthy." … You know, the British sailor's uniform had, I think, a blue kind of shirt or blouse, and then, it came down and it showed a white skivvy shirt, in this area. Well, they said, "Those skivvy shirts were filthy, but they take white shoe polish

and paint the part that showed, but they wouldn't wash anything," and they came back disgusted. … So, that was the main difference. … We tended to be cleaner than some of our Allies.

SH: Where did they house the officers during that training?

WL: Oh, I guess, I don't even remember, but it was only [for] a day or two. … Yes, I just don't remember. There's no story connected with it; I can't remember it. [laughter]

SH: When you were on Guadalcanal, did you see any of the natives?

WL: … Yes. Well, the Japanese, … there was one or two islands right at the southeastern end of the Solomons group that they didn't get to. … This Commander Smith that was our flotilla commander at that time had been in the South Pacific in peacetime, earlier, so, he knew a lot of this stuff. So, he took us [there]. … There's an old German that ran this last little island down there and had been there for years and he wanted to see him. So, we took a training cruise down there and went ashore and this old German is hiking us through the [island], from one village to the other, and we're all these young ensigns, think we're hot stuff. We could barely keep up with the old guy, you know. [laughter] He was in good shape, and so, … as I say, he and the Commander knew each other. … I still have some artwork that they sold there, little statues and bowls and things with inlaid mother of pearl that we bought, that I have a shelf full of them at home, and that's what they had done, but the Japanese never quite got to them. So, their pads were kept clean, their villages were nice and this German ran a pretty tight island, you know. [laughter]

SH: What was he doing on the island?

WL: I don't know. … I don't know whether he sold copra or not, which was the main product of the South Pacific at one time, but … they were making this stuff for sale that a lot of us bought.

SH: He was not a missionary or something else.

WL: No, he just was a trader, I guess, that kind of took over and ended up sort of running the thing, and for the better, because we had another assignment, one time, to go over to [Guadalcanal]. They were expanding an airfield or something and they wanted to move some natives on Guadalcanal. So, they sent us over to pick up these natives and take them about thirty miles down the coast and we took them onboard and I have some pictures of that, but they were filthy [laughter] and there were nursing mothers. … As I say, we had them on about three or four hours, but we hosed everything down pretty thoroughly after they got off. They weren't very clean or desirable and, other than train and do that, that [mission to] move the natives and the Green Island thing, … that's about all we did in the Solomons area. … Then, they reassigned us over to New Guinea. So, we went over to Milne Bay, at the very tip of New Guinea, and then, worked our way up the coast, got into Hollandia, I think, probably within a month or so after they'd taken it from the Japanese, which is one of the good harbors on the north shore of New Guinea, and we went ashore there. We found fiber sacks full of rice, all piled up, and a lot of Japanese stuff was still there when we first got there. …

SH: What did you do with stuff like that?

WL: Left it right where it was, [laughter] and then, the SeaBees came in and started reshaping the thing and cutting in-roads and building docks and making it a [base], and that was where [Douglas] MacArthur had his headquarters for a long time, before he went up into the Philippines.

SH: Did you ever see MacArthur?

WL: No, just heard about him, [that he] was drinking orange juice and had his wife there. [laughter]

SH: When you went to Hollandia, was the LCI still empty?

WL: … Mostly, we were traveling around empty, yes. … We only got used four times, I think, in there, [the Pacific], yes, where we really were involved with an operation. Oh, we did some stuff in-between, like, when we went from, I guess, … Manus to Leyte, why, … they had, I think, three or four LCIs, and then, there were LCTs, the floating bedpans, who had no navigation equipment. We kind of herded them up. We were their navigation and their support and one of them sank about halfway up and one of the LCIs went alongside to take off the crew. … One of the officers, we understood, wanted to be a radio announcer at some time and he was on the radio. Then, he sounded like an announcer at a football game, describing what was going on, and then, all of the crew of the LCT, they wouldn't just step from the LCT onto the LCI. They insisted on jumping in the water first, because they heard that if you were rescued like that, why, you got to go home. Otherwise, … you didn't, necessarily. So, they made sure they got wet before they got rescued. [laughter]

SH: Were they able to go home?

WL: I don't know the end of the story. [laughter] … Then, another time, … when we were in Subic Bay, why, they sent us out to, what's the island that the Japanese took in Manila Bay?

SH: Leyte?

WL: No, not Leyte, … the last stronghold, that MacArthur was taken off [of]? …

SH: Corregidor?

WL: Corregidor, yes. We went out to Corregidor [laughter] and, again, we were herding some LCTs that were going out, … they'd just taken the island a week or so before, … to take off some of the equipment. … We went along … as navigation and to assist them, if they needed it, and, … really, that's the only time I ever saw any dead bodies. There were still Japanese bodies kind of floating in the surf on the Corregidor shore when we were there. …

SH: Did you go ashore at Corregidor?

WL: I just walked [around] and looked a little bit, not really much.

SH: Did you see any of the caves?

WL: No, I didn't get into anything. So, we did things like that, but, actually carrying troops, there were only the four times that we really [did that]. …

SH: Would you like to talk about them?

WL: [laughter] Well, let's see, we covered Green Island. That was Aussie troops and that was no resistance at all. It was just finding it. It was kind of a rocky, little, coral island, and not a beach, so, we found a place to go ashore and let the guys wade in. … Then, the next one, I think, was Noemfoor, which was near Biak, which is kind of in the turkey throat of New Guinea, on the eastern end there, and that was a D-Day. … That was kind of fun, because there were cruisers there and they did a bombardment before we went in and you could kind of see the shells going overhead and, again, we were never actually hit by anything. … I'm not even sure we were ever fired at. [laughter] We were available, if they wanted to, … but that was a D-Day landing, and then, the next one was Halmahera. … When did we go to Australia?

SH: It says here, "10 of '44."

WL: October, okay. So, that would have been August or September, … while we were still operating in the New Guinea area, and we did the Halmahera landing. That was D +1, I think. … So, we went in unopposed. The main thing about that landing was that … I didn't start smoking until I was nineteen, I guess, during finals in my sophomore year or junior year, and I was smoking about three packs a day and I was down to about 135 pounds. … I knew I could never keep smoking if I wanted [to gain weight]. So, I'd been trying to stop and I'd stop for a few hours, and then, borrow so many from our radioman that I'd have to buy cigarettes to pay him back. … When we got to Halmahera, I said, "When we pull off the beach, that's the end of it. No more cigarettes," and so, fortunately, we got caught by the tide, so, I had an extra six hours before we could get off. … I did throw them overboard and I've never smoked a cigarette since. [laughter] I've smoked everything else, cigars, pipes, but I don't inhale those things; … I obviously inhale some. … So, I don't think I'm doing anything since then to damage my health too much and I seem to be holding together, but that was when I quit smoking cigarettes, finally, at Halmahera. … Then, we went to … Australia and did the training, worked down there at Cairns and came back and rejoined the flotilla, when, in December? in Leyte Gulf, but we missed all the action there, too. … Then, we went through the islands and started operating out of Subic Bay and we did one landing from Subic Bay, which was down on southeastern Luzon, at Mayon. It was the Mayon Volcano. It was just at the base. It was a perfect cone and there's a Mayon village or something there and that was our last operation. … It was about, I think, maybe a dozen LCIs and three or four LSTs, with their equipment, and a destroyer escort of three or four destroyers. We understood, afterwards, that there were some fourteen-inch guns manned by the Japanese watching us, but they were waiting for the big ships to come, so [that] they never used them, and we were all it was. We were just putting this smaller unit ashore to clean up the area. …

SH: Did you ever see any Japanese aircraft?

WL: No. [laughter] War's fun when you don't get shot at. …

SH: Would you like to repeat that?

WL: You want me to say it again? I've always said that war is the most exciting thing in your life and, if you don't get hurt, it's a lot of fun. … The only thing you really worry about [is], you know you might get killed, you just don't want to get crippled, that's all, you know, and they're the guys that pay the price, the ones that … really end up with a crippling injury. …

SH: Did you ever have to take wounded men off a beach?

WL: No, no, never … handled any wounded or anything, no.

SH: Did your ship ever get any R&R [rest and relaxation]?

WL: No. We got that "surprising" trip to Australia, as Wally said when I was talking to him this last time. … That was the only civilization we saw after we left … the States, was when we were in Australia, and we'd just about given up even seeing Australia when, suddenly, they said, "We want two, three boats to go down and train Australian troops," and we were happy to comply.

SH: When you were in the Pacific, did you know what was going on in Europe? Did you know about the D-Day invasion? [Editor's Note: Mrs. Holyoak is referring to the invasion of Normandy.]

WL: Well, our radioman would tune in [the news], and then, type a little bulletin and he did that almost every day. So, that's the way we got the world news, yes.

SH: You did know.

WL: Yes, yes, … and I think it was code, in those days, you know. It would be voice, obviously, now, but I understand they don't even man the SOS band any more. They quit that a few years ago.

SH: That was amazing. I had heard that as well.

WL: Yes.

SH: You mentioned that you returned to Subic Bay and that you were detached from the LCI-444 in April of 1945.

WL: Yes, when we were relieved for reassignment, yes.

SH: Where were you going to next? Obviously, the war was still on in both theaters.

WL: … Yes. Well, we got orders to proceed and report, and proceed orders mean that, … in this case, … if it were proceed and report in the US, I think you had two weeks to do it, … from when you got the orders. When it was proceed and report to the US, it meant you had two weeks to report in after you arrived at a US port. … Stella and I had plans to get married as soon as I … got back. So, what I wanted to do was not land at a West Coast port, I wanted to land at an East Coast port, and then, I could visit with my parents for a few days, and then, go get married … in Madison. So, we got on a tanker in Manila, and the Skipper and I were leaving at the same time, so, we were traveling together. …

SH: They replaced only you two on the LCI. Was there anything wrong with the 444?

WL: … No. They replaced us. We were replaced on the LCI and relieved. …

SH: Your crew stayed.

WL: Yes, yes. As a matter-of-fact, … the night before we were relieved, … it was a nice night. … I woke up and I went out on deck and I could hear some noise and I [was] kind of curious and I walked up. … We were anchored out, I think, in Subic Bay, yes, in Subic Bay; we were not on shore. … I walked up and, in the boatswain's locker, up in the very bow of the ship, I looked down in and here's all of the ratings, the boatswain, the coxswain, the chief motor mac, the signalman, the radioman, all the guys that I knew were down there, drunk as hell. [laughter] I went back to bed and, the next day, I said, "For God's sake, don't do that with these new guys." … We had a chief pharmacist's mate, we had a pharmacist's mate onboard, and that was his job. He got medicinal alcohol. [laughter] …

SH: He was your corpsman.

WL: Yes. So, that's where the booze came from. … [laughter] What was I telling you before? …

SH: You were replaced and relieved, but the crew was going to stay.

WL: Oh, yes, yes. So, these … new, other officers came aboard the next day and the ship was turned over to them and we left. … As I say, I told the guys, "Don't get drunk in the boatswain's locker for a while, until you know them." [laughter]

SH: What did you and your skipper think that you would be doing next?

WL: We had no idea, no idea. … When we got back, he was reassigned to an LCI, or I'm not sure. He was reassigned to sea duty and for training at Coronado, California, which was where they were beginning to train for the Japanese invasions that never came [about] because of the A-bomb. [Editor's Note: Mr. Llewellyn is referring to the atomic bomb raids on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.] … I was a little disappointed, because I had this engineering degree, and so, they

assigned me to the Inspector of Naval Material's office in Detroit. … So, I was [assigned to] no more sea duty. That was my only sea duty. I was [assigned to] a desk job.

SH: Why were you able to leave the LCI and return to the States? Was it because you had been out in the Pacific for a certain amount of time?

WL: Yes. … I don't know whether points were involved or not, but I think there was something like that and we knew we'd been out there about as long as [possible]. …

SH: Okay, I wondered if there was a time period.

WL: Yes, they had a rotation system going and we were relieved on that basis. … So, anyway, we got … on a tanker in Manila and that was, supposedly, going to Panama, because we wanted to go through [the Canal] and get on the East Coast. Well, the tanker left Manila and went around and stopped at the Palau Islands, which are; I don't know, but they're a little east of the Philippines there, someplace. … Their orders got changed to San Francisco or … whatever, Los Angeles' harbor, I forget, and so, we said, "We don't want to go there." So, we jumped off and went to the naval airbase, and then, … there was nothing else going, so, we got on a flight down to Manus, … which was a staging point for the Philippines invasion, down … near New Guinea, and went back there. … The previous time I'd seen Manus, you could almost walk [across] on the ships, a huge harbor and just loaded with ships. [When we] got there, there were about two little boats of some sort there. So, we stayed at the officers' club there for a few days, … trying to get some transportation, and a tanker came along and it was going back to Aruba and Curaçao, … through the Canal. So, we got on that, but it was still full. So, we had to go to Biak and way up … the eastern end of [New Guinea] to get rid of the oil, and then, finally, we turned around and headed for the Canal and we were, what? I used to know that figure, thirty-one days, I think, out of sight of land, just at fifteen knots, from there to the Panama Canal. So, we got to the Canal and we went through the Canal on this tanker and got off in Colón, and then, went to the Navy … transportation office, looking for transportation for the States. … We got in there and the guy said, "Yes," he said, "there's a destroyer or something there. You've got to hurry to get there. … It's going to someplace on the East Coast and here's the name," and we said, "Okay," and we got outside and we looked at each other, the three of us. We said, "Do we want to jump on the boat and go back to the States right now?" and we said, "No, we don't." So, we wandered off [laughter] and, two or three days later, when we came back, … we said, "You know, we missed that boat," and the guy said, "Yes, sure." [laughter] He said, "There's a destroyer escort over in Balboa that's started [across] and it's coming through the Canal tomorrow. It's heading for Philadelphia." He said, "You bastards go over there and you get on that thing." [laughter] So, this time we did. We got on the destroyer escort. It had been *kamikaze*-ed at, where were they *kamikaze*-ing, up near Japan someplace? [Editor's Note: Mr. Llewellyn is referring to the Japanese suicide aircraft attacks at the end of the war.]

SH: Okinawa?

WL: Okinawa is what I'm trying to think of, yes, and killed all the officers, because it hit the bridge. So, it was still badly damaged, but, … otherwise, it was okay. So, we … got on this destroyer escort and went through the Canal again. So, I've been through the Canal so many

times and … I've been across the Isthmus by train three times, because I went over and back [the first time], and then, this time. So, we got to Philadelphia … early in the morning and it was foggy and, … as I say, the bridge [was wrecked], … so, they didn't have much navigation equipment on this thing, and they couldn't find the end of the channel. So, a fishing boat comes along and [we shouted], "Where's the channel to Philadelphia?" you know. [laughter] So, they pointed the way and we found the channel, [laughter] and then, … as we went up the river, why, we knew we were back in civilization as we counted condoms floating down, … all over the place. [laughter]

SH: Before we get into Philly, when you were on the tanker, was it a US crew?

WL: Oh, yes. It was a US [ship]. …

SH: Military?

WL: No, no, it was Merchant Marine. … By union contract, they had to serve two meats at every dinner, so [that] they had a choice, and we're thinking, "Boy," you know. [laughter]

SH: Did they share?

WL: Oh, yes, we enjoyed the food, but the Merchant Marine had it pretty good, except in the North Atlantic, when they really had a rough deal. … So, we measured it out; … you know, the tankers had these catwalks that went from one end to the other. So, we knew how many laps was a mile and we jogged a couple of miles every day and [we would] get our tans going. I got back to Madison, Wisconsin, and … I had a tan like it was going out of style, never had one that good since, but, no, it was a nice trip. …

SH: Were you able to get off immediately once you docked in Philly?

WL: Yes, yes.

SH: You then went home to visit your folks.

WL: Yes. Then, we reported in; … did I do it then? I don't remember exactly when I got my new orders, but, at some point, I did, and then, that was a month's leave, and then, [I had to] report to Detroit, to the Inspector of Naval Material's office, which I did around July 5th or 6th, something like that, I think, as I recall the timing. … So, I went up to Plainfield and visited my parents for a few days. …

SH: Were they able to come out when you and Stella were married?

WL: Yes, yes. We got married on the 23rd or 28th of June.

SH: The 28th of June.

WL: Yes, 28th of June. … I hadn't even seen a woman for over a year and she was a saint. [laughter] … If you're together every day and working up to this point, and, of course, today, there won't be any secrets after you get married, [laughter] but it was a different world then. I remember, well, John Wallerstedt was a good Catholic from a good Catholic family, with about twelve kids, I think he said his family had, in Kansas City. … When I first knew him, we were … at Solomons, Maryland. … It was a big room … with cots sprinkled all over and John would kneel down beside his cot every night and say his prayers, and then, when we got on the LCI, for a while, … he and I were in a cabin together and I had the lower bunk and he had the upper one. … I'd be laying there, smoking a cigarette, and he'd be kneeling by my bunk, saying his [prayers]. …

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

SH: This is side two of tape two.

WL: Okay, so, John, when we got on the LCI, would kneel down by my bunk and say his prayers and that was kind of a little embarrassing, as I lay there smoking a cigarette. So, I moved in with Gebhart and this other young officer, we had four on the boat sometimes, he moved in with John, and they used to argue Catholic things. [laughter] There was … another officer I knew, … whose name I don't remember any longer, but he was madly in love and he and his girlfriend got married just before they shipped out. He was on one of the other LCIs and I knew him pretty well and he said [that] they didn't have sex, that they weren't going to have [sex]. They wanted to be married so [that] they got the pay while he was overseas, but they weren't going to have sex until they were married in the Church. So, as I say, it was kind of a nice world, but it was different. [laughter] …

SH: Were your parents able to travel out to Madison for the wedding?

WL: Yes, yes, they came out and they were there. Of course, I … didn't know much [of] what was going on hardly. … [laughter] Then, an old roommate of mine and a fraternity brother, Barclay Malsbury, [who] died a few years ago, he was fairly active in the Rutgers alumni stuff, but he was in the Air Corps and I somehow got a hold of him and he and his wife flew up. … He'd been overseas, but they were in Louisiana, I think, in an airbase. They flew up and he was my best man. So, he helped me through. Other than that, it was [just family].

SH: Was there housing for you and Stella in Detroit?

WL: No, no, we had to find someplace.

SH: Was that tough?

WL: Yes. … Finally, we were in a hotel for a few days, but hotels only cost about three-and-a-half bucks a night, though, you know, in those days. We used to stay in the Pennsylvania Hotel in New York City and that was, … as I recall, three-and-a-half bucks, [laughter] a nice world, and so, we found a little place. … I was saying, "Well, maybe you've got to go home." She says, "Nope, we're going to live together." So, she found a place and it was … a little apartment

in the back of the house, right opposite that island in the Detroit River, [Belle Isle?] but, anyway, I got off … the trolley at Crane, Hibbard and Holcomb, I remember that, to go home, but it was an old couple [that] owned the house and they had this thing in the back. … Of course, they enjoyed having a young married couple there, but his name was Frame. [laughter] So, he felt like …

SH: Family.

WL: And he was a Fuller Brush man.

SH: Did any part of your Rutgers education help you when you were in the military? Did it come into play more in your civilian life?

WL: An education is an education, you know. [laughter] I was one of the few engineering officers, I think, that really was an engineer, … so, that helped. …

SH: Did you ever entertain any thoughts of staying in the military?

WL: No. …

SH: You mentioned that you got your orders to return to the States the day Roosevelt died. What was the reaction of the men around you? What did you think of Truman's ability to govern?

WL: Oh, Truman horrified us. [laughter] As my father said, "The haberdasher from St. Louis." [laughter] … He embarrassed you when he was in public and [said] some of the things he said. It was only later that you realized he was a pretty solid guy. … No, we knew that Roosevelt was [sick]. We didn't know how bad, but we knew he was pretty bad and, obviously, he shouldn't have been there for several years, because he … practically gave the store away while he was dying, but, no, Truman was an embarrassment and only later did we realize he was kind of one of the best ones, maybe, yes.

SH: Do you recall any of the celebrations that followed the end of the war in Europe and the Japanese surrender? Did you take part in any celebrations?

WL: … Yes. When did it [end]?

SH: The war in Europe ended in May of 1945.

WL: That was when it ended in Europe? So, I was at sea or something, then, I think.

SH: That is right. You did not go there until …

WL: July.

SH: You would have been coming back then.

WL: Yes. I have … very little recollection of the ending of the war in Europe, except that it happened. I was in Detroit when V-J Day [happened] and that, of course, was a happy time. …

SH: You were in Detroit when the war ended.

WL: Yes.

SH: Were you released immediately? What did they do with you?

WL: … I actually got out in November, some time, and then, the termination date was December, … because of accumulated something or other, [leave time?], but I think I attached a copy of the thing, [his discharge papers]. It doesn't say where; I think I got out at Great Lakes or something like that, but I don't really know what the location was. I don't think it was in Detroit itself, but I'm not sure. It might have been. … I remember being interviewed by the guy and I just don't remember where. … Then, we went back to Madison, … and then, I contacted, wrote a letter to, Westvaco in Charleston and, you know, … of all things, that letter got lost, because … I contacted them later and they had never received it. … As I waited, I wasn't sure I wanted to bring a Wisconsin bride to Charleston, South Carolina, because [there was] no air-conditioning, [there were] cockroaches this long running around, and so, when I didn't hear right away from Westvaco, I started looking at some of the paper mills in Wisconsin, Kimberly-Clark. … They said, "Sure, we'll give you a job," and I said, "Where?" and they said, "Well, you'll be out here … on a drawing board," and there's about thirty drawing boards out there and I said, "No thanks, I don't think I want to do that." So, I went to [the] Marathon Corporation. They had a converting [plant] and some mills in [the] Neenah/Menasha area and they said, "Well, we think (Grover Keith?), up in Wausau, Wisconsin," … their original mill was in Wausau, "is looking for somebody, if you want to go up there." So, I went up there and talked to Grover Keith and he said, "Yes," and so, I got a job there and, actually, … this was an old mill. … So, my first winter was in Wausau, Wisconsin, after two years in the South Pacific, and I don't know … if you've ever seen [this, but] there's an ad, Employer's Mutual or something like that, that shows the Wausau train station, on TV. Well, I had a room and I walked past that thing every morning to the bus station. I didn't have a car and it was ten, fifteen below every morning, [laughter] and then, I'd take this bus out to the mill, and then, Stella came up and we got a crazy little apartment. … The people [do not] realize today … what nice places they can rent. There was nothing, you know. This was a one-room deal on the third floor or something, … but, then, they had bought a mill over in Menominee, Michigan, on Green Bay, at the mouth of the Menominee River, and so, they transferred me over there in May, and then, I was there from May … '46 to '51. … Then, in '51, … we bought a mill out in Oswego, New York, and I went out there as plant engineer. I was out there for eight years, … but that first winter in Wausau, oh, it was cold. [laughter]

SH: You mainly stayed with the paper mills.

WL: I stayed in the paper industry, yes, … actually, the whole time.

SH: Were you mostly situated in the New York/Great Lakes area?

WL: No. I was in Oswego as plant engineer until '59, and then, I went back to Neenah, Wisconsin, where we had the central engineering [department] and worked on projects in Naheola, Alabama. … We had a paper mill expansion and new board machine down there, and then, another expansion there, and so, I spent a lot of time in Alabama, but I didn't want to move my family down there. I had kids in high school. So, I would go down on a Monday and stay two weekends and come back on a Friday, and then, stay a week, and then, do another three weeks [there] and I worked it that way and the family lived in Appleton, Wisconsin, where there were good schools. … So, that was during the Martin Luther King times and everything. [Editor's Note: Mr. Llewellyn is referring to the Civil Right Movement.] … I took the position, I told Southerners I knew that I didn't agree with what they did, but I stayed out of it, other than that. It was their state, not mine. … When I came South in '41, of course, it was totally segregated and the work crews out at the mill would always have a white foreman, even if everybody else was black. Blacks just didn't have a chance on anything. … Again, I stayed out of it. When they asked me, I told them I disagreed with it, but I left it at that.

SH: From Appleton, Wisconsin, where did your family move?

WL: Oh, then, … that was '59, we went … back to Appleton. … In '57, American Can had bought Marathon Corporation. Marathon Corporation … made the first frozen food packaging for, what was the original frozen food people?

SH: Birdseye?

WL: Birdseye, yes, and they worked with Birdseye on their early packaging and they were bread wrapper and food packaging [products], you know, solid bleach food board products, and then, in around [the] early '50s, they bought Northern Paper Mills, and so, they got into Northern Tissue and Towel and most of the machines I put in were for toilet tissue or were tissue machines. So, I've made enough toilet paper to supply the world for a long time. … In '66, when American Can decided to reorganize and … centralized their engineering, … they had the can operations, of course, they had Dixie, they'd bought Dixie about the time they bought us, and then, they had our tissue and towel and food packaging, and they put all the engineering together in Fairlawn, New Jersey. … The guy who was chief engineer in Neenah just didn't like the [idea], decided he didn't want to go to Fairlawn, New Jersey, and get mixed up in this thing. So, he left and went with Champion Corporation and they made me chief engineer for the pulp and paper operations. So, I moved the remnants of what used to be an engineering department to Fairlawn and rebuilt it there, because a lot of the guys quit. … They'd always lived in Wisconsin and they weren't about to move to North Jersey, and so, I was working in Fairlawn [in] '66. … During that period, we built a new mill in Halsey, Oregon, which was for tissue and towel, and that was the first mill in the country that didn't smell. … We decided we wanted to do it if we could, and then, the community, you know, Eugene, Oregon, it was just … thirty miles out of Eugene, they were all far-out liberals and everything there, and environmentalists. So, we actually collected all the stray smells and incinerated them in the lime kiln … So, the mill didn't smell. It was a clean mill that way and that started up in '69, and then, the head of pulp and paper operations, a VP, a guy named John Bard, I never did like the bastard and he didn't like me either. So, I had to get out of paper mill engineering in American Can and I was made director

of environmental engineering in the environmental group for the whole corporation. … We fooled around with such things as the "litter gulper," which was [to] pick up cans and litter along the highway, and some of the other problems. … I was working, then, in Greenwich, where they'd moved out of 100 Park Avenue, like everybody else in New York was doing at that time, to a big office in Greenwich, Connecticut. So, I commuted. … When we moved back, we were living in Upper Saddle River, and so, [I had] to go down to Fairlawn, and then, I commuted across the Tappan Zee, about forty miles each way, for three or four years, when I was working in Greenwich. … Then, Champion, my old boss, who had … left Neenah, went to Champion, they had an opening for directing an expansion and they had a mill in Mogi Guacu, Brazil. … You know, with Stella, she'd been born in Argentina, and so, I said, "Okay." I took a three-year contract then to go down to Brazil. We lived in Campinas and worked in Mogi Guacu. … It was my fault. I didn't handle it, the language and everything else, and so, they were in the process of replacing me when, and I know that, I have the guilt, that that was a factor, but, anyway, Stella contracted polio down there and that was in December '75, yes. … We'd been down there a little over a year, a year-and-a-half, and she [was] paralyzed right up to her neck. She couldn't turn her head. All she had was her face and her mind. Otherwise, she was totally paralyzed and it shouldn't have happened. She shouldn't have … caught it at that age and, if she caught it, it should have killed her, and it didn't quite do either, you know. … So, I had to bring her back to New York and she was on Roosevelt Island, in Goldwater Hospital, … as a quadriplegic, from about March of '76 until she died, in November of '79. … So, I got jobs doing what I could around there and I worked for Parsons and Whittemore, in the Pan Am Building, … as assistant chief engineer for about a year-and-a-half, I guess, and then, they really moved all their operations to Alabama and I had to stay. … I was living on 220 East 54th Street, and then, when I finished work, … they put in the cable car over to Roosevelt Island, I'd go up … to ride the cable car over and visit with Stella for two or three hours every [day], you know. God, I couldn't abandon her. If she were a vegetable, I could have walked away from it, but she was the same gal I married, except she couldn't move, you know, and that's a rough deal. … Then, I had a job with Rust Engineering. They opened up an international engineering office up in Greenwich and I tried commuting by train for about a week [laughter] and it was awful.

SH: It was what you said you did not want to do, correct?

WL: Yes, only other way, and then, you're up there with no transportation. … I said, "I'm either going to quit this job or," I bought a car, bought a little … '76 Celica, I guess, and that was fun, you know. You'd leave about seven-thirty in the morning, driving out of the city, no traffic, and [come] back at night, not bad, … but you couldn't park in front of the building where I was until seven o'clock. So, I'd just work a little late and I'd drive in and I'd get there about seven o'clock and park in front of the building and that worked out fine. … You couldn't park there Saturday … or Sunday, and so, … some time Friday night, … I had to get the car someplace else. … I parked up by the heliport and all over the place, and then, I found out that the clubs that close about four o'clock in the morning [had parking]. … I'd set the alarm and get up at four o'clock in the morning and take the car from in front of 220 East 54th Street over to about, oh, 52nd and Third; between First and Second Avenue, they had alternate side parking. … These guys would be leaving and I'd park my Celica there for the weekend and that worked fine, as long as I was there, and I did that for a couple of years. [laughter] You tell people you get up at four o'clock in the morning to park your car, they'll think your nuts.

SH: Stella and you had two sons.

WL: Yes, we had two sons.

SH: Can you tell me about them? Did they go to college? I was going to ask about the Vietnam War, since your sons' generation was involved.

WL: … They were thirteen months apart, born in '46 and '47, and so, they weren't in the war. Peter, the older [one], graduated from the University of Wisconsin, … and the year, now, I've forgotten, and then, he went into the Peace Corps. That's the way he avoided Vietnam. … I think Peter was a little slow in getting out of college, so, John graduated about the same time, but his girlfriend, who wanted to marry him as soon as possible, her father was Annapolis, Class of '42, I think, so, … he went into the nuclear sub program. … He graduated from Duke and went … directly into that, and then, after his indoctrination as a naval officer, they got married that June, I think. … He graduated in the middle of the year. He started out as a physics major and changed to mechanical engineering, after he found physics majors had to learn languages and things, which he wasn't any much better at than I was. … That was always my disappointment; I never learned Portuguese well enough to think in it. … They say when you really know a foreign language, you can think in it, and I know a little, but, as I say, my (*secretary bilingual*?) … got much better at her English, but I didn't learn much Portuguese. [laughter] … So, that's the way they avoided Vietnam. … Peter, right now, he's still living in Honduras and he's kind of messed up his life. He tried to start a fish farm and I don't think that's working very well. … Why would you want a fish farm in the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, you know? which is Honduras. His daughter, my granddaughter, stopped by this summer. She's up living with an aunt in Union City, New Jersey, and his son is fifteen. He came up a month or so ago. He's with Uncle … (Noël?) in, what's the German name, oh, right near Union City? anyway, but the whole family is up here. Peter's still in Honduras, you know. All the Hondurans want to be up here and he's down there. … So, I don't know how he's going to come out.

SH: Did your other son retire from the Navy? Did he stay in?

WL: No, he didn't stay in. His wife pulled him out after eight years, because, as she said, … they have two daughters, … her mother and her grandmother raised her and she didn't want to raise their daughters with her mother while John was off at sea. So, he got a job with Union Camp, here in Savannah, when he got out of the Navy, back in, a long time ago. … About five or six years ago, I guess, Union Camp was sold to International Paper, I think. … He's decided, along the way, that I wasn't very nice to him, or to his wife, or I favored his brother or something, so, he doesn't talk to me. … So, that's kind of sad, it's silly, but, if that's the way he wants it; I talk to his wife once in a while. She has a business in Savannah here, Llewellyn and Associates. She's an enrolled agent for taxes and she's a good accountant. She is a pain in the ass in some other ways … and she convinced John that he'd been abused. … I don't care. [laughter] So, I think she over convinced him and, all of a sudden, he decides that his mother and father favored his brother and he wasn't treated fairly, and he kind of sulked, anyway, though. I realized, in looking back at pictures, he was always sulking about something. … I've lost him.

So, that's all right. As I say, I keep track of his daughters and by talking to his wife once in a while and that's the way it goes. [laughter]

SH: You remarried.

WL: … Stella died in November of '79. … There was a guy, Bob (Gravis?), also living in 220 East 54th Street, who died of prostate cancer in April of '79. … When you live alone in a … "doorman" apartment house in New York, why, you have a favorite doorman you tell your troubles to, and Jack (Hogan?), when he was sober, was a great doorman, [laughter] good Irishman, and, one day, he brought Connie Gravis, a few months after Stella died, over to me and he said, "You two ought to know each other," [laughter] and we did. She's been a wonderful wife and we've had a lot of fun and she's totally different from Stella and that's the way I wanted it. [laughter] …

SH: How long have you lived on Hilton Head?

WL: Too long. We didn't expect it to be this long, but I did several things towards the end there, after Stella died. … The last job, I was working … at Simons-Eastern, which was a US affiliate of HA Simons, which I worked for for eight or ten months, out in Vancouver, British Columbia. … Connie and I lived out there for a while, and then, we moved and I was working in Atlanta and we were living together there, and then, we invited the nice couple we knew below us if they'd like to come to our wedding and [they said], "Ah, you're not married?" [laughter] We said, "No. Second time around, it [living together] doesn't seem that important," you know. [laughter] So, then, when that job … ended; it was an expansion job at a paper mill in Augusta, Georgia, … that I was involved with in the consulting engineers office, HA Simons, and that ended in December. So, I was terminated in December of '82. So, we came down here in '83 and, you know, after a while, … I was sixty-three or four and, if you had a regular job and you were into [your mid-sixties], you'd stretch it out as long as you could. I don't think they should let you, but you could, but, … after you sell yourself in another job, you say, "Oh, the hell [with this], I don't feel like selling myself anymore," and I had enough that I thought I [should retire]. I haven't handled … some of it too well. I lost a little money a couple of times, but there's still enough. So, we've stayed here since '83.

SH: Do you have a passion now, anything that you are active in?

WL: It's been golf, basically, and my springer spaniel. I've got a passion for a springer. … In the last few months, she's eleven years old and she got all crippled up with arthritis and we can't take our walks every night. I take her out for a walk and she sits on the pad and I get out there and I say, "Come on, Molly," and she sits there and just looks at me, doesn't move. So, I say, "Okay," and I go back and we do something else, but its [primarily] golf, and I've enjoyed doing things around the house, in the yard. …

SH: How do you think World War II shaped the man you are today?

WL: I don't know. …

[TAPE PAUSED]

I mean, I was in Charleston, I was working at Westvaco, I was beginning to go with a Betty Techlenberg, a very nice young lady that worked for the personnel manager at the mill, … the personnel manager later became the manager, and I probably would have married and stayed in the Charleston area. … I didn't tell you how I met Stella, did I? Oh, yes, (Freeman Hyman?) and so on, yes, and that was the first time I'd really fallen madly in love. So, I sent Betty the letter that said, … "Something happened and I won't be seeing you like I thought I might," and so, that got me to Wisconsin. It certainly changed where I lived. I had been in the paper industry enough before the war that I liked it and it was a nice industry. It's not quite as nice [now]. Nothing's quite as nice anymore. Of course, they say people in their eighties don't like anything and I'm no exception. I think the world's going to hell. … I went in as an engineering officer and it was a wonderful adventure, but, other than that, I don't think it changed me too much. … There weren't any … life changing revelations or anything that came about. … Then, I wasn't involved in the type of action … where I'd maybe live, maybe die. …

SH: Did you use any of your GI Bill benefits?

WL: Oh, just once, in living in Oswego, and I think I mentioned that, I think it's '53, I bought a National home, which was a prefab house, one of the first ones. … I got a GI loan for thirteen thousand dollars to help buy the thing, but that's the only [time]. I wasn't any place where I could use education benefits or anything. All these guys that lived in the city [could] and I was always; you know, paper mill towns are great. I loved them, a nice place to [live]. …

[TAPE PAUSED]

Where was I?

SH: You were talking about the mill towns.

WL: … I mean, they were great places to raise families and I ate lunch at home, really, until the kids were … out of high school. … There was no place else to eat. I just came home. It was the easiest thing to do. So, it was a nice life, but there weren't any schools or things. When I got to New Jersey, I'd hire some of these guys to work in the engineering department and they'd have about five degrees, but, you know, it was [due to] boredom and that was their recreation, you know. It didn't mean they were any better at what they did. [laughter] … That's about it.

SH: Unless there is anything else that you want to add to the tape, I thank you again for coming.

WL: I guess we covered most of it.

SH: I look forward to seeing your letters and documents.

WL: Yes. … You might as well have these things someday, so, I'll kind of aim in that direction. You want some pictures [to go] along with them?

SH: Of course. Thank you again.

WL: [laughter] Okay. …

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

Reviewed by Brett Gorman 2/12/06
Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 3/2/06
Reviewed by William Llewellyn 11/20/12