

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT I. OWEN

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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Kurt Piehler: This begins the interview with Robert I. Owen on July 24, 1997 in West Long Branch, New Jersey with Kurt Piehler and ...

Melanie Cooper: Melanie Cooper and ...

Linda Lasko: Linda Lasko and ...

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: Sandra Stewart Holyoak.

KP: Now I guess I would like to begin by starting out with your father who was Rutgers class of ...

Robert Owen: '08.

KP: Class of 1908. Do you know why your father chose to come to Rutgers?

RO: Not really. [But I think it may have been related.] He was living in upper New York State, and upper New York State had, and still does have these, Regents exams, I think, and ... one of his older brothers came to Rutgers, ... Earl Owen. He was Class of ... '04, I guess, and only one son could be away from the farm at a time. He [Earl] was at Rutgers and my father was helping at home on the farm. And so, I think it was the New York State Regents exams plus the connection with his older brother. As soon as the older brother graduated, my father came that fall. He worked his way through Rutgers. He couldn't be very active in sports and things of that sort. I think there were only maybe 80 in his class. Since he had waited for the other brother to graduate, he was the oldest person in his class, and, apparently, also one of the strongest. Because [it] always was important to him that when they took their strength tests, or something or other, he was doing chin-ups until they told him, "for heaven's sake, stop." ... He had been harvesting on the farm that fall and he was hardened. But, anyway, he lived in Winants Hall some of the time. He also lived where that parking lot is now, beyond the Chapel. ... There had been a building there, which also was a dorm. He lived there for a while. He worked for the big book store, on George Street? And he was in charge of a number of newsboys, so he'd get up real early ... and take care of all that. He put himself through and was Phi Beta Kappa, which he was always very proud of. He was disappointed that I didn't make it, ... I almost did. Anyway, his experiences at Rutgers were rewarding. ... There was no NJC in those days and the boys met local girls. I think he met my mother in church. They were Baptists, at that time. ... She was one of five sisters, and three of them married Rutgers men.

... But he was a poultry specialist and he wasn't making enough money from Rutgers to satisfy my mother, I don't think. I think he would have liked to stay in teaching or county agent work, for one thing. So ... having been a poultry specialist, why, he went and bought this poultry farm, in New Jersey, Marlboro, New Jersey, right at the wrong time, not long before the Depression, when the bottom fell out of the egg market and everything. ... I was an only child. He didn't have me until he was over 40, I think, and my mother was getting close, although she never admitted it. In fact, she falsified her driver's license age for years, until Social Security came along and then she had to fess up in order to get the benefits. [laughter] Anyway, Rutgers was the only

college I ever heard about. I heard my father's stories and he had taken me up to New Brunswick, occasionally, to football games in the old field, across from the old gym up in there. And he took me to his fraternity house. His fraternity no longer is at Rutgers, but he was one of the founders of it, Pi Kappa Alpha. So it just never occurred to me, really, to think in terms of any other college. Rutgers was the only college that I applied to.

KP: So your father had very fond memories, though he had it very hard?

RO: ... Oh yeah, he had very fond memories. He had a lot of good friends. I don't know how many were in his graduating class, but I think, 80, maybe, when he entered. ... It's a little bit different than today.

KP: Your father got a job at Rutgers very quickly, relatively quickly?

RO: Yeah, [I guess], immediately.

MC: Did he ever return back to New York State, to the farm?

RO: Only on visits. I was taken up once as a baby. Of course, I have no memory of that. In recent years, we did make one trip on the way back from Grand Rapids, where I have a daughter living, to swing up there and visit the old town and look around a little bit.

SH: It says in your survey that you also lived in California, in San Pedro?

RO: Well, that was during the war, when I was going out in order to get ready, [to] get a little more training before going to the South Pacific and it wasn't San Pedro, ... it was San Francisco.

KP: In your father's alumnus file at Rutgers there were some clippings and there was one mention of you, at age six, riding a pony. I guess, in Marlboro.

RO: Oh, yeah. We were not well off, but [my family], I was never aware of any shortages or anything, but, at one period, my father wanted to let me have things, and we had a pony, ... I guess, for one whole winter and spring, until summertime. ... At that time, people had these ponies giving little ... children [rides] in the summertime, going around in circles, at the shore and so on. ... They didn't move the ... ponies down South or anything. They farmed them out, to let people have them, to look after them during the winter and then they would pick them up again in the summer when they were ready to start. I had Daisy, she was a ... Shetland. It took a long while to get her to keep from going around in a circle, I tell you. And when she learned that, then she learned how to go under a low pear tree and knock me off. I even tried to make her jump once, but she didn't think much of that [laughter] so she stopped and I went into the barberry bush. But, anyway, it was nice of him to do that, it was nice of him. Later on, he was still trying to be nice to me and help me out when we couldn't afford much, he bought a horse, thinking, well, we could plow a little bit with it. But unfortunately, this was an ex-polo pony, not likely to do much plowing and he ran away with the plow a couple of times and things like that. ... I had him for a couple of years, which was nice, in rural New Jersey, to have.

KP: It sounds like you very much enjoyed the farm, despite the hard times.

RO: ... Well, it was a poultry farm and it wasn't too many years before the poultry farm wasn't paying. Everything was bad. So he went into sales work with a West Coast company. This maybe was San Pedro, somewhere down that way. A company called Phillipar Park that had kelp products, ... from the Pacific, additives to animal and poultry feeds. So he became, you might say, the East Coast representative and did a lot of traveling and was not home very much. But that was a ... difficult period.

KP: Did your parents sell the poultry farm?

RO: No, they kept it. Right until, I remember now, it was in the '50s, ... when my parents just couldn't stay there anymore. ... I helped them move out, into Freehold, New Jersey. I spent a good deal of my childhood working with my father maintaining those big poultry buildings, even when he no longer had any chickens. We did have the responsibility, because of the mortgage and so forth, to keep ... them up. So, we worked on, every summer I worked on the roofs with him, putting hot tar and paper on the roofs, or working on the foundations. Dad figured if you did those two things, the roofs and the foundation, the rest in between ... forget about it. [laughter] ... I had happy experiences working with my father. I learned a lot.

KP: It sounds like his career as a salesman really subsidized the poultry farm.

RO: Oh, yeah. ... But, by the time he became a salesman we no longer ... had any chickens. But we did have interesting times. Because he had fond memories of sheep, as a boy on his farm, and so we had sheep. Not exactly approved of by my mother, but we had sheep. We had them on chains eating the lawn, mowing the lawn, instead of my having to mow it by hand mower, so I approved. They all had names. The big ram was, I'm going on and rambling too much, I'm going to beat your ... old record at this rate, anyway, Julius Caesar was the ram. Cleopatra, naturally, had to be one of the ewes, also Helen of Troy and so on. Eventually, Helen of Troy got loose and ran out and was hit by a car. And so, rather than waste the meat, we ate her, you know. At Sunday dinner it was, "Pass some more Helen, please." [laughter]

SH: Did you have any kind of help on the farm?

RO: Well, there was a period there when my father employed a very nice Irishman, named Henry Hardy, who later on became the sexton of the church. He would baby-sit me a little bit, help father on the farm, but when things got bad, ... my father couldn't afford him anymore. ... But I used to go over and have great fun with Henry. You know, the Old Brick Church, in Bradevelt ... near where the institution is, a beautiful old cemetery, an old Dutch Reformed Church. We were the closest house and ... my parents went there in the summertime. It was closed in the wintertime, you went to Marlboro to the chapel then. I used to go over, not having any nearby playmates, I used to go over and pester Henry and follow him around the cemetery when he was sexton. He paid me ten cents to help fill up graves, ... after there had been a

funeral. I roller-skated on the church sidewalk once and in a while over there, not a very good surface, but better than what we had.

KP: So you were sort of isolated growing up on the farm?

RO: Well, ... you might have thought of it as isolated. But ... we did shopping in Marlboro Village and in Freehold. ... I had relatives in Freehold. ... One of my mother's sisters lived in Freehold. And I went to grade school in Marlboro. A school bus picked me up and I went to school in Marlboro. Well, but, first, I went to school right next door. There ... were six grades, I think, ... in one room. ... It's a house now. ... So, I started out there at four and a half. My mother wanted me to get started on my way to Rutgers as soon as possible. [laughter] Only for a few months. They canceled that school and then the bus would come and take me into Marlboro Elementary.

KP: But your first experience was in a one room ...

RO: Yeah, a one room schoolhouse. That was a rough experience, in a way. Because I was too young, of course, and there were a lot of tough kids in there and the language and everything else. [laughter] A lot of these things you probably wouldn't want to use, but one of my first memories of that school was ... of one boy who was particularly proud of breaking wind and lighting a match so you would see a blue flame. ... There were things rougher things than that going on, so I was quite impressed. ... I could walk there, it was so close to our farm. A rough bunch, the same rough bunch, went also up to Marlboro. But then there was a larger group.

MC: Did they all come from farms, these children?

RO: ... No, I mean, they weren't bad kids. But they were, I guess, Estonian or Lithuanian families. Some of them ... had kind of gotten together up on that next hill, (called "Big Woods"), to the east. It was just beyond the State Hospital. ... Where there used to be St. Gabriel's Church, which has since been moved by name, but the building is still there, the original St. Gabriel's Catholic Church. There was a little community from the Baltic States up there.

KP: Did they farm?

RO: I don't think they did. I don't think they were farming people, mostly.

KP: Do you know where they worked?

RO: Not really. I had a feeling they were manual laborers. Maybe some of them worked on farms, but I'm not aware of any of them having owned farms, you know, on their own. But there had been a lot of farms around over at the State Hospital, I guess. There was a family, before they started building the State Hospital, that was in easy walking distance. I knew the girl in the Hayes family. And then there were other people, including another Hayes family, possibly related, that was about a mile away. Marlboro Village was just a mile from us and, as soon as I got a bike, why it was nothing, or to go over there or with my horse. ... We had a post office box

in Marlboro, a general store we went to, and a fire company. We went to their firemens' fairs and suppers. This is enough ... probably, of this sort of background.

KP: You mentioned you wanted to go to Rutgers very early, but did you know you wanted to go into Ceramics?

RO: No, I had no idea. I didn't even know there was such a thing as Ceramics. But in high school I had been a good student, one of maybe the top half dozen students. I had done well in math and in science. Professor George Brown was the head of the School of Ceramics and a friend of my father. He and my father, the families knew one another. ... Ceramics was a fairly new field and apparently included a fair amount of, I was told, you know, science and math and things that I'd done well in. I went to ... college when I was sixteen. I didn't know anything of what I really wanted to do in life. ... I was sort of persuaded, "Well, why don't you ... try Ceramics?" I did. So there ... is nothing really more sensible than that. In fact, I never did decide what I really wanted to be. I came into the Foreign Service many years later and thought I'd sort of, "Well, we'll try it out, see how we like it." And I retired, ... 31 years later. [laughter] ... I still haven't decided what I'll be when I grow up.

SH: What was your mother's background that she was not happy with the farm?

RO: ... She was a city girl. The family had moved around a lot. And my grandfather apparently, I didn't know him too well until he was very old, ... he was only quite old, I'd say he was about as old as I am, he came from a good family, from way back in Monmouth County and elsewhere. But he was the younger son, so he didn't get their farm, which is an historic farm, ... still operating. So he was the one who went around and got odd jobs here and there and eventually ended up in real estate in New Brunswick. ... He was very good at producing children. I think, actually, there were twelve pregnancies. No wonder my poor grandmother was in ill health much of her life. My mother was the sister who looked after her and looked after the family. ... She was the organizer and the planner and the saver. No thought of her ever going to college. She did finish high school. But anyway, she was active in church. ... What did I miss? What was that last question?

SH: I just wondered what her background was and how she felt about moving to a farm?

RO: Well, I mean, women went where their husbands went. And since she was the one that thought he should make more money and so on, why, she was stuck with it once he got the farm. She worked her head off. She was a very remarkable woman, a very strong character. You behaved when you were around her, but she was a good woman. She could do everything, from gardening, we had tremendous gardens. ... When my father was sick, at one period he had ... something of a nervous breakdown and stayed in bed for a while, she went out and kept working, ... collecting eggs and so forth. One memory is when she was collecting eggs at one of these buildings that had high steps. ... I suppose about six or seven feet to get up to that part of the building. And she came out with this whole pail of eggs, maybe two, and stepped down on the steps that had fallen away from the building, (since she went in). So down she went with her eggs, on top of these fallen steps. She got pretty well bruised but nothing broken. She would do

upholstering. She would re-do the house, walls, once every couple of years, depending on what the current style was. She made a beaded dress, little tiny, tiny beads, the whole dress from beads, down to below the knee. She was a remarkably hard working woman and a wonderful cook.

KP: It sounds like times were tough during the Depression, but you were able to grow a lot of what you needed?

RO: Well, we always had a good-sized garden. My father was very good at that. And then when we had chickens, why of course, when a chicken got old we ate it. [laughter] ... It was a difficult period because I remember we had dogs come and kill some chickens. We had some chickens, range chickens, and a pack of dogs came and killed a bunch. Another time, we had a small farm building that had brooding chicks in it, you know, little baby chicks, a lot of baby chicks, and a fire killed most of those. It was one series of problems after another. It was not an easy period. ... My mother did canning during the Depression. ... And she did again, later on, during World War II. She made a lot of her own soap, laundry type soap, you know, using fats and lye and wood ashes. We had cherry trees, for cherry pie, and pear trees and strawberries. There were periods in the Depression, I'd have a chair, or a little stand, if you will, out front, just a table, and sell strawberries for 25 cents a quart, and cherries and some of her gladiol blooms. She had beautiful gladiol. I mean, for a long time there, 25 cents a week was my allowance and I had to work for it. But later on, in high school, I would get up to a dollar. And I insisted on that I kept getting a dollar all through Rutgers. [laughter] But then [I] had to work for that, too. I had a lot of jobs at Rutgers, too. ... I went to Rutgers on a scholarship but it wasn't a full scholarship, it was just hundred dollars. Then I did well enough the first year so that I went on a full tuition scholarship ... and I was commuting, I couldn't afford to live there at first. But later on I went and lived in a boarding house on Livingston Avenue with a couple of other fellows and then, I think, it was only the last year I stayed at the fraternity house (Phi Gamma Delta). I earned my ... room and board by washing dishes and pots and pans.

KP: It says on the survey that during the Depression your father was a Republican. How did he feel about Roosevelt and the New Deal?

RO: Well, he wasn't too strong about it, but my mother referred to Franklin, FDR, as "that man" and was very reluctant later on, in a way, to accept ... his social security, but then she didn't ever rip up the check. ... Of course, my wife and I are both card-carrying liberals and proud of it, which causes me certain problems now and then. Being both brought up in the Depression, we appreciated, we understood what was going on or felt that we did, at least I did. I read a lot of (liberal) things ... like Upton Sinclair. So that's part of my background and I became very aware of the injustices that so many people suffer. It seemed to me then, and still does, that the Democratic Party has done more to alleviate the problems of a majority of people, ... even though financially I am now up in the top ten or fifteen percent. [laughter]

KP: When you grew up on Upton Sinclair ...

RO: Well, you mentioned that I, you know, that I was sort of isolated. Well, I ... early developed a great love of books and read everything that was in our small library. Then we had neighbors, the Barkers, up on the hill, ... where the YMCA (Camp Arrowhead) is now, the ski lift and the pool and so forth ... that had a turkey farm up there. They were lovely people and they had a lot of books and I read all their books. ... The man, ... Sam, never grew up. He used, you know, to wear a big cowboy hat, when people didn't do that, and play a six-gun, and so on. His wife was the practical one, but he was a lot of fun, too. They had a walk-in closet that was almost as big as this room, at least two-thirds as big, just full of pulp magazines from World War I, Argosy, Aces, one thing and another. So I did an awful lot of reading there. [laughter] ... As I mentioned to someone I think, already that I read, (I guess at the library today when I got another Michener book), in that in high school I read all of Dickens' works because you got more points for reading a volume of Dickens. You didn't have to read as many books. I read all of Dickens. So, just reading Dickens, you get an idea of people being mistreated and poor, and so on, I think. I read Upton Sinclair, Sinclair Lewis, I read everything I could get my hands on.

KP: What about movies, did you ever go to movies in the 1930s?

RO: Yeah, well, in those days when you went to movies ... in the '20s, too, you would get, during the Depression, too, they would give you a free cup or a plate or something every time you went, so you could build up your own set. And they had vaudeville, too, which was nice. We went to Freehold, some of the time. There were two movie theaters in Freehold, the Strand and the Liberty. The Liberty was not considered to be so high class, so my mother insisted we went to the Strand. She was a socially conscious lady. But in that period, the Carlton Theater, what is now the Count Basie Theater, opened up in Red Bank and that was not so far from where we lived, across from the Marlboro State Hospital. So, we mostly went there, maybe, once every couple of weeks. That was nice.

KP: Did you ever travel on vacations while growing up?

RO: Not very much. My family (had) retained quite a number of friendships from New Brunswick and, particularly, Highland Park, where we had had our house. And we would sometimes travel to New Brunswick to see them. Or, occasionally, people would come out, maybe once a year, and play "Michigan," at our place. And then I would find money on the floor afterwards, or under cushions, or whatever, but any way some of it I think [was] salted so that I would find it, but I didn't complain. But we didn't do much of any traveling. One period, as a child, well, let's see, it was my father's connections. I hope I am speaking clearly enough. One of his good friends, from the time he had worked at Rutgers, was Harry Lewis, who became a big poultry farmer in Rhode Island and, for one period, even was Secretary of Agriculture in Rhode Island. He had this big, beautiful poultry farm. So once in a while we would go up there around, maybe even have, Thanksgiving dinner with them. That was always a great treat. They didn't have any children my age, their one son was somewhat older, but that was nice up there. ... I'm going into too much detail here. Among other things, I still have some swords from the Russo-Japanese war, some old rusty swords that he had a bunch of and I found them in the barn or something. And he said, "Take any that you want." So I took a few. But as far as traveling, one of my mother's sisters had married a person of German or Pennsylvania Dutch background

named Succop, and they lived with their two children, my cousins, in Pittsburgh. Uncle Dave was a paint salesman or something of that sort. And there was one time, after they visited family in the East that ... I went with them when they drove back, there were no big highways then over the mountains to Pittsburgh where they lived on Squirrel Hill. ... After my holiday in Pittsburgh, they put me on a Pullman car, told the black gentleman to look after me, and I came home in style.

KP: Which must have been very exciting for you.

RO: Yeah. Another family, named Musgrave had been very good friends in New Brunswick, and I kept up with the boy, George Musgrave, who in later life put a shotgun to his head and killed himself. But he had a marvelous collection of toy soldiers. Anyway, they moved. ... The father, who may have been George also, I'm not sure, was working at the Department of Agriculture or some other department in Washington. They lived over in Falls Church, Virginia. I remember one time my mother and I drove down to Washington for a visit with them. I played with George. That was about the furthest we ever got from home. Once in a great while I would get up to New York, or Newark with Mother, to buy something at Bambergers. We went to Trenton fairly often because my mother liked a store there (and Aunt Emma lived there near a little park and zoo). Our dentist was in New Brunswick. You know, my mother didn't want me to become a country boy. ... It was not always easy, because she made me wear shorts long after the other boys my age were wearing knickers, not shorts ... and I was a little plump, too. So I had a few problems adjusting to my mother's ambitions and wanting to be like everybody else.

KP: You must have gone to the beach a lot, I would imagine.

RO: We did. Somehow or other, we got where we liked Manasquan best and we went ... quite a lot to Manasquan. That was nice. I would suppose my mother, my father couldn't go very often, but my mother and I would go to Manasquan a lot. Thank heavens for my mother's insistence, she took me to have swimming lessons in Asbury where there was a ... natatorium, or whatever it was called. There, so I learned the Australian crawl. There had been a lot of relationships with the beach. Because earlier, even before we came to Bradevelt, my parents went several summers down to Sea Girt where they rented a cottage. They would also go down in that area and have bonfire picnics on the beach with friends from New Brunswick. One of the earliest problems I heard about, with me, was that I wandered off into the Sea Girt inlet one time and was already up to my neck, going further out, before they realized where I was and came and got me. I was never afraid of water but I still hadn't learned the crawl or anything by then. I was only about three.

KP: You went to Marlboro Elementary and then Freehold High School. I imagine there must have been something of a, particularly in Freehold High School, a split between the townies and the kids from farms.

RO: Oh, I suppose so. I don't know, I wasn't too much aware of it except indirectly. As I recall now, thinking back, I sort of got in with the Freehold kids, who had been in school together, somehow or other. Maybe, my mother having family there, and so on, and she was always

pushing me, "You are not just there just to study, you're to go out for this or that or to do this and that," giving me encouragement (to be active). And I had an older cousin, Carol, who, I think, was a senior when I went there as a freshman. This was the Pittsburgh cousin. ... Her mother, she, and her little sister moved to Freehold after the father, my Uncle Dave, died, ... so I had that connection. I mean, Carol taught me how to dance and even took me on a double date when I was ... in eighth grade.

KP: You were very young.

RO: I was precocious. [laughter] I mean, ... it was just to help me grow up. It wasn't a real date. ... It was ... with her and her boyfriend and one of her girlfriends who pretended to be my date. You know, it was with real "adult" people, sixteen, seventeen years old. ... I was only twelve, when I went to high school. Anyway, I got into things. I was very active in high school. Like Mary, a fellow student, I got a "Gold F" pin (for Freehold) for being in so many activities.

KP: What activities were you involved in, in high school?

RO: Well, I did a lot of writing then, still do. ... So I was one of the editors of the school paper and the coeditor of the yearbook, and things like that. I was lousy at baseball, but it was the only sport I had ever been in at all, so I started out with baseball, then shifted over. Since I was light, I didn't go in for sports so as to build up my muscles to show bravery or to prove something, I did go out for football. I never got beyond, really, the second or scrub teams. I got beat up on all the time playing against bigger, older kids. I only weighed about 140-45 pounds then and was too slow to be a good end. But anyway, I did get into track, and found that I had more stamina than most anybody else in the school. So I could run miles when they couldn't. [laughter] There were no cross-country teams then, but I ran. I was, relatively, the best school miler, anyway, and ran in a lot of meets. Got my school letter. I built up a lot of credits, one way or another. I had a lot of fun. I dated almost every good-looking girl in my class and in a few other classes, too. I got to be vice-president in my senior year, strictly on the womens' vote. [laughter] We had wonderful dances at school. And in that period, say by senior year in high school then certainly on into Rutgers, all the big bands were coming down to the shore. It was wonderful.

KP: You mentioned that in high school and in college, and it is one of the things my students always bring up, they almost are envious of how active the social life was at Rutgers, particularly the dances.

RO: Of course. At Rutgers and with Mary at NJC, (Douglass), there were dances almost every weekend certain times in the year. We'd go over to NJC, I think it cost a dollar a couple, and they had a paid orchestra. They would give you a piece of cake, or cookies, and punch. I didn't do too well in my cross-country towards the end because I was spending too much time with Mary. ... Douglass (NJC) is a pretty long way from Rutgers campus, Old Queens, so whatever training I did, I did running over to Douglass, [laughter] ... if there wasn't a dance or something. Mary usually treated me to the dance when it was there, only a dollar. We would stop at a little place that's ... still there on George Street. We would stop there, ... go in and each get a cup of tea for a nickel. You could sit there and have a tea together for two nickels. Then she would

walk back to NJC and I would trot back to Rutgers. ... This was when I was living in New Brunswick. I commuted for my first two years in a car with three other people.

KP: From Freehold?

RO: From my Marlboro home, yeah, they would pick me up going to New Brunswick by way of Matawan and Old Bridge.

KP: Who were your commuters, do you remember them?

RO: Not too easily. ... Milton Horowitz was one. He was the driver, I guess, usually. Then there was a Sylvia Lazansky. She later changed it to Lazan. She was, I think in the NJC Class of '39 or '40. And another man, a classmate, whose name slips me at the moment, (Sam Siegel). I haven't seen any of those nice people in a very long time.

SH: How many years had you been at Rutgers when you met Mary?

RO: Well, I met Mary ... Mary was in high school with me at Freehold and she was in my French and English classes and she was one of the fifteen or twenty pretty girls I dated. [laughter] And she was very nice, right, as a lot of them were. Anyway, as I say, we knew each other and we were in a number of classes together. ... I saw quite a lot of her for a couple months at one time, before I got a real serious crush on somebody else. And then, later on, ... after my freshman year at Rutgers, I was home. I thought I'd like a date for July Fourth, and I kinda went through what little books I had and I wasn't doing very well getting anybody to date me. And ... my mother said, "What about that nice Mary Hance you used to see?" More maternal influence. ... And I said, "Hey, that's a great idea." So I called her, and it was a July Fourth date. On July Fourth we went out to the fireworks at Matawan, right, and we got along well together. So when ... I went back to Rutgers and she went back to NJC, we got together again. First thing you know we were going steady. ... We were, more or less, engaged for about, you might say, ... four years before we got married. It was not a relationship that Mary's mother particularly approved of because she had Mary all set to be a journalist or a writer or so on. I don't think Mary's mother's marital experience had been very happy, and she didn't think too much of men, generally, but she put up with me because she didn't have too much choice.

KP: So her mother had sent her to college to have a career?

RO: Yeah, ... Mary's mother was her father's third wife and he had been a farmer. But he died ... when Mary was only about fifteen. And the mother, ... who was not left much of any living, went into ... [the] antique business and things of that sort. So it was really marvelous that Mary was able to get married at NJC. Where are we now? ... I didn't quite answer that question as I recall. Oh, I see, about Mary, yeah.

KP: Were you disappointed that you could not live at Rutgers and that you had to be a commuter? Or did you just accept the fact that this is the way it was and you were just glad to be going to college?

RO: I don't recall any great disappointment. I recall wishing I were living at college and as soon as I could manage it, why, I did. I mean I got jobs. I was one of those people that was always checking coats at dances or doing one thing or another, ... even later on, when I was in the fraternity. And I worked whenever I could get a job, all four years. I worked in the summers at farms. One whole summer I worked at the Marlboro State Hospital in the ... stores department, assistant to the storekeeper. I was making money every summer, picking potatoes, or working one way or another.

KP: Since we are on the subject of summer jobs, one summer, you worked at the World's Fair, in 1940.

RO: Yeah, ... I was ... at Rutgers. Maybe this is one major benefit of having been in the School of Ceramics. When it (the World's Fair) opened up, I didn't go work there the first year, but then two Ceramics students in the Class of 1940 went up to work with Dupont at the World's Fair, giving little demonstrations of the ceramic colors and one thing or another as part of their show at the Dupont exhibit. And then it sort of got started, through the influence, I guess, of George Brown, Dean, and the School of Ceramics. ... When they (1940 students) graduated, why, then the fair was continued and they needed replacements for those two. And so two members of the class of, the Ceramics Class if you will, of 1941 were asked if they would go and I agreed. And the other one was a very nice man who was killed in flight training before he got overseas in World War II.

KP: Do you remember his name?

RO: Williams, no, not Williams, Harold (Harold Johnson)? At the moment it escapes me, but anyway ... that's how I got to work at the World's Fair. And I got training. They took us to the Dupont factory, and we ... had a big, long speech to memorize. That we would do some of the time ... theoretically when we could get the whole spiel for the whole show, not just our little Ceramics (Engineering) part. But mainly we were there, ... with little electric ovens, decorating china and glasses, firing them in the ovens and passing them out to people. But that's essentially ... why I didn't get to be Phi Beta Kappa. Later on, my father was asking about it, because he had wanted me to make it, and George Brown told him how it was, that I was considered for Phi Beta Kappa, but had missed too many labs due to working at the World's Fair, ... during part of the school year, I mean, I would go up and I would be at school all morning, then I would get on the train in New Brunswick and get out to Long Island to work the rest of the day at the World's Fair. So he said I had just missed too many labs ... to give full credit, that otherwise, I might have made Phi Beta Kappa, (like my dad). It didn't make any difference to me at the time, it is only in later years that I sort of wished I had it, I wish I had a grandchild I could pass that [on to], made Phi Beta Kappa and then have yet to pass his key on, too. Dad always wore his key whenever he was dressed up. He always had both his father's watch and his Phi Beta Kappa key hanging from a chain.

KP: My stepfather talks about this a lot. He says it was a very exciting World's Fair.

RO: It was, it was a very exciting fair. It was exciting in more ways than one. On one occasion, it must have been the first year before I was working there I took Mary to the World's Fair. We went up to the Fair and we had a marvelous time. But then I forgot, we didn't keep track of the time, and we missed the last train back to New Jersey and had to spend the night in Pennsylvania Station. We didn't have enough money for a hotel or anything and Mary's mother was rather upset. [laughter] You would have thought, you know, Mary's reputation was ruined forever. It was almost like having a baby out of wedlock, for heaven's sake, and I ... wasn't guilty of anything at all. I wouldn't want to spend the night in Penn Station anymore, but it wasn't altogether a cozy spot back then, either. But that (working at the Fair) was a good experience and I got paid some marvelous amount, something like \$138.00 a month.

KP: Which was still a lot of money?

RO: It was not a vast amount, even then, but it might have been the equivalent of four or five hundred now.

KP: You mentioned that you got into Ceramics sort of by accident that you had come to the idea sort of by ...

RO: Yeah, I just sort of drifted in. It appealed to me in a way that the classes were smaller. I only had eight or ten people in my class in Ceramics. And it had a certain prestige on campus as being one of the toughest curricula on campus. You had your own special Ceramics courses, which were not very difficult, really, but then you were also taking engineering courses, you were taking chemistry courses, and it had a certain, I don't know if it does now or not, but in those days that was considered you ... weren't taking snap stuff. ... I worked, also, at the Ceramics lab. I made ... 40, I figure it was 40 cents an hour or 60 cents an hour mopping up the floors in the Ceramics building.

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

KP: Did you think you would have a career in Ceramics?

RO: I wasn't drifting, I was working hard and doing well, but by the time I graduated, or I guess a little bit before I graduated, I didn't know what I was going to do. World War II had not come along yet, although the rumblings were there. ... At one point even thought I might like to go into geology. I was very attracted by one geology course I had, enough to go and be interviewed, or go talk to the head of the Geology Department up at Columbia. He was more interested in paleontology. ... Anyway, ... I wasn't all that excited, and I didn't get any offer from Columbia. ... I guess Professor Brown always thought I should go on and do graduate work, if I could get a scholarship. And I was offered a fellowship and a scholarship at MIT, in the Department of Metallurgy. MIT had ... a very famous [professor], at that time, I can't think of his name at the moment, who headed ... the Department of Metallurgy, a very famous name in Ceramics (Norton). ... So I got a full fellowship and a scholarship, too, which I supplemented later by working in the graduate school cafeteria up at MIT. That was just because I couldn't really make up my mind and here was something to do, right? And then, of course, when World War II came

along and I suddenly, to my great surprise, found myself with a commission as a (Navy) Ensign. Why, that took care of the next four years very nicely. [laughter] And I never did go back into Ceramics, although I had passed my written exam for the Doctor of Science before I went in the Navy. But I would have had at least one year more in research, and thesis, and oral exams, so I never went back. They had kept the space open for me, if I had wanted to go back. By that time I matured enough to know I didn't want to be stuck in some lab for the rest of my life, when I really liked being with people, working with people. I had broader interests. In the meanwhile, I had read, ... this is my earlier reading habit, on the Pacific Islands, I read countless other books that my wife sent me, or I ordered ... by mail. Every subject I had missed at Rutgers, botany, biology, history, you name it. And on the basis of all that reading, I decided when the chance came along after the war to, or [during the war] toward the end, to take a Foreign Service exam. Well, I was able to pass the exam. (As I learned later on), they at first weren't even [sure] whether they were going to accept me even to take the Foreign Service exam, because my background had been in engineering and so limited, and, in lieu of academic credits, I submitted a list of everything I had read in the South Pacific. And they said, "My word." ... I talked later to someone who was in the office that reviewed my application, and [they] said, "Let's ... see what he can do. See if he can take, how he can make out, on the exam." Well, I skimmed through the exam, barely did the (foreign language-)French part based on high school French and a little scientific French (at MIT). The rest of my life was changed, if I hadn't done all that reading in the South Pacific and a certain amount of cramming in the few weeks I had ... before the exam, reading cram books on American history, and things of that sort. So I passed the written and later was invited (to take the orals), ... twenty-five thousand or more World War II vets took that written exam and something like one thousand passed, most of them were offered the oral and by the time the orals came, probably not more than half of those were still interested. So I got in through the orals. Maybe, maybe a hundred were accepted. I've been lucky, it's a great life. But it's all chance. [laughter] So I'm drifting around, at least we can get a little about World War II in here. [laughter]

SH: If we could go back to "the rumblings" that you heard. Can you describe the rumblings of the war in Europe? Where you were and how they progressed?

RO: Well, in high school Hitler was already moving. ... Of course, ... earlier you had the war in Spain, you had Mussolini going into Ethiopia, and so it was clear things were getting pretty bad. But, you know, at our age, young kids in high school, it was interesting, but you were more interested in the next dance or something else, what you were going to do. And then it got, of course, in '38, '39, and '40, ... the Germans really started moving, going into Czechoslovakia.

KP: A number of people I have interviewed knew people who often were German-Americans and knew some people in their community or high school who were involved in the Bunde. Did you know anyone?

RO: No, there wasn't any activity of that sort that I am aware of, or was aware of.

KP: You read a lot. How closely did you follow foreign affairs at the time?

RO: Very little I would imagine, other than what I needed for courses in high school.

SH: Were you aware of any discussions in your home of war?

RO: Not that I really remember. Of course, obviously, ... we had radios, you know, we would hear things on the radio. ... We would worry as things happened. ... We were aware that there was a lot of extra training going on. I think it's obvious, for example, that while I was at Rutgers they started encouraging kids to take a sort of aviation training, subsidized. And a number of my friends did go into that. I wanted to, but I was too young and my parents wouldn't give consent, so that's one reason I am alive today, probably. They didn't agree.

KP: So you wanted to take the Civilian Air Training Program?

RO: Oh, sure. I was always interested in new things. Of course, then I was marching around for two years in the ROTC. I didn't care too much for that.

KP: You decided not to apply for advanced ROTC?

RO: I don't recall now my thinking on the subject, but I wasn't particularly attracted to it. It didn't have ... anything to do with assessment of the possibility of service, or anything. When the opportunity came along for the Navy, why, I kind of grabbed it because to me the Navy had more class, or it was more romantic. I had read all those Hornblower stories in the Saturday Evening Post when I was a boy and my Uncle Ed had been in the Navy (in World War I), although I don't think he had any kind of career. But he ... still had his sword in the attic when it was time for me to be married. So we borrowed his sword as one of the swords to be held in the arch coming out of the chapel.

SH: As a commuter you were exempt from chapel, so by your senior year did you have to attend chapel at Rutgers?

RO: Yeah. I don't think it bothered me, I mean we were church-goers. I was in the choir, children's choir, until I started having voice problems. [laughter] Of course, we had the church across the street. I never was able to get the little star or bars or anything for perfect attendance, but I came close one year. [laughter]

KP: What did you think of Dean Metzger and did you have any dealings with him?

RO: I think he is the one that married us, I will have to check back on that. [He was.] Mary doesn't remember, she thought it was ... Demarest, the former president, whom we used to see once in a while and who my father knew just as a student, he didn't have any special relationship. Poor Demee, he had trouble with his teeth, with speaking, in later years. ... He was a fond character. Dean Metzger, the Dean of Men, ... he was tough. He was a disciplinarian. I don't think I was ever called up on the carpet. I made sure, I was sort of a "Rover Boy," anyway. I was not the sort to get in trouble, except once in a while. [laughter] The same in high school, one big incident in high school, ... here I had been ... one of the really good boys, didn't drink, ...

didn't have a bad reputation with the girls, even though I went out with them a lot. ... Senior year, I guess, we were going on a trip to New York, a class trip to New York to go to Radio City Music Hall and whatever. I had two or three particular buddies in high school, two of them from Farmingdale, one from Freehold, son of a rug mill person, very good friends. On the senior trip we got together and we said, "Radio City Music Hall?" Anyway, ... we skipped that part, we went to the burlesque, Old Minsky's Burlesque. [laughter] This was quite an experience for us, and on some other street, we bought those horrible fluorescent type ties you can get real cheap, for obvious reasons. They were cheap ties. And then, not content with all that, why, then we wanted to go on a big, long subway ride. So we went on this big, long subway ride and got way up in the Bronx, or heaven knows what, and they had to hold the bus for us, because we were so late getting back. Which was the worst sin of all. Of course, then it came out what we'd been doing instead of going to Radio City. So I was suspended, the only time I was ever suspended from school, or on probation or something, for a few days. And my reputation at the high school went zooming out the door. [laughter] They thought I was just too good to be true before that.

MC: Did many people from your high school attend college?

RO: ... Yes, quite a few did. In those days, you could take two tracks, so to speak. They didn't even have that term then. ... There was a special set of courses required for people who expected to go on to higher education, others got more shop, or sewing, or whatever. They still had other good courses, but they were not pointed toward higher education. I don't know what the percentage was, I would say about half maybe went on to something, went into special schools, normal school, or CPA school, or college. Maybe not quite that many. ... Sort of the ones mostly that I [was] associating with [went to college]. When you asked earlier about cliques, possibly, between the country kids and stuff, I wasn't aware of it too much, except there were definitely some. People tended to stay with their friends, the ones they had gone to grade school with. I broke into the other groups. In fact, I was in several different groups, depending on who I was dating at the time. But I didn't see that much of my old classmates from Marlboro. We just sort of, ... weren't in the same sports or weren't in the same social circle. It wasn't that easy for me because Freehold was a long way, and I would have to hitch-hike home from Freehold a great deal. I couldn't drive obviously, I wasn't seventeen yet. I did not drive until I was a sophomore in college, oh no, ... I guess, ... I got a license the day I was seventeen in February 1938.

LL: You mentioned that you enjoyed writing. Did you write for the *Targum* when you were at Rutgers?

RO: Yes, I wrote for the *Targum*, I wrote for the Scarlet Letter. I was one of the activities editors, my last year, of the Scarlet Letter. I was editor of the fraternity newspaper that came out once a month or so. I always enjoyed writing. ... Mary was a journalist, though. She was at the School of Journalism. But at that time the girls could come over to Rutgers for journalism classes, in ... maybe junior and senior [years], at least senior year. I used to meet her at the journalism, its where the Geology Museum is now, right next to Winants Hall. I would be there and meet her and she would be given some assignment to go. So I would take a pad along, and I would go along with her to whatever assignment that she was supposed to report on. [laughter]

KP: You joined a fraternity. How did you come about joining the fraternity you joined?

RO: Well, obviously, you got rushed. They looked around to see who they wanted as members. Well, I got a bid from my father's fraternity. ... I took a girl up there once for a date from New Brunswick, I mean from high school, I think it was the year before, a few months before I went in and it didn't impress me too much, that particular group of fellows. That whole experience was one of, you know, people huddled together in dark corners. And then Chi Phi gave me a bid and Phi Gamma Delta, Fiji's, gave me a bid, ... I was at both houses and I opted to become a pledge, and did as a freshman for Phi Gam, even if I didn't live on campus. So ... that was my fraternity, and I had a good time there. They were a pretty well behaved bunch, in those years anyway. We always had ... a man, living in the house, who did the cleaning and so, and his wife was the cook, a nice black couple. People generally behaved. Once in a while, there would be a binge, a little drinking, some did visit the wrong parts of town occasionally. But, it was not too bad.

KP: What was the wrong part of town?

RO: I did not visit there, let's ... [make] that clear. [laughter] But I knew where it was and heard some of the experiences. It was a house of prostitution, down somewhere (near) where that theater is now.

KP: The George Street Theater?

RO: Yes, I guess that is the George Street Theater. Yeah.

KP: Livingston Avenue, by the Y?

RO: No, it was down closer to the campus. ... Maybe the theater is not there anymore. It was not the one up on Livingston Avenue, this was the one --

KP: On Albany Street?

RO: On Albany Street. I don't know whether it was even a house of prostitution, I know it was a place where people could get a drink and find girls that were willing.

MC: Where was your fraternity house? Was it on frat row?

RO: No, no. There's a big dorm where it used to be. You know where the Chi Phi house is? Well, if you go north toward the river ... it was at the corner of Bishop Place and that next street.

MC: George Street.

RO: George Street. It was a beautiful old building, up ... on a hill, looking out over the river. Seems to me one of the George Street fraternities now is down below, on the right to where that used to be. But that was a nice, we had a fire later on and they had to move and they moved twice. I guess now they have moved a third time, fourth time, maybe.

SS: Do you remember your initiation?

RO: Yes, well, not so much the initiation, I remember “hell week.” In our particular fraternity, the tradition then was that you each got a big bunch of onions hung around your neck. ... Whenever an upper class-man saw you, he would ask some question and then you would have to take a bite of onion. And you couldn't take them off, day or night, right. ... Plenty of people [gave you] room in class, people moved away. And there was still, still there was still paddles then. I don't recall it ever being abused. I always had mixed feelings. I think it was sort of a rite of passage, and it wasn't all that harmful. There weren't any pranks so serious that anybody, at least in our fraternity, ever got seriously hurt. They might scare you to death a little bit. I remember Vince Kramer particularly. I remember he and I were not the best of friends, it wasn't bad, but we just sort of had different personalities. Well, he was the football hero and I was the runner. He was contact sports and I was not contact sports. ... Oh where was I, wandering too much again.

SS: About the initiation.

RO: ... I remember particularly being so impressed that upper classmen would challenge freshmen, you know, for exchanging swats. You would have to swat them first, the upper classmen, you know, he'd bend over assume the position and you would give him a swat, and then it was his turn. [laughter] ... I remember Vince particularly was very stalwart in this regard, and I think one of the seniors and he must have exchanged about ten swats. ... I don't think either one of them sat down for a while. It was a very good period at Phi Gamma Delta. ... We had, I think, an exceptionally compatible group of people in all the different classes. I think, at one time I did check out on ... the contributions to Rutgers from different classes and there were an awful lot of active people in the class of '41. And '38, '39, '40, '41, '42, '43, I mean somewhere in that group, ... people had such a good, active time that they continued their fondness by supporting Rutgers more than some others might.

Hey, we're not even anywhere near World War II hardly yet, let's hurry it up, if we go a little while longer and then stop for lunch or something. ...

KP: Okay. Whenever you are ready to stop.

RO: I can talk all day, you know. ... Will I get a copy of what I said that you don't use because that can be ... an oral history that will useful to us.

KP: You will get the whole transcript to edit. You will have to do the editing.

RO: Because you will have to cut this down. ...

KP: Oh no. We put the whole transcript on the Internet.

RO: Well, this means it will never get read because people will get so tired of it. ...

KP: Oh, no!

RO: Okay, well go ahead. ...

KP: On campus, did you see a split between those who commuted and those who lived on campus?

RO: I don't know how serious it was, I mean, I was young and pretty naïve, right, still am, not young, but naive. There was more of a split you might say between fraternity and non-fraternity, but this wasn't evident, as far as I can recall, in class relationships, or club relationships or working for the *Targum*, I suppose. There was a very active non-fraternity group, I forget what its called now, I think it's probably still has the same name.

SH: Scarlet Barbs.

RO: ... The Scarlet Barbs, or whatever, right. And there were separate dorm groups. But ... I don't feel that it, I mean you might say having ... been in what at the time may have been considered the more elite group in the fraternities but I was much less aware of any distinction then if I had been in, say, been in the ... commuter club or group, that wasn't as active, and might have felt some people were looking down on them, which maybe they did, but I wasn't aware of it, really.

KP: So by being part of the fraternity, but still being a commuter, you felt like you had a place.

RO: I had so many. The fraternity was important to me, but it didn't mean I had fewer friends among my Ceramics classmates, or that I didn't have a lot good friendships in the cross country track group, or Scarlet Letter group. I mean, I just sort of kept doing what I had done in high school and throughout my life in a sense. I avoided being too closely identified, in the narrow sense, with any group. I like people, whatever, I mean, I'm not bragging, its just been my approach.

SH: Did you notice any split between those who favored isolation towards the war when you were there? Vince Kramer mentioned in his interview that he thought there was a division between those who ...

RO: Between which?

KP: Between the isolationists and the interventionists.

RO: I don't know. I think he picks up a lot from times later on rather than from school years because he has very strong views about people who were draft dodgers or one thing or another. I was not aware of this. ... Certainly there was really no feeling about it, as far as I can tell, in say '37, '38, '39. Maybe starting in '40 people were beginning to think, well, sooner or later, they might go in and a few people left college to go fight ... with the British before we went in.

People were a little concerned about the future. But, I don't think there was too much of this until, say, the draft started. Let's say in that period and people had to make up their minds whether they were going to go, or what did they feel about it, or whether they would be volunteers, or wait to be drafted. Maybe if you had been an advanced ROTC person, you would have had much more feeling for this than the bulk of the student body.

KP: So you did not view the debate over America going to war as a big issue dividing the students?

RO: Not for me. Maybe in the Department of History, not in the Department of Ceramics. [laughter] I didn't hear too much about it at the fraternity, either, which included people from all different faculties. If anything, it made us a little envious toward the end, in our naive approach to war, a little envious of those who had been parading around in uniforms.

KP: Several fraternity people have said that part of the reason they joined advanced ROTC was because of the military ball and their uniforms.

RO: Yeah, they also got a certain amount of pay, which was very handy and tempting for people. I guess I, it just was not a very challenging subject in terms of the scholastic side of it. And there were other courses I had to take, I had a pretty full schedule in Ceramics, and with working at the World's Fair, and all my dating activities, I just didn't have time for it. [laughter]

KP: Before we move on to the war, could you maybe reflect on who your favorite professors were and maybe some you were less fond of?

RO: I don't think I had ... any favorites at Rutgers. I barely remember, I mean at MIT.

KP: What about at Rutgers?

RO: At Rutgers, well, I'd have to do some more thinking about that. I liked most of them, I didn't have any particular gripes. ... Looking back over the years, there were some subjects that I found that are more helpful to me later in life. In the Foreign Service, for example, where I also had to do quite a lot of writing, reporting, it was helpful to have had engineering writing as a skill, how to organize an engineering report for example and this I found good. Later on, I forget the name of the nice young professor, maybe he was even an assistant or instructor who had public speaking. In later years, I wished I had really worked much harder on that, because I was not really a very good public speaker, except in informal circumstances. ... I could have benefited later in life if I had more training that way. We had almost no, in Ceramic Engineering, general courses, except for freshmen English, and American Civilization, which I enjoyed. It was all those engineering courses, you were too busy working and learning what you could. Freshmen chemistry, I should remember, Professor Van Mater, he was another family friend. This was nice, you didn't have instructors come and teach, you had the professors come and teach. Which I think is a great shame, later on, that hasn't had that contact, close contact. His was the biggest class I had, and there must have been 60 I guess, maybe 70. ... But they were nice people in the

Ceramics Department, ... I really can't pin down particular professors as being great favorites or that this or that person influenced my whole life. They probably did, but.

KP: You did go to MIT for metallurgy.

RO: Well, it was in the Ceramics (Engineering) aspect within the Department of Metallurgy.

KP: How did you like MIT and Cambridge and Boston?

RO: I liked Cambridge and Boston. [laughter] I liked MIT, but it was very, very arduous. I did not have calculus in college ... and it was considered a deficiency, but I was still given my scholarship and fellowship on the understanding that I would take a crash course in Differential Equations when I went up there. And boy, if you have had no background in high school or college in differential equations and then have to take the equivalent of a whole year's course in five or six weeks, five hours a day or something. ... I flunked every test in that except the final, and just somehow, things sort of started coming together at the very end. [laughter] ... That was not a very auspicious start, because this was in the summer, June or July, early August, until regular courses started. And I was very busy there, of course, and I had to do a lot of studying at night. I had my work to do as well as my studies. I had some very good friends, the young men in the Ceramics (Engineering) Department. I particularly treasured relationships with three or four. But at ... MIT I was pretty poor, and I was engaged, of course, to Mary, but I didn't have an engagement ring yet. ... So I was saving money, I was only getting fifty dollars a month from the University. And I'm supposed to eat on that as well as pay my rent. ... It was a little tough. So, for quite a while there I was eating Spanish peanuts, which were the cheapest thing you could get that were nourishing. Mary's engagement ring was bought, you might say, with Spanish peanuts, at so much a month at this second hand jewelers in Boston. But I got awfully tired of Spanish peanuts. ... So I started, I got a little ... hot plate and one of these little gas ovens, for gas, but we didn't have gas, ... and I would put that over the hot plate and cook it in my room. ... This was very difficult on my roommate, who was [from] a well-to-do family, he didn't have to, but to have the room all smelled up from my cooking. So finally, one day I guess, whether he was there or I was there, people coming into the MIT Graduate House where we lived would say, "Oh, we're having pot roast for lunch." And they would go downstairs, and no pot roast, just the smell coming down from my room. So I gave up, under considerable pressure, I gave up cooking in my room. ... I got a job as a busboy in the Graduate House cafeteria, which provided my food. It was an interesting period.

KP: You had just been at graduate school a few months when the news of Pearl Harbor came. Do you remember where you were?

RO: That day, I have no idea where I was. I don't remember exactly any important place, where I was on a given day, even the Kennedy assassination, I can't pinpoint it. But anyway, ... shortly after Pearl Harbor, ... a Navy recruiter came around to MIT, ... offering engineering, I suppose engineering graduates and I was a graduate of Rutgers and doing graduate work at MIT, commissions in the Naval Reserve as Ensigns, maybe some higher depending on age, background. ... So he offered me a commission in the Navy and by now I was aware of what was

going on, and sooner or later one way or another, I am going to be in this, and wanted to be. There was a lot of patriotic fervor around, more than enough. Anyway, but he ... assured me, "Oh, we wouldn't want to take you right away, you would be so much more valuable to us, you know, when you've got your Doctor of Science degree." So I said, Okay." My commission came in, and not too long after my first orders came to report for active duty, in June, at Fort Schuyler's Officer's Training School in ... New York City, upper New York City. ... So that's when I passed my written exam, and MIT said they would hold a slot for me, if I wanted to come back after the war and finish up. This sort of made me think, too, that maybe I ought to get married before too long, if possible, if I was going overseas. So Mary was amenable to that, her mother was not. [laughter] I was only 21 and Mary was 22, (that June 8, 1942).

KP: So, you actually needed her mother's consent.

RO: No, well, I was already 21, Mary was over 21. She didn't need consent, but, her mother was a widow and she (Mary) didn't want to go too much against her mother. But for the first time Mary actually said, "I'm going to marry him, whether you come to the wedding or not." And at some point, Mary's mother was advised by her brother, who used to live in this house, a dentist, if you can't lick 'em, join 'em, so she did come to the wedding. Anyway I was at Fort Schuyler, New York, Officer's Training, kind of a basic course, where you paraded around, and you took courses on naval history. ... I can't recall anything too much that was useful, it was terminology and you salute the quarter-deck when you come on board ship, and be nice to your captain, and all that stuff. [laughter] And remember Admiral Farragut, and so on and so forth. But they did a certain amount of training, and a lot of physical exercise to build us up. So those were some interesting, quick weeks, and Mary and I scheduled our wedding for August 8th, 1942, just the weekend before the school was going to close. So we got married at Rutgers and came out safely under the crossed swords. [laughter] And a reception at Woodlawn, where Mary had been living [working as ... alumnae clerk], and also she was occasionally also a hostess (at Woodlawn) there to help with things. But anyway, that was the reception and big fancy wedding, big reception. I don't remember too much about it, I was in a big daze.

KP: Most people are at their receptions. I remember my own.

RO: But right after the reception we went down to the station got on the train to go to New York. We went to Hotel Pennsylvania for our day-and-a-half honeymoon, and then Sunday morning, real early, I got up in order to be back up at Fort Schuyler by seven a.m. Then I think at nine a.m. we had our strength test to see how much we had progressed physically in the course. [laughter] And so I graduated, and that was it. I was a cheapskate even then. I was thinking back to the wedding because my best man, who had been one of my best friends from high school, he came but he left his shoes, his white shoes at home or something. ... So I sent him downtown, New Brunswick, to buy a pair of white shoes. He was a big fellow, by standards then. He was well over six feet, and had big feet. But I made him get the shoes in my size. [laughter] Or at least he did, as I recall, and so I used those shoes later on. If anybody saw him he didn't look too comfortable in those around the reception. [laughter] Everyone has a practical side.

KP: MIT, in World War II, would play a major role in the war effort. Did professors approach you, or did you think you might be staying as part of the war effort at MIT?

RO: I wasn't even aware of it, as far as I know now, I wasn't even aware of anything like that going on.

KP: No professors said, "We've got this great project"?

RO: No, no. Actually, of course later on, much later on, Ceramics became very important. You wouldn't have anybody up there in space if we had not developed ceramic materials for insulating the tiles. Anyway, maybe I just didn't know what was going on around me, MIT students didn't discuss anything. They were really a dull bunch, generally. Not so much in the graduate school itself, but you go some place else and you would think kids like at Rutgers would be having a nice time talking, no, these MIT students would be there sitting around hunched over playing with their slide rules. At least that was the impression some of us more freewheeling graduate students had. [laughter] But it was nice to be up there, Mary came up and visited. And a very important development in my life occurred at MIT, because there was a boat club by MIT that had these little sailing dingies in the Charles River Basin and they wouldn't let you use these boats unless you took their course, so I took the course and that's when I started to sail and I've been sailing all my life since. It was really a wonderful start on a lot of things. And I taught all my children to sail, too. So you never know what's going to lead to what. And also, my wife and I are now, and have been a long time, very fond of classical music, we go to many concerts. I had no concept of classical music or the beauty of music at Rutgers to speak of. Glee Club, or something, but at MIT my roommate, who was a more cultured gentleman than I, introduced me to classical music by taking me over to Boston Commons to listen to the Pops orchestra. So I think that was another wonderful deviation in my life.

SH: After Camp Schuyler, where did you go?

RO: Well, we got orders to report to Mare Island Navy Yard, in San Francisco for additional degaussing duty. I'm sorry, I got ahead of myself, we first got orders to go up to Boston Navy Yard, Charlestown Navy Yard, in Boston, for Degaussing training, which we did. And we went almost at once up there, got a little place, little apartment to live, a little cellar type apartment, a basement apartment I guess is a better word, on Beacon Hill, but not on the fashionable side.

KP: But you ended up going to a place you were very familiar with, Cambridge and Boston.

RO: Yeah, to a degree. That was pleasant, but I worked on, I forget some of these names now there's so many places, Castle Island, it was a little island in Boston Harbor, where they had a degaussing station, and sent people for training, and I was there for awhile. And that was interesting it wasn't a deperming station, where you wrapped temporary coils around a ship, but it was one where you ran tests on ships across ranges that were on the bottom of the channel. ... You listened and you learned and learned a little bit particularly about instruments, you know, so that you could adjust them and read them properly and read the tapes, and work out charts to give ships and so on. I don't say I was terribly proficient, but I did that. I remember more one

experience when, on a slow spell, I was standing out on this little dock, or pier, coming out from the station and I wanted to fish, here I was in my Navy uniform, you know, untarnished braid and everything, the young Ensign. And they had a kind of like a little fishnet you'd throw out right to try to catch some little minnows or whatever to fish with later. ... But, I stood outside the railing, and I threw too hard, and I pulled myself off this pier down into the water, (which was) only about four or five feet deep, no, maybe only two or three feet deep, and hit my arm. Pushed my whole left arm out, hit a rock, dislocated my shoulder, got a little scratch on my head, maybe, lucky. That was very memorable because it was very embarrassing. Somebody else had to go in and fish my hat out, with the braid, of course, after that it looked a little more senior. [laughter] But they took me to the nearest naval facility with medical possibilities. It was like a boot station place. They just about killed me trying to push this arm back into position, because they were pushing in the wrong direction. Finally, someone, "Ohh, that's the wrong way." And they pushed it the other way and snapped it right in. I haven't had a great deal of confidence in certain types of medical people since. Anyway, I decided to go back to our little apartment and sleep in a chair for the next week or ten days or two weeks. ... Not the best way to spend a second honeymoon.

KP: What was your wife doing while you were training in Boston, was she working at all?

RO: I wasn't there all that long. ... I think she just kept the home-fires burning, so to speak. In fact, one time we had to evacuate the apartment because I had gotten some free wood from the Navy that happened to be creosoted, and the smoke fumes from our fireplace drove us out into the street. It was not very pleasant.

KP: Did you have a hard time getting an apartment in Boston?

RO: I don't recall. I think that wherever you went, there was always somebody in a Navy office that had a list of places and would offer help. ... So I suppose that's how we found this spot.

KP: Could you tell us about the problem with mines and merchant shipping in World War II?

RO: Well, of course, it wasn't just the merchant marine, but in the early stages of the war, the Germans mounted a massive effort, using magnetic mines, which means mines that would be triggered, would be primed and triggered, by the magnetic waves of ships going over (or nearby). It's like in the olden days where there would have to contact, but this is, they'd blow up with a certain magnetism. And ships, all metal ships, have you might say, magnetic signatures depending where they are, what direction they're heading. ... One way was discovered, I think probably the British pioneered it, but we, anyway, we followed up and did more, in ways to counteract these magnetic signatures or reduce the size so it would be less likely for our ships to set off these magnetic mines. We lost a lot, we probably lost a lot more ships or as many ships from magnetic mines as we did from submarine torpedoes.

KP: Because you always hear about submarines.

RO: Right. ...

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

RO: It is not real clear now in my memory, whether, as far as amounts go of course, submarines did an awful lot of damage. But off England, in areas where we wanted to send supply ships and other ships, areas that could be mined, were mined, and these magnetic mines presented a very serious problem that was vastly reduced once they developed the techniques for this degaussing. Degaussing meaning de-magnetization. Which was done either by wrapping coils around an entire ship and putting direct current through it which is just sort of a one time thing, it reduces a certain amount, but not too much. Or installing coils inside the hulls of ships, from simple ones on a ship like Liberty ship, all the way around, and occasionally a vertical one, or to much more complicated coils of various types, aboard say a destroyer or a battleship or so on, where you'd have some fore and aft and vertical and whatever. And then, ... these were run also on direct current, and you could measure the effect of the ship in various headings and times by instruments on a channel underneath a ship. ... From this you could draw up charts to be given to the captain and the navigator, so that as the ship was going along, depending where, and what heading, what part of the world, they could adjust the currents on these various cables to minimize the magnetic signature. This later on became important also for when the Germans started using magnetic torpedoes. It really affected us if a torpedo didn't hit the ship, it didn't hit the ship, but it could go under the ship, or even come near the ship, and be blown up by the magnetism of the ship which could increase their deadliness, so to speak. But anyway, there were a lot of people in this activity, both officers and enlisted men, and degaussing stations set up all around the world, in all harbors, to take care of this, because every so often these signatures, magnetic signatures would change, and the ship would have to be re-calibrated, so to speak, given new instructions. So everything I did in the Navy pretty much was related to this activity, assisting in ... one of these degaussing stations.

KP: So what skills were involved in your training to do this?

RO: In degaussing training?

KP: Yes, in just your training in general.

RO: Well, in all honesty, like in many things including modern days, being able to use a computer. ... It's one thing to, you can learn how to do a great deal without knowing all the theory or how to write your own programs on a computer right. Well, you could learn how to use these instruments by watching other people and by hands-on experience and work up your charts, it was just step one, two, three, four, without knowing all the magnetic theory, which of course, you also got a smattering of, but ... it is a practical talent that you develop by doing. And that was pretty much true. ... I suppose I drank more coffee than I did anything else in those training periods, while watching other people, more skilled people do things and then, now and then, in effect, taking the helm and working some of the stuff out, taking sort of a practical hands-on type test to see if I was ready to go on to the next step. You got to be very familiar with the anatomy of ships because many of these cables really were in odd spots of the ship, and you had to inspect it. Every kind of ship, aircraft carriers down to little, small ships if they were metal. PT boats, no, because they didn't have enough metal to have any real magnetic signature, and they usually

weren't around in a given spot long enough to set something up anyway. But we did, also, as a secondary help, we would occasionally even go aboard a PT boat in order to help them adjust their compasses, which, of course, ... were magnetic compasses, since we had a little bit of experience with that. But that was sort of an extra duty that we would do on occasion to be obliging, or do the same thing, favor for liberty ships, adjust their magnetic compasses. At the same time we were also giving them instructions on how to reduce their magnetism. It wasn't really very exciting. I had much more fun with Mary, learning the towns that we were stationed in, and making friends with other trainees.

KP: Did you make any lasting friends that you've kept in touch with?

RO: Well, I guess, pretty much as long as they lasted, you know, we kept correspondence up for years, but don't ask me at this moment to recall their names, Mary would be much better she's always been my name resource person.

KP: Were you disappointed that you got this assignment?

RO: I never gave much thought to it. It was much later on in the South Pacific that I tried to get transferred out to most anything else.

KP: It sounds like you were looking for something more exciting, that your mission proved to be very mundane even in the South Pacific?

RO: Yeah, you might say. Well, of course, when I was in charge of my own unit, why then I was sort of the CO, and responsible for all aspects of the enlisted men. When you're out a place like that you didn't, they weren't all degaussing specialists, you had to have signalmen, you had to have cooks, you had to have coxswains, you had to have divers. You had quite a miscellany of people that you were responsible for. And that included responsibility for everything you could think of, including helping them with their advancement through monitoring and teaching, giving them tests to see if they were qualified for going up another grade. I've always loved a wide variety of responsibilities and experiences. I sought that and achieved that in the Foreign Service and the Navy its always been very interesting. I don't think I ever really questioned the right of the Navy to send me anywhere they wanted or tell me what they wanted me to do. It was always fascinating to go to a new place, San Francisco, New Caledonia. You got to interesting places, in New Caledonia I wasn't at the main naval base, I was on a small island out in the harbor. We always were somewhere off on the edge of things, where there'd be a suitable channel in depth for you to have these instruments on the bottom. On the island of Ile Nu, in the harbor of Noumea, which had been a very infamous prison island, but the prisoners had long since departed, although some of the ancient ones were still hanging around Noumea itself, because they never could get anywhere else. But we were on that island, that was maybe what five, six miles out in the harbor. Once in a while we would get into the main base, not too often.

I guess I did mention that I bumped into Admiral "Bull" Halsey there on the main base, I went in one time and they had a beach somewhere out near Noumea, and a lot of people in the water as I recall, mostly about chest high. ... And I was ... always a great one for swimming under water and

I would dive, and I was swimming under water and I came up, "BANG", against somebody's big tummy. I came up and looked and there was Admiral "Bull" Halsey standing there in front of me, I had just banged into him. Needless to say, I was down under the water and off somewhere pretty quickly. [laughter] He had a reputation for being, as well as, he was he was the top naval officer in the South Pacific, I didn't hang around, I was cautious after that. I remember that particular island, one on Ile Nu they were growing wild not pepper plants, there were little pepper plants, very, very excruciatingly hot peppers, about that long, in rocky soil. And one way, when you were a new person, somebody was always telling you "try one of these peppers." So I remember a number of times doing the same thing to other poor kids that came on. You would sort of pretend to eat one, and say, "these are good, really have one," and you would see them get redder and redder.

KP: After Boston, you were assigned to San Francisco?

RO: Yes, I was assigned to, ... I think it was Pier 33. Here again, it was not close to the Navy Yard.

KP: And you mentioned that the Navy had said you had to be in San Francisco at such and such a time.

RO: Yeah, they ... made it possible, in those days, to take a roundabout way. They were only really interested in ... the date you were supposed to report. And they, of course, would pay your travel. ... I think they also paid for my wife's travel, since I still wasn't going overseas, you know, and we were married. So we took this opportunity to, with naval assistance or maybe there's some other word, ... to get to San Francisco ... from Boston by way of Niagara Falls, where we stayed overnight I guess, a day or two maybe. And then stopped over briefly in Chicago where I guess we changed trains and got, I think it was called the "Chief" or something, an old train, quite famous, but a slow one. You could get another one that was much faster, but we got a slow one so we could stop at different places. We stopped at Carlsbad Caverns, and saw Carlsbad Caverns and had wonderful seafood at a little hotel near there. Then we went up to the Grand Canyon. I showed you some pictures of Mary and I ... coming up out of the Grand Canyon by mule-back ... in the snow, the ... last day it was open that year. And then ... got to San Francisco, and the Navy helped us find this little converted store with the big show windows boarded up, except for little holes in it, where we lived for several months before my going [back] overseas. That was the period that ... I had mostly night shifts at Pier 33, which was both a deperming station and a degaussing station. Here again mostly filling in time, while other people did the work. Sometimes there would be nothing ... to do, but you still had to be there. I learned that the Navy ... has endless cups of coffee going, usually in the same pot that hadn't been washed for years. But it kept you awake. Then I would come home and Mary would be doing her housework in the middle of the night, and putting out laundry, ... then be available with me the next day, say until maybe three or four in the afternoon to go enjoy Golden Gate Park or go around town. We were only a block or two from Golden Gate Park actually. It was in town, right on a noisy place too during the day because of the trolley going by, just up the corner next to the liquor store. This meant that people ... at night, when I was working down at Pier 33, people would come up from the liquor store, having bought something, and stand in the little store doorway to at least have a

few, and sometimes, Mary said, there were as many as two or three bottles out by our doorstep in the morning, empty ones, when she came out.

KP: It sounds like you and Mary enjoyed San Francisco a great deal.

RO: Yeah, ... it was delightful weather. It very often rained in the early morning before we got up, and then it would clear off, and then rain, and then be delightful. This was, of course, at Christmas-time. It still was pleasant and warm by midday. We had our own little Christmas tree there in the store window.

SH: What was the relationship between the Navy personnel that you worked with and the merchant marine?

RO: Mutual respect I would say, I can't think of a better way to express it. If you're looking for news of conflict, I know of no good conflict going. You hear about it, you read about it, but I didn't have any. The merchant marine weren't much people for spit and polish, on the other hand, neither were a lot of us reserve Ensigns. [laughter] We were there to help them, I guess about all the disagreement we may have had is that a lot of the merchant skippers didn't know too much about, or weren't too keen about, degaussing. It meant a little bit more of a nuisance for them, except for those maybe that had had some experience or learned about how much it maybe saving them in terms of danger. I suppose it was understandable if they had not heard of any recent ships going up from magnetic mines in the area they were traveling, they were less inclined to want to take the time away from their other duties to cooperate by going back and forth across instruments in different directions. But they were always nice, they would invite you in to sit and have a cup of coffee with them.

KP: How long would it take for a ship to go through the process?

RO: It would depend again on how complex the equipment aboard a given ship, ... and, of course, how fast a ship could go and maneuver and come back and so forth, and whether you got good readings where it was quite clear what the results would be and how you'd make out the chart. Or in some reason or other it didn't come out clear you'd have to do it again. ... Oh, it could be anything from fifteen minutes to several hours. On some of the more simple ships you, in some cases, could take a signature of that ship on their way into the harbor and then ... not do it again until they were on their way out. And then from those two, ... the two tapes make your comparison and send a boat out or they'd send a boat in to pick up the results. Usually somebody went aboard, but not always. You could handle this by signal light, which is what we mostly used. We would just send out a good signal to tell the ship which heading to take next and so forth.

SH: Was there any difference in security between the East Coast and the West Coast?

RO: Security? What do you mean?

SH: How monitored were your activities?

RO: I don't think I was ever aware of any monitoring other than the guidance we got at training school. Or there would be a big sign, of course, when you go into an installation, there would be a big sign on the wall, be careful, "don't talk, the enemy may be listening." But I was never particularly impressed, I don't recall now that our degaussing activity was supposed to be classified information. There wasn't anybody to tell it to anyway. I don't think that the enemy could have benefited very much from, I suppose there were ... some aspects ... they might have benefited, in order to get information about our degaussing techniques and so forth to enable them to make a more sophisticated mine. I don't think any of us were particularly anxious to talk to anybody about it. We didn't, I rarely had any chance to associate with anyone that wasn't already in the Navy. [laughter] I don't recall any approaches, or hearing of any approaches by mysterious civilians or ... seductive blondes to pry out secrets from me. ... [laughter] ...

KP: You mention that the Navy reserves did not take to the discipline, the spit and polish. From the interviews I have done, I have gathered that the Navy was a very hierarchical and tradition bound service as compared with the other services.

RO: Well, I don't know. ... I was never too much aware of it, because they couldn't be too hide-bound during World War II because suddenly a very small organization, relatively speaking, was expanded many times by the bringing in of people like myself, and enlisted men from all walks of life. I suppose if there were problems, they'd be problems aboard a particular ship, depending on the personality of the officers and the Captain, of those who had been through Annapolis and had professional experience during peacetime, trying to cope with all these eager, sometimes inept, but maybe mostly willing, new people. ... I didn't have a ship-board experience, as such, I spent a lot of time on ships helping them and working with them. And I encountered a lot of regular Navy at some of these bases. I can't really be helpful on that. I could speculate, but why speculate.

KP: When you got your orders for overseas duty, did your wife stay in San Francisco or did she come back East?

RO: Of course, going to San Francisco, we knew this was just the beginning of the end, and that we were going to have to leave. In fact, we knew that when we got married. We were just happy that we had as much time together that we did. But there would have been no reason at all for her to stay in San Francisco. Go back home where the family is, so she did, went back and stayed with her mother, in Freehold, New Jersey. And very soon applied for, and got a job working for the army down here at Fort Monmouth, at various camps, including Camp Wood. ... I'll let her tell you about her experiences, but she worked, until she got word, ... I guess the day she got word that I was coming back from overseas, well, that's the day she handed in her resignation. [laughter]

SH: Can you tell us about how you shipped out of San Francisco, and what you did from that point?

RO: Not too well. ... You said San Pedro earlier, ... it wasn't San Pedro was it? I left San Francisco ...

KP: You actually left from San Diego.

RO: Oh, that's right. Well, we left from San Francisco and then the ship that we got on went down to pick up some additional people at San Diego. And we were just there a day or two, ... I think I had time to go see the races or something. And ... then it was a solid month before we saw land, or pretty much a solid month. Because ... there was still a lot of presumed danger from submarines, right, and there had been a lot of submarines suspected earlier, and then suspected of being in the vicinity of Hawaii and other places. ... Unfortunately, it would have been nice to see Hawaii that way, but ... we bypassed and zig-zagged, in long zig-zags, all the way across that tremendously long ocean. Even though our ship was, I suppose, relatively fast, having been a former ... French passenger ship, why, it took a long time. ... We had a lot of time doing mostly nothing. Some watches, to assist with the other enlisted personnel onboard this transport. *Admiral Rochambeau* is the name of the ship, it had been, I guess Vichy France had it, but then we got it away from them somehow in North Africa and ... gave it a Navy number, and then ... fixed it up so that you could five people in rooms that one person used to be in. [laughter] Not to mention the poor enlisted men stacked up like sardines in the hold one on top of the other. So [we were] really just enjoying the ocean, as far as you could enjoy it, on good days, and not enjoying it so much on bad days. And learning to play bridge and cribbage, and more coffee, and salt water showers.

LL: Did you ever encounter any bad weather?

RO: I don't recall any. ... No real storms. It was a pacific Pacific, in that period, mostly, as I recall. I don't recall too much about that trip you got to know your roommates rather ... well.

KP: Did you go over with a unit, or where you going over as an individual?

RO: I was going in as an individual, although, as I seem to recall, at least one, maybe more of the people that were in the cabin with me were going to go into degaussing. ... One particular older man, at the grand old age of something like 28, 27 or 28, from Boston, who was an acturarian, I think he was a slightly higher rank, I think they gave him an extra half bar, lieutenant j.g. when he came in. And, he's the one that persisted to try to teach me bridge, never achieving the quality that lived up to his standards. We also ... all tried chess, and started carving our own chess sets. I never got very far in chess, either. Cribbage, I did.

KP: It sounds like after this voyage was over, you had an idea of what war would be like for you, that there would be a lot of time to fill?

RO: I don't quite understand your question. ... You weren't participants in war, you had various drills and stuff.

KP: But you really had a lot of time on your hands aboard ship.

RO: Yes.

KP: That you managed to fill in a lot of ways.

RO: Well, here again, good old reading. I was able to read a lot.

KP: You landed in?

RO: Noumea. ... That had been a French colony. ... I forget now the history of it, but there had been some kind of, I guess Vichy France had wanted to hold on to it, but couldn't. So then we had a Navy base there, a rather large Navy base. A very interesting country in fact, I wondered around some, some areas there, there were very few roads, but the natives were Melanesians, many of them bright red hair because they used some kind of bleach or ... lime, I guess, quick lime to try to kill the bugs, and things and it gave them red hair as a result. Not a very attractive lot, generally. [laughter] ... The town was like a frontier town, like you might imagine ... hundred years ago. Here it was supposed to be the biggest city, the capital, but still ... pretty scanty by the time we got there. I mean they, most of the goods, they were very poor, the shops were very poorly supplied. It was really frontier-type conditions, except for the Navy part.

KP: And the Free French were running the island, as the civil authority?

RO: Yeah, I don't know if we would call them Free French then, but they certainly weren't imprisoned French.
[laughter]

KP: It wasn't Vichy?

RO: ... Well, ... we were in control. ... I suppose there were people there who might have preferred the Vichy, but they didn't have any choice particularly. But I learned a fair amount about the island. I think it helped me later on in my Foreign Service oral exams when I was questioned about the country and what they did there, and what the natives are like and one thing or another and I had answers because I was interested enough to read the little guide books and wander around a certain amount. So it didn't hurt me.

KP: In some ways, although there is a war going on, you are almost a tourist, not in a bad sense.

RO: Not a first class tourist. [laughter] I mean, I was following orders I was doing the job that I was supposed to be doing.

KP: Well, one captain had said to his crew as they were passing through the Caribbean and the Panama Canal that "People in civilian life pay a lot of money to do this." And since you were going to exotic islands ...

RO: Well, exotic yes, but not ... like the Heddy Lamar-Bob Hope movies, really. [laughter] ... There was a certain amount of disease, you know, and you saw people with elephantitis, and you saw, on that island of Ile Nu, there had been a leper colony there. ... No longer, but you can see that and you had the impression of how many thousands of people might have suffered as prisoners in this cruel place.

KP: And the prison was gone when you were there?

RO: There were walls and deserted buildings. It had been as bad as any of them in its day.

KP: How long did you stay at this naval base?

RO: I was there about eight months. I would not say I was in training, I was there actually doing work, but I was one of a number of officers on this island doing their work. And, I guess, they decided I had progressed enough to take over some more responsibility, and they gave me orders, put me in charge of a unit, of a small unit up in the New Hebrides. Again, out on a little island, an even smaller island. No other residents there of any kind, except wild boars and bugs and so forth. I guess there were a few lady pigs, too. ... I shot one once with a .45 caliber automatic because ... we were getting awful tired of spam and other things. ... She was a very obliging, fat pig. ... Well, not that fat. They were pretty fast, these wild ones. But anyway, she let me get close enough to actually hit it with a .45, which takes pretty close. ... But unfortunately to my dismay, the only person, the only other officer or two, and the cook, were the only people that would eat this pork. All the other men had such prejudices against wild pork that they wouldn't eat it, so most of it was wasted, unfortunately. They would rather eat spam than risk whatever diseases they might have picked up from this beautiful pork. I didn't get any disease from it. Here again, I ... remember all these sort of interesting things that talk about what I did in my spare time, and I did work once in a while. [laughter]

KP: At the first base overseas, Noumea, what was a typical day like, in terms of your work duties, how often were you on?

RO: I can't really ... think of a typical day. I suppose you could say that you got up, you had breakfast, ... you went to ... you might say the office, which ... in this case probably a Quonset hut, overlooking the harbor, with a lot of people in with machines going [makes machine noises] around. ... And you would be hailed by a ship by signal light that was coming in to the harbor. ... You would direct it how to, what to do, ... maybe what to leave their coils off, and then maybe to put current on certain of their coils, to go across this range and then come back at another heading. Meanwhile, these machines would be spitting out pieces of paper with ink on them, ... up and down and around. And you could ... put these together and see where the magnetism needed to be corrected most. ... Then you'd try to correct one place and maybe that'd give you a new bump somewhere else, and you'd have to correct that. ... You'd all be very busy for, as I said, up to maybe a couple of hours, I'd say on the average, maybe not more than half an hour, 45 minutes. And then there wouldn't be anything. Maybe there'd be a ship following right along, waiting out there to come in follow the next. So you could be ... constantly busy for a day, and then maybe the next day you'd only get one or two, and the next day you'd be off somewhere,

assisting a ship adjusting magnetic compasses, inspecting cables, if something wasn't working you'd send technicians, or something would go wrong with your instruments and you'd have to send a diver down to try to correct them, or repair other instruments. ... You were pretty busy much of the time, but when you weren't busy, why, you were certainly not busy. ... Then it was boring, and you missed your family, you missed good food, it was too hot, the bugs were killing you, who knows. Of course, actually, around New Caledonia, the period I was there, the weather was much more, it wasn't really bad because it has a climate something like Hawaii, maybe not quite, but still, unless you got up into a jungle somewhere, why the weather was moderate. Once you got up into the New Hebrides group, well, you were in another situation where there was dengue fever and there was malaria, and no town, that could be called a town. Some enterprising Frenchman on the main island had put a restaurant somewhere. They would just take you into their house, it wasn't a restaurant you could go in. I guess there was one little restaurant, it was a shack about not much bigger than this room, where you could get some bad wine and bad meat. But we didn't get in to the main island, so we were mostly out on this little Ile Nu place eating rations. ...

KP: You mentioned Noumea was a larger base, but still you ate a lot of spam. What was your diet like, what was the ratio of spam to other foods?

RO: I don't really remember. I remember we got a fair amount of New Zealand mutton. We had a lot of canned foods, I mean the army does pretty well with the supplies and the Navy is usually is a little better. In fact, this was one of the benefits of being in degaussing, because you went on so many different ships. And you would hope that the captain or somebody would invite you to have lunch with them. [laughter] Where the food was, generally speaking, aboard ship was, depending on the kind of ship, and how recently they'd been provisioned, could be ... quite good.

KP: Yes, because some Navy ships had very good food.

RO: Right.

KP: I remember one Navy member telling of how the men complained when the ice-cream maker broke.

RO: Well, we didn't have an ice-cream maker. We did get a ration I guess where you could get a beer a day, if they had it, and when they ran out then, ... then we had to get ... our own supplies to come into these little islands, you know, we'd send in, if we had a boat of our own, and we did, why we'd send that into the main base and send the cook and a couple of his helpers along to see what they could find, and beg, borrow, steal, and bring back. But the choices weren't too great. We ate a lot of canned food. As the illustration of the pig shows, the men were pretty hide-bound, they weren't, they hadn't been brought up to be very imaginative in their eating ... habits. So they'd rather have a can of beans, or something, rather than even sometimes using the fruit you might find somewhere on the island. I was very fond of papaya, which grew on that second island.

KP: You had grown up with fresh eggs. You must have grown tired of powdered eggs?

RO: Powdered eggs were pretty poor. Powdered potatoes were pretty poor. Powdered coffee was pretty poor. They ... improved in their methods of making these things over the years. But I can think of very few things less pleasant than scrambled, powdered eggs, or canned bacon had much to be improved on too.

KP: At Noumea, how often did you get mail?

RO: I don't remember. I suppose some mail would probably come almost every day or every other day, ... but not everybody got mail. ... Mary was very good sending letters, but sometimes it took quite a long while.

KP: You mentioned a lot of the recreation you created, like the cribbage games, but did you ever get any movies on Noumea?

RO: Oh, yeah. ... I'm not saying quality of movies, I didn't get any movies on, we were very rarely on Noumea itself, we were usually down on that prison island, Ile Nu. Both there, and later, on Bogacio up in New Hebrides, we had our own projector. And when it was running, why you could see a movie, right. You've been to many places where projectors have broken down, well, they used to break down very regularly. So ... maybe once or twice a week, once every week let's say, maybe you'd get a movie in. Some old movie, maybe you'd seen it two or three times before, but at least it was something. You've seen of course, M.A.S.H., well, a lot of our activity, without all the casualties and the operating room, was sort of like a M.A.S.H.-type atmosphere. Not quite so much kidding. [laughter]

KP: How formal were you in terms of military discipline and uniforms?

RO: Well, when you are out on your own island we were, we had certain limits, but we wore uniforms, but we didn't always wear complete uniforms and we didn't wear ties when it wasn't necessary. You didn't go around looking like the young people do today, going up and down the street with pants over your shoes. ... So if you were at the main base and you were going to report in for some reason at the headquarters, ... you put your tie on. ...

KP: And you looked more spiffy.

RO: Looked more spiffy than you might otherwise. They were pretty tolerant of these reserve officers. ...
[laughter]

KP: Did you encounter many regular Navy officers?

RO: Well, nobody went around necessarily with a big sign saying, "I'm Regular" or "I'm Irregular," right. [laughter]

KP: A lot of people have told us particularly about the brass ringers, the Annapolis people.

RO: Well, I didn't bother looking at fingers. I mean, you'd go ... on board some ships, ... and you could tell, you know, that it was a very tightly run ship, and everybody was, I wouldn't say running scared, but they were well disciplined, the uniforms were right and the salutes were straight. And you sort of thought, "Well, probably the captain certainly's a regular." If it was a big ship like an aircraft carrier, you didn't find reserve officers being captains of aircraft carriers or sometimes destroyers, more often you would find reserve officers on the smaller vessels as captains, DE's, and so on. But I got very tired of all this recreation I was having as a tourist. ... I was trying to get active duty aboard some ship. I took navigation courses and got credits for them and I kept applying. When I was up on Bogacio every so often I would apply for something new possibility I had heard of, to be on a ... landing ship or ... a landing tank ship was even smaller. [laughter]

KP: Which were all dangerous assignments.

RO: Yeah, it was all dangerous, ... it was dangerous going crazy on a little jungle island, too. You know, you're young and ambitious, I won't say so much ambitious, but you like variety. And some of this great touring got pretty boring after now and then. And you wanted to be active where you knew other people were being active, maybe taking a few risks and feeling you were really a part of a war effort instead of sitting out your time on some horrible, but pretty little island. So I kept applying and I kept getting turned down, how essential I was. I guess they couldn't find anybody who wanted my job. I almost applied, at one stage, I was about to apply to what ... would now be called Navy seal duty, ... because I was a good swimmer, and if they weren't going to give me a ship, maybe they would let me go in and remove mines in a harbor somewhere. ... It's a good thing I didn't get it, I'm here. Finally, I was getting closer in time, ... I wanted to get down to New Zealand for a holiday with some people down there. The reports that came back were pretty glowing of ... liberty in New Zealand, but they wouldn't give me, finally, they said, "All right, we'll let you go to New Zealand, but then you have to sign up for another year overseas." No choice, so I didn't sign up, and I came back on such an uneventful voyage, I don't remember anything about it. I don't remember cribbage, I don't remember anything about it, except that it was much shorter, a much more direct route. We still didn't stop anywhere that I can recall. But I had a lot of duty down in the hold, every watch they had a couple of officers down there to make sure nobody killed each other or did something or other wrong. It was rather unpleasant for everybody, but especially for enlisted men packed in too close onto some of these ships without enough adequate ventilation. And who knows what kind of experiences they'd had during the war or what they were anticipating when they came home. Some of them were sick physically, some were sick mentally, and a lot were just okay, just waiting patiently. You had to maintain a certain discipline aboard ship in case it was needed suddenly, because of an attack or something.

KP: Before talking about your experiences coming I want to ask about your experiences as CO on Espiritu Santo.

RO: Well on this Ile Nu, ... of this ... little degaussing unit.

KP: How many people were in your unit?

RO: I've had trouble remembering, there were three officers, some of the time, and then in a period there was only myself and one other officer, I'm not quite sure how long the second two overlapped. ... They were good people, they were both married, one missing his wife more than the other, because it hadn't been a very satisfactory marriage, but, you know, both missing home and family. ... It was ... a lonesome duty, ... you weren't really supposed to, and didn't have pals among the enlisted men, for example. There was very little social life, so you were right up against the fact that, you know, two of us in the same half tent. It was not a full tent, ... they had a floor and a frame and screens around the outside and then canvass above. And this was ... your life, and you were together to enjoy one another or not.

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

RO: Or you could go once in a while, maybe every month or so, you could get into the main base and go to the Officer's Club.

KP: So going to the Officer's Club was one of the social highlights?

RO: I don't really remember particularly so, in fact, I don't really remember the club very much there, Noumea except maybe the last month or so that we were there. The unit was being disbanded and the other officer and I and the enlisted men were taken into the main base, and given various, assorted duties. I can't remember doing very much except waiting around for the orders to go home. And then you would go to the Officer's Club, to talk to people. ... You did sort of learn to drink occasionally, which hadn't been a pre-war experience. I smoked cigarettes, ... I'm not a smoker. At one period it was very hard to get my favorite cigarettes, Pall Malls, ... the only way I could get Pall Malls was through the Seabee's, who were very enterprising. I could buy a case of fifty cartons, I bought a case of fifty cartons and long before I was through that, I was hooked.

KP: How long did you smoke?

RO: I kept smoking much too long in my life, I finally gave up after the Surgeon General's report came out. I gave up cigarettes and kept the pipe, and then gave up the pipe later, about 25 years ago up here, when I found I didn't have enough wind to be a proper member of the choir. It also worries the family, the kids and everybody had been pressuring me to cut back or down or both or entirely, for years. I eventually did, I'm glad I did.

SH: Was it at Noumea where you bumped into Admiral Halsey?

RO: Yeah, that was on the beach at Noumea.

LL: How often were officers of that rank at Noumea?

RO: Beats me, I suppose whenever their particular ships were in port. I wasn't in the circle that knew these things.

KP: How big was the force at Noumea?

RO: I don't know that either, I suppose the permanent contingent at the base may have only been several thousand. When a big ship was in ... you'd suddenly ... or a big fleet was nearby you might be up two or three times that amount. On that island that I served I doubt if there was ever more than a hundred people on that island at any one time.

KP: Where there any civilian inhabitants of these islands?

RO: No, not on there. ... Not on either island, neither Ile Nu or Bogacio. No, either units on the little island, Bogacio Island. They had a pretty beach.

LL: Had the civilians been evacuated?

RO: No, there'd never been anybody on that island. And I didn't see any relics of any huts or anything. I think it was just uninhabited, tropical island. There may have been natives there at one time, the pigs must have come from somewhere, been leftover from some time and multiplied, they were not in danger of anything except me and my .45. ... The real danger was boredom and people sort of going off their rockers in places like this, for one reason or another. Everybody has reasons, right? Things weren't working out in their lives or they hear their wife is off running around. Or they get a "dear John" letter, or a family illness, and they couldn't go back, or whatever. Some cases of homosexual relationships, I'm sure, ... because of the absence of women, in most cases. ... It could be a disappointed male lover, and shoot yourself.

KP: Did you know of any homosexual affairs going on?

RO: ... I had to keep a pretty close look on my group out there on the island, because there were some suspicions of temptation there. I had no proof, but ... one sailor ... got where he couldn't stand being out there everyday, I got him transferred into the main island. ... I forget now the arrangement, but he hung himself, I think, while he was at the main island. This may have been unrequited love for some person of the same sex. You would hear a certain amount of joshing, the enlisted men don't really confide in officers too much about things that could lead to court martial, right? [laughter] You wouldn't expect them to. But you do keep an eye, and you usually have at least one, and we had several, reliable non-coms, so to speak, and related people, that you could rely on to try to keep things within bounds. And we had sort of a special relationship, not one to tell on one another, but a special relationship of confidence with the officers. Anyway, ... I wasn't too strict but we had a good ...previous CO who had set up the unit and worked out all the various bills of performance and activities and work descriptions or job descriptions or whatever the Navy term was, and procedures for what to do at certain times of day, and to set up the watches. It all gets pretty complicated, not too complicated once you learn it and abide by it. He had done a good job, so that I inherited a unit that already was well organized and had everything pretty well set out so that it wasn't too hard.

KP: Where was that?

RO: I'm speaking now of Bogacio.

KP: Well you also were really isolated, you mentioned, and not very well defended.

RO: No. Well, we didn't have any weapons at all, except I guess the officers each had a pistol. Originally, I had a really good Smith and Wesson, ... a revolver that I could shoot decently with, but it wasn't macho enough, you know, ... you had to have a .45 automatic, even though you couldn't hit anything with it, but you should have that because it was macho, though that term wasn't used then. So I turned it in at some point for a .45, and I guess the other officer had either a pistol or a .45 and then we had a Thompson's submachine gun, that you had a pistol, I had a .45 also, for the seaman on watch, on duty, at any given time. He was the duty man and he had his .45 in his belt and all. The Thompson sub-machine gun was restricted of course to the officers, but I remember one time, the crew was particularly antsy about a lot of things, and there had been, of course, Japanese there earlier, and there used to be once in a while, ... not while I was there, a plane would come over and drop one bomb and then go off somewhere. ... But presumably, some of these Japs were still around up in the hills somewhere, living off the natives in the jungle, and maybe sneaking in to steal something once in a while. At least, that's what our ... crew thought. And there were certain noises in the jungle, ... including noises of wild pigs moving around, and sometimes making more noise than they should. This one period, everybody was so upset that I went out and I took the Thompson, and I let a few rounds go into the jungle, knowing there weren't any people there. At most, it might kill a pig. And then people could settle down, figured well, if there were any Japs, I scared 'em off.

KP: You never had any contact?

RO: Well no, ... not with the enemy. Of course, when you're isolated like that, right, as we were, it was all too easy for somebody in a little canoe or a raft or whatever, who was maybe starving somewhere up in the hills, to ... avoid detection, and come out to a place like that, and make off with stuff that they needed, maybe hoping to get some weapons. Of course, they would present a danger to the people. I never put much credence in that, but I guess there was a potential. And we did have native visitors, at least once. Some storm was coming up, and a couple of canoes, dugouts or whatever, came up and the chief or whoever was in charge asked to see me, since I was, theoretically, the chief, and get permission to stay overnight until the weather was better before moving on. So, they did stay, I forget how long they stayed, it wasn't very long. As luck would have it, they loved of course, to get gifts, and they loved spam. [laughter] ... The gift of spam that we were happy to get rid of put them in extreme joy, and so they gave some gifts to us. They gave me one of those sleeping mats that they wove. I still have it somewhere around, in bad shape. But it was a little bit difficult because apparently somewhere in their canoes they had stashed away some alcoholic stuff they had cooked up, some kind of jungle juice, and some of our men got a hold of it. It wasn't any real disaster, but I was happy when they were away. You see ... that ceremonial paddle there? That ... came up on the beach one night there-it's studded with inlay of mother-of-pearl. It just blew up on the beach, once in a while you would get

something like a Japanese gas mask, or something like that would come up. Bits and pieces of things. ... In Bogacio, the war was a lot closer to us than at Noumea. Noumea had never really had a war down there it was just a base from which to move up north. After Guadalcanal, for example, some of our units got very badly chewed up. And instead of sending the poor guys to Noumea, or New Zealand they sent them down to New Hebrides [Espiritu Santos Island], which was not exactly a holiday spot, and put them in camp until they sort of licked their wounds and reestablished discipline which might have become pretty bad. Check out the mental cases. And then, send them back up to some other island to be chewed up again. So there were periods when we'd have a whole division there on Espiritu Santos or what was left of a disorganized division that needed reorganizing. So those are periods too that you know, if you didn't see them out at Bogacio, ... you'd encounter some of them when you were in-- and up on the north, there was an airport up on the northern part of Espiritu Santos, we never got up there, but there was an airport ... up there where the bombers would go out. Since I've been here I've met a person who was an officer who was serving with that unit who had some of the same experiences in terms of exploring little streams around Noumea. Of course, I don't approve of his experiences, he used sort of catch fish by ... throwing dynamite or hand grenades in the water which is not very environmentally suitable.

KP: You have an interest in the environment, and these were very interesting islands from an ecological point of view, or did you have other things on your mind?

RO: I wasn't ecologically developed, as you might say, in that period, although I'd been brought up in the country and I liked nature, and so forth. ... Of course, I told you, I did a lot of reading and I was an observing type, so somehow or other, I had gotten into a correspondence with a man at the Smithsonian Institution who was head of their, maybe it was their zoology, it could have been Zoology Department, well anyway, he and I got to writing and he wanted me to see what I could do to collect crustaceans. Well, I never was able to satisfy him in that regard, but I tried for awhile even to collect spiders, I would catch spiders by hand and hope nothing bit me and they didn't, and put them in some alcohol or whatever, but they didn't keep, you couldn't really do that. But I was much better with lizards and geckos. I got quite a collection of lizards and geckos that I caught and put in alcohol and I sent them back, I didn't send them back to him, at one stage, I wrapped them in a cloth with alcohol in it, and put them in a sealed can and mailed it back to Mary. [laughter] I told her what was coming, so it wasn't any big shock, but she kept them, I don't know how long, under the cellar stairs or something, and finally got them down to the Smithsonian and the man was very appreciative and invited me down to visit him, which I did later on, at the Smithsonian. He gave me a crustacean paperweight. They were just learning then to embed things to preserve them in plastic, that was a new technique. He was Otto, I almost remember his name, but anyway, he was a very nice person, [Schmit].

KP: And how often would you write to each other?

RO: Oh, I don't really recall, probably not more than two or three times altogether. But he was nice enough to invite me to come see him in Washington later on, and I did.

KP: Did you ever get to a Bob Hope show or another USO show?

RO: I don't recall any at all. I remember the movies, but I don't, possibly there was one in Espiritu Santos while I was still out on Bogacio, that I heard about, but ... they didn't come around and dance for me. [laughter]

KP: You mention that the World War II experience was very decisive because if you had not have gone into the military, you probably would have finished at MIT.

RO: Right.

KP: And if you did not have all this time on your hands you might not ...

RO: I might not have done all that reading. It also gave me an awful lot of time to think of what I wanted to do in the future. Before I came back, I had already pretty well decided that I did not want to go back to MIT. Also, a factor I think in my future was that I enjoyed being part of my government, even if it was in the military part of my government. ... Whether I liked the prestige, or what I liked about it, I don't know, but I liked serving my country, let's put it that way. And so it wasn't too big of a step from serving your country in one ... capacity to serving it in another capacity once you got the opportunity, at least to look into it. And coming back on the ship, unfortunately, aside from everything else, I don't have any memory of it, really of that voyage back except getting to San Francisco and, after a period, coming and meeting Mary in New York. ... Where was I? I'm losing myself again. How did I start off that last part do you remember?

KP: I had asked about reading and how you had time to reflect.

RO: Oh, yeah, and then I got into the Foreign Service. Well, you see, on the ship coming back, I came down ... or at least got the bug for infectious hepatitis, as a lot of people were getting in those days. And they didn't know anything about it, really, except that people were sick. And that sometimes they, once in a great while they'd die from it, or they'd have serious liver complications. And when I got back and went to work after a little holiday with Mary up in the Poconos, I went to, I was still in degaussing, I went to work on a little island in the harbor of New York, but attached to the Brooklyn Navy Yard. And we got a little apartment in New York, temporarily. And I started feeling sick. One particular evening I know, Mary and I went out to a restaurant where there was a gypsy violinist going around, had some of that rich food, and I got very sick. And it turned out it wasn't just what I ate it was because I was coming down, finally, with this infectious hepatitis. I went to Brooklyn Navy Hospital, and ... to add to my respect for the Navy medicos, they diagnosed it obstructive jaundice, now there's some kind of tumor, which scared the life out of me. ... But they were feeding me all kinds of stuff, that if you have jaundice you should not have, pork chops and everything else. [laughter] And then they inspected and sort of probed around and said, "Well, now, I guess you don't, you probably have infectious hepatitis," for which you're supposed to have a complete, hundred percent fat-free diet, at least. ... So then they put me in a hospital up in New York not too far from Columbia, I forget, anyway Rockefeller Research Institute, which had been taken over by the Navy for hepatitis patients, because there were many of them. ... So I was there a month or two on strictly a fat-free diet, and almost developed a life-long aversion to raspberry jello, which was permitted, excessively. But

anyway, during this complete bed rest, ... if you call complete bed rest being in a place where anybody that comes by your door says "Oh, maybe I'd better check him," comes in and takes some of your blood. I mean, it went on and on and on. It got where all I had to do was look at a needle and my arm would jump. And I'm not sensitive, normally, to that kind of thing. But anyway, I finally improved, but there was no treatment for it then it was just really bed rest and special diet. We were sort of out of the line of things in terms of getting news or information from the Navy and reports and ... circular letters and things. So I was in the hospital there when I got such a circular notice to all naval personnel, that there was the possibility of taking a Foreign Service examination. I didn't even know what the Foreign Service was, but it did explain a little bit about it. But ... I got this so late that the deadline for applying was something like a week later, ... or maybe a little more, I don't remember exactly, but very soon. And Mary and I sat there in my hospital room, and "well, should we try it? It sounds interesting, we don't want to go back to MIT. Who knows, take a stab at it." And I applied, and I told you before, they accepted my application based primarily on all the reading I did overseas. Even though I was a dubious case, they weren't really looking for chemistry or engineering majors, let alone a Ceramics major, I don't think any of them knew what it was. So ... I did apply, didn't hear of course right away, but ... I got well enough to go back and work on this, so-called work, on the degaussing. If ever there was very little to do at times at other places, there was less at this particular spot. We were just waiting for the war to end. At that time, I guess, part of the war had ended. Because I was fully anticipating maybe getting orders to be sent over to the European Theater, when that canceled, why we were all just sort of hanging on. ... I forget the name of that island?

KP: Swinbourne Island.

RO: Swinbourne Island, it's still there in the harbor. It's not too far from the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island and its sort of close to ... Staten Island. So I put in time there, I don't remember much about that except that I was shocked by another officer ... who had liquor and brandy in his coffee for breakfast. But there was a lot of traveling by boat, because part of the time, at least, ... I was commuting from my family home in New Jersey, going out to the end of Staten Island, where a Navy boat would pick me up and go on out to work.

KP: Now, you got transferred from the Pacific, and then back to the States to Swinbourne Island ...

RO: Well, actually my orders were to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, but for degaussing duty which took you out, ... nobody ever put "Swinbourne Island" down on an order. [laughter]

KP: Well, I also saw that your wife had gone on quite a letter writing spree, she was writing ...

RO: Oh yeah. ... She decided it was time for me to come home and she wrote to President Roosevelt, suggesting that it was time I be brought home. [laughter] And she has been writing letters to presidents ever since. Not to mention vice-presidents, ... secretary's of state, senators, congressmen, assemblymen.

KP: Yes, because I see she went on quite a spree.

RO: ... Well, it wasn't a spree, it was just the beginning of a life-long activity. But she is a ... very civically conscious person. Maybe the journalism background helped with that.

KP: Sandra just reminded me of notes about other incidents: Brownie, Stefan, baby fruit bat and a home-made sailboat wrecked it.

RO: Oh, yeah. Well, that's sort of interesting because, here again, you know, you have to make your own recreation or whatever and I told you that we got this one beer a day when it was available, we rationed it out so that people wouldn't get too much. Although one time some enlisted men in my group had been inventive and were using fruit juices and fruits to have their own little still up in the woods, but that's another story. ... I'm not sure it was a real still, but it was alcoholic anyway. [laughter] Anyway, no one got jailed because of it, but it was stopped as an activity. But getting back to the beer and Stefan, we had built up these, kind of big long bench like a desk, that we could write on in this half-tent, had little cracks in it, and I guess, at some time or other, I had spilled a little beer, and I saw this spider come up and take a nip of this beer. So we got in the habit of calling him Stefan, and he would come up every night about the same time for his little drop of beer.

KP: And this was on Bogacio?

RO: Bogacio, right. But I must have spilled too much one night because then he disappeared after that. [laughter] But that went on ... for weeks that he would come up and have a little nip of beer at night. ... [He was a] tiny little spider, too. And what was the other one?

KP: Brownie.

RO: Oh, Brownie. We inherited Brownie. He was a dog, of mixed breed, a nice very fine dog. And he was a big help because he was friendly and he wasn't subservient, and he knew the difference between officers and enlisted men [laughter] and he was nice to all, but he saluted me, so to speak. We inherited him from some previous officer on that island or somewhere else, I'm not sure. But anyway, ... he was a big help, ... a real pet nice to have around and he would stand duty, and I guess made the single soldier on duty at night with all those pigs in the jungle and one .45 automatic, feel better, because Brownie was around. But he was nice.

KP: I guess he stayed on the island?

RO: I just don't remember, we didn't leave him on the island, he must've, he was part of our crew so we must've taken him into the main base with us. And where he went from there I'm not sure. On the sailing, there had been a group on Noumea who had got together and chipped in funds and expertise and built a small sailboat, mostly of canvas and frame and sail and so on. And at some stage or other I had gotten into that group, I don't remember now the details. Then gradually everybody else got transferred or went home or New Zealand or further north, and I was the sole remaining owner of this boat which I had out there in Bogacio and I would sail around the reefs and so on, which was sort of nice, and exploring the reefs was diving in and

looking for shells which was always nice to do if you're a little careful what you might run into sometime, ... coral snakes and things, but I never had any trouble with them. Anyway, one time I went out in a little too much breeze, it was not a very sea-worthy boat and I went out to ... the north end of the island. And at that time why there was a baby aircraft carrier anchored out some distance from there. And I got in trouble, it was too much wind for me, I think something went wrong with the sail, and I started having trouble, and going in toward a reef I didn't particularly want to go into because if you go into a real, live coral reef then you have to bail out, you can get some very nasty infections from that coral that gets under your skin and keeps growing ... in your body. Anyway, somebody on board that aircraft carrier had binoculars and was watching me out there sailing and when they saw I was having trouble being blown into this reef. I couldn't work around there wasn't enough room there was too much wind, I didn't have ... a paddle, ... but it would not have done me any good if I had. ... So ... they offered to rescue me, they sent a boat out and said, "Can we help you," but by the time they came, why the boat was already almost past saving, and I thought there was enough water for me mostly to float over the coral and get in closer. I said, "no thank you" and they went back, but I've often said how I had an offer to be rescued by an aircraft carrier. [laughter] And the boat probably ... wasn't ... more than twelve feet long, or fourteen feet. And it was completely wrecked, I just left it there on the reef, and floated most of the way in and got a few scratches, but I treated them right away and walked back to my unit.

KP: Did any in your unit have any medical problems that developed? You mentioned the medical problems among the natives, elephantitis and others, but did you have anything that was either very exotic or very serious?

RO: Well, ... in our unit, we had one medical corpsman, which meant that he probably was qualified to put on a tourniquet or give you an aspirin, APC pills were very big. So, he might, I mean, if he was aboard ship, why he would even have a little office, ... like a little infirmary or something. But we had nothing like that, he just had a first-aid kit that he carried around. So if anybody got sick, I assume we sent them in with our, we had a boat of our own. ... And we would send him into the main base to go to the infirmary, or the sick bay there. ... But I don't remember anything beyond that, I don't recall anyone coming down with any horrible diseases. You would get various tropical itches, they would paint you all purple with gentian violet, which is supposed to be helpful.

SH: The sharks, you mentioned ...

RO: Well, ... there are of course lots of sharks ... in the Pacific. I never had any close encounters with any personally, except one time on Ile Nu, ... off Noumea. ... It was an interesting island, there was cliffs, sort of a cliffy, rocky, where you could look down into the water, or you could work your way down. There weren't any, or I don't recall any sandy beaches on Ile Nu. If you wanted to swim on a sandy beach you had to go in and find an Admiral to bump into in Noumea. [laughter] Anyway, I had been swimming that morning, as I recall, because ... I was off-duty, and I sort of crawled down this cliff. And [there was a] beautiful lagoon there, surrounded by rocks and pretty blue water. So I had a nice dip in there. And I came out, but when I was coming back from my walk later on, I looked down here in this same little place which wasn't much bigger

than say these two rooms combined, there was this HUGE shark just sort of swimming around in there. Maybe he was even smelling ... my antiperspirant or something. ... But I decided I was not going to go to that particular spot again. The only other time I had any, there was also some danger if you went up some of the little rivers, up in Santos and swam. If you went out to wade, why, this is a little dangerous because it wasn't from sharks but they had these rays that would be on the bottom. And they wouldn't bother you they wouldn't come after you, at least, not the small ones, and I hope not the big ones. But if you stepped on one accidentally they might lash out with this tail that had barbs in it. And those can go way into the bone, and then you really had a medical problem. So, I was up the streams a couple of times, you could borrow the boat and go up and have a picnic or something by yourself, just as the different or another person or two would come out. That was one problem. ... One time, just as we were closing up our operation in (Il Nue?) on the instruments and all, instruments, some had gone over and they were down about 60 feet or 65 feet on the bottom. And we thought well we should try to righten the instruments and maybe we could get back in business. And by that time we didn't have a qualified diver in our unit anymore. ... I had some experience, not in a big diving suit, I wouldn't dare do that, but swimming just with a gas mask over my face, with an air hose coming in, ... and a cartridge belt full of lead weights ... to take you down, and bathing trunks. I had been down maybe 30 or 40 feet that way, sometime, but this is a little deeper. ... I got off some Navy ship, sort of anchored near there and I was going to go down with this, ... I went down, but the tide was very strong in through that part and I was just being swished around and couldn't really hardly get close to the instruments to do anything. Then I looked up, and not too far away was one of these huge manta rays. On the bottom, coming right at me, and I said, ... they're not supposed to bother you, but this is not for me. So, I dumped some of my weight or whatever, and up I went, much too fast. I bled from the ears, but I didn't have any more serious trouble. I decided I wasn't going to, they said, "Do you want to go down again?" And I said, "I think not." [laughter]

KP: One of your responsibilities as a commander was to censor mail.

RO: Yeah, that's true.

KP: And mail is more important because, I would imagine, there is more time to write it.

RO: Yeah, well, ... we were pretty tolerant, most of the people had previous experience writing letters, and they knew that they weren't supposed to mention unit numbers and there wasn't that much interesting to report anyway, where I was. So ... I did go over the mail, but ... rarely did you have to black anything out or anything. Much more interesting was helping the men try to get, the ones who were ambitious at all, to get higher grades, qualifications, through correspondence courses or working with some other more, usually correspondence courses, but working as someone else's assistant and then taking a correspondence course. And if they got a good grade, why, you would recommend, I myself wasn't qualified to or authorized to promote individuals up a different grade, but I would make a recommendation ... higher up saying and say, "So and so got this grade." And I did a little tutoring of them too, now and then, to help them out. They weren't always able to really, not that I knew their specialty as well, but I could understand the English better, of the instructions, and explain what was wanted. I always had fun teaching people, I did some tutoring in chemistry when I was at Rutgers, and got paid for it.

SH: These men who were serving under you, were they very diversified in the geographic areas they were from?

RO: Yeah, they were from all over. ... There weren't any of them that were career Navy. The most senior one, he was just below a chief, ... he was a first class, but he wasn't a chief, had had some previous naval experience, he was the one that really kept things in order, and when he came to me when there was some more serious problem that he didn't feel in his own way that he could withhold from me. There was very interesting people, though. I still have, once in a while have memories of individuals, of signalmen or if I see a name in a newspaper with the same last name as someone, like there was a Polish boy named Sawicki, a little bit of a rebel, but smart. ... When I see the name, then his face sort of pops out at me. I remember helping him with some of his work, studies. I even learned ... a certain amount of the signal light myself, I never got really good at it, but there were occasions when the real signalman was off on sick leave or off on some other errand and a ship would come by that I could, I'm sure, much to the disgust of the better people aboard the ship, to have to be communicating with me, although sometimes they were worse than I was, depending on what kind of ship. A merchant ship, they weren't always that great on signal lights.

SH: We asked you about the weather when you were traveling. Did you have any severe storms when you were on these islands?

RO: Oh, torrential downpours. There was some pretty good waves now and then, depending on where we were. I told you [about] the time the natives came ashore, they wouldn't have come ashore then, I don't think, if the weather hadn't have been a little too much for their particular small craft. On the other hand, I'm sure they were hoping to get some handouts too, which they did. No, we were pretty fortunate that way because there can be very dangerous hurricanes, and particularly up there on Bogacio, ... off of Espiritu Santos. See, Espiritu Santos is a name, really, of a settlement, but it's also, at that time, the name of the whole island, and now it's the Republic of Vanuatu, or something of that sort. It had been a ... joint British-French protectorate at one time. Now I've lost myself again.

SH: We were talking about the weather and how severe it had been.

RO: Yeah. But we were fortunate that way. I guess I was going to observe that at that particular island of Bogacio we were really right on the beach. If we'd had a real storm coming from that side, we would have had to climb coconut trees further in, and hope that we would survive, because we weren't in anything really anchored down. We had a couple of Quonset huts, maybe two or three Quonset huts, and maybe two officer tents. And that was it, and a little signal station, it would have been washed away, nothing left. No place to go either because if anything came along that way and we hadn't already evacuated to the mainland, why, our little boat couldn't, it was a good solid little boat, but ... it couldn't have weathered ... any real storm.

KP: On the islands that you were connected to were there any black troops or black sailors or marines on any of those islands?

RO: I'm not aware of them. I've never been particularly aware either, of color differences. I suppose they were so rare then I probably would have noticed. ... In those days, ... you would see the black sailors when a big ship was in, because they might have had a job in the wardroom or something there, and Filipinos, and there may have been, I don't know if there were any black units or not in the army that came by. I'm just not aware of it, really, but I'm not a good observer of ... that aspect of life.

KP: You learned about the Foreign Service test, when did you learn about the GI Bill?

RO: I don't know when I learned about it, but I knew of it. I suppose that all of us were circularized with information about that possibility, if not before, why, we would have been given that information at the time we were released from active military service. ... I do know that I'd already been up to New York and took my Foreign Service exam, I think, before I was out of the Navy. I recall one reason, another good reason I made it past was because I got bad news, or bad information on where the exam was going to be. ... It was an all day long examination, and it was, and that was cut back from a two day examination, but an all day examination. And I got up to New York and went to the place in sort of lower New York, where the exam was to be at some federal building. ... I and about 21 other people got there and looked and the door a notice saying the exam is not here, its up ... at an address ... further up in ... New York. So we all jumped on taxis or whatever to get up there and we arrived at the examination place late, and started the examination late. I was so late that I thought well, this is just an exercise, I was relaxed, I can't possibly win now. And instead of being nervous about the exam I went at it just sort of as a mental exercise. I might not have passed it if I had gone there and started at the beginning all keyed up and tense. But see then, you don't hear the results of things right away, and I was released, I could have stayed on a little longer and probably gotten what they call an "all-nav" promotion to lieutenant-commander, but by now I was a lieutenant senior grade which was two stripes, the equivalent of army captain. And I wasn't interested in staying on any longer than I had to. [laughter] And I forget just when it was, it was probably December or so that I got out. And I was home a little while, and I knew about the GI Bill, I didn't want to go back to MIT, so I applied to go to the School of Public and International Affairs do graduate work at Princeton. I forget now how I first learned about that, but anyway, that's what I did. And they accepted me on the GI Bill and we went to Princeton. I was out of the Navy by then. There wasn't enough to live on really for the two of us, so Mary got a job at the Langrocks Clothing Store in Princeton as a steno or secretary even though her shorthand wasn't very great. And I went to start taking graduate classes in things [like], I did not have in Ceramics at Rutgers, like constitutional law. [laughter] Dean Corwin was the ... famous man in constitutional law and he was teaching at Princeton, so that was really a fabulous experience. I've never had to use constitutional law, but still it was fabulous. And I took history and at the school there was also a man there who had been a former Foreign Service ambassador and written books about the Dominican Republic and the U.S. intervention and so on. I had some course with him and he suggested that I look into this. And I did, and as it turned out, why, I heard that I was accepted, that I had passed the exam, and I could have asked for a postponement, but I could take the oral examination in Washington and go down there I had already written a paper on the Dominican Republic. And I went down and Mary went with me, but she didn't participate in the oral exam. And they liked me and

accepted me and sent me to the Dominican Republic. [laughter] So I never went back to Princeton to finish up and get credit for that year. ... In a way, who knows what might have happened if I had gone back and finished and gotten a Master's at Princeton before going into the Foreign Service. But anyway, I started the Foreign Service earlier, as a result.

KP: It sounds like you liked Princeton the one semester you spent there?

RO: Yeah Princeton was, I mean I guess I was there ... from January to April.

KP: So you didn't even finish up the semester?

-----END OF TAPE TWO, PART TWO-----

RO: In Princeton, we lived in a small rooming house near the campus without cooking privileges, but, the land lady, she'd let us make coffee or something. Up near there, like Princeton. Pretty busy studying, Mary was there helping support us at Langrocks, which was a very famous clothing store in its day, it had been there for generations. And I liked the people and even when I had the chance, and we didn't have any car of course, those days we, when I was home I could borrow my father's old car, but there we were usually using trains and buses a lot.

KP: At Princeton, when you were at graduate school how many of your classmates were fellow GI Bill people?

RO: I have no idea, absolutely no idea.

KP: In the Foreign Service exam you took, you mentioned it was for veterans?

RO: It was for veterans.

KP: It was strictly for veterans?

RO: Strictly for, yeah, I think it was strictly for veterans. They had Foreign Service exams every year. They were two day exams and I suppose they'd get maybe, well a hundred or so people applying and taking the exam. At this particular one there were thousands of, I don't know how many thousands, but anyway thousands of people who applied. And how ever many took the written exam, relatively few passed and relatively few of those passed the orals. ... It's not that so many were eliminated from the orals, by the orals, but that there were long time intervals (delays) and while people were waiting to hear from this and that they would get other opportunities and so didn't bother to take the orals. ... But in those days you had to have ... passed a written language exam, later on they canceled that; I think they're coming back to it now. I think when they canceled you had to make up your deficiency within a certain time. Of course, I didn't have anything except high school French and a little scientific French I was studying up at MIT because it had to be easier than scientific German, which I didn't know anything about. And so naturally I was sent to the Spanish speaking country [laughter] and studied Spanish the whole

while we were there. Got moderately fluent before we left and started studying Finnish to go to Finland.

KP: You had not dreamed of being part of the Foreign Service, but obviously it was the right match.

RO: Well, it gives a great variety and in those days at least, though its not quite so true now, you got a great deal of responsibility as a junior officer. The posts were all smaller. I started out as administrative officer and I suppose now the administrative officer in Santa Domingo, which then was called Ciudad Trujillo, probably is now, of a Councilor or Minister Councilor rank, ... almost ambassadorial in rank. I mean just one step below, with a huge staff or whatever. ... I was in charge of, and had ... two or three very able Puerto Rican assistants and a number of other Puerto Ricans doing various things, primarily, and that was it. And we did a good job. But, I had a wide variety of responsibilities, once I was allowed to get going at it. ... At the start, (before my predecessor left), I ... [would have] sort of make-work jobs like working in the ambassador's basement going through old files [from the beginning]. But later on I had a special opportunity there because ... there had been a funding cutback in the State Department on the information service, U.S.I.A., and the U.S.I.A. officer in charge there was a very good friend of mine, and when he left I took over some of his duties in addition to being an administrative officer and met a lot of interesting people that way and got some good experiences. We can't stay all day here can we Mary? It's already two o'clock. I think its time we had something to eat. [Laughter]

KP: I think that's probably a good place to break.

BREAK

KP: I guess in talking about your Foreign Service career, which was a very long and varied career, maybe if you could talk about how you did not know what you were getting into. When did you get a sense of what the Foreign Service involved? That sounds like a very basic question, but you did not really know what you were getting yourself into fully until, I get the sense, until you actually got to the Foreign Service.

RO: I guess I had some idea from reading the materials I was given and I knew it was working and living abroad for the government. But, I guess I was not too well informed, but they had a training school for new officers. ... When I went down in, I guess maybe it was June, there's a Foreign Service Institute had not been formed until, it wasn't till a year later. They're celebrating now its anniversary. But there was a school for new Foreign Service Officers at the Lothrop House, sort of at the corner of Columbia Road and Connecticut Avenue. A real beautiful old mansion, moderately small. ... It was a school in the sense that they had a director and people visiting. People would come and talk about the Foreign Service and their experiences and you were given some instruction in protocol and some idea about ... how to adapt to other cultures and things of that sort. So that was quite nice. And we lived close to there (rented an apartment). So that gave quite a good idea. And then, as I said, I got orders for our Embassy in the Dominican Republic in Ciudad Trujillo, called in after the dictator Trujillo, the

Generalissimo and so on. And so we went down there to the administrative job that I had, which gave a wide variety of experiences.

KP: How big was the embassy when you served?

RO: Its hard to say, but its certainly less than half what it is now. ... There was an ambassador of course, and his deputy, [and then] an economic officer, an agricultural officer. There was a separate building downtown for the consulate and there were two or three officers there and a lot of local employees, not so many local employees as Puerto Rican employees. And local employees for, let's say, the maintenance type duties and so on. We had our file room. I'd suppose all together there were probably twenty Puerto Rican Americans and ten or twelve continental Americans.

KP: Was that common for the State Department to hire Puerto Ricans to work in the Caribbean?

RO: Well, they were American citizens.

KP: Yes.

RO: And they also were bilingual in English and Spanish, so it was a Spanish speaking country. And it was very common and they were very efficient. I had a great deal of respect for them.

KP: But they were not regular Foreign Service Officers?

RO: Well I suppose there are Puerto Rican origin Foreign Service Officers now. In fact, one of the persons that I helped hire as an embassy guard later became a Foreign Service Officer through the regular route. He became a vice-consul first and later on became a Foreign Service Officer. ... In the Foreign Service, it was the Foreign Service Officers, but also Foreign Service staff people and later on they had Foreign Service staff officers, it's a little bit mixed up, but anyway, I came in at the bottom of the officer corps, sort of like a brand new second lieutenant, with the equivalent in salary. But down there at that time we were able to have a rather nice house and two or three servants and send money home to my father and mother. It wasn't too bad.

KP: You mentioned you were administrative and my sense of that is you, well, you said you got some interesting work there. A lot that is, some of it is very mundane, maybe trivial.

RO: Oh, yeah. One of my more interesting experiences was trying to keep track of loaned-out furniture. The embassy had quite a bit of furniture to loan out to people to save them from having to bring too much furniture in, or to supplement what they had brought in. And there was a lot of it, but by the time I get there the inventory was all fouled up. They didn't know what was where. ... And it was one of my jobs to try to get it squared away and find where things were and who properly had them. In this regard I had lots of fun with a sweet lady whom we still know and is now very old, who was the wife of the public affairs officer or the information officer whatever you want to call him. And she was a very generous person and all anybody had to do to

go into her house and admire a piece of furniture and it would be at their house the next day, you know? [laughter] Without telling anybody where it was or anything else. It was this wonderful, sweet lady and I had quite a lot of things to get straightened out. Betty Hamilton was her name, she's mid or late 80s now and living by herself at their former vacation home in North Carolina because she wanted to have more independence and somehow she's managing. We see her when we get down [there]. Her husband was very nice. They had a lot of boys. They were very kind to us in helping us get settled. In administration, well with any administrative group, in any office, you have to have your financial officer, you have your accountants, you have your supply people, you have ... not your typists so much, but you have your file room which ... came under that and those people. You had the housing responsibilities. You have the guards ... which were local people or ... Puerto Rican locals, ... they weren't Dominican citizens in other words.

KP: So you didn't have Marine guards at Santo Domingo?

RO: We didn't have any marine guards at that point I don't think. We had a marine major, I guess it was, who was an assistant military attaché. We had a fascinating old character who had been a former marine when we (the US) intervened in the Dominican Republic, who had been a sergeant in the marines and married into Trujillo's family. In fact, I guess he, maybe, helped train Trujillo as a local constabulary person. That sort of gave him a leg up to becoming the supreme general of the island. [laughter] ... But he ran our commissary and did a very good job, a little commissary about the size of this room. ... Well we had the maintenance of the buildings and the administration in the broader sense.

KP: But you are “running” much of the embassy as a very junior person?

RO: I was the most junior officer in the embassy, at that time “Unclassified "C." [laughter] If you can imagine, it is a different way of operating now. It changed two or three times over the years, but that meant that ... I moved up. I think I went ... I don't think I had to go through "B" and "A" in order to go up. I think they had a change of mind.

LL: When you began work for the Foreign Service in 1946, the Foreign Service was undergoing some major reorganization.

RO: Oh, yeah ...

LL: What kind of assignment did you have?

RO: Post-World War, mainly, they brought in lots of veterans through that exam and otherwise, you know, so it expanded drastically. And there were relatively few people around who were pre-World War II personnel unless they were an older group. ... A few younger people had served earlier and then gone, left to go into the service and come back. I don't quite understand you.

LL: I had read somewhere that in 1946 that the State Department underwent a big reorganization change within the Foreign Service.

RO: ... Major changes, but there've been so many over the years and its a rather difficult subject to give a good view of that other than to say, "Yes, there was a major [re]organization." And you're now facing still maybe about the eighth major reorganization there since I [left] ... [Laughter]

KP: You've seen a number of these.

RO: Yeah, yeah. Sometimes it goes up and then you have maybe a reduction in force, you change the rules, maybe your information agency is part of the State Department itself, and later on it's out and then it's back in again and then you have some people who are with you temporarily, but they really had been with the Department of Commerce and then later on they had their own little Foreign Service, it's back again. It's very hard to, it's almost useless to try to keep track of all these changes. [laughter] You just sort of grin and bear it and hope you survive that particular one. There was one occasion when I was ... I hadn't really planned to be, but I became something of a rebel. And that during one of those organizations later on, I think at the time let's say, it's a rough idea, let's say there were six classes of Foreign Service Officers and with this new organization, by changing the number of classes and categories it looked as though it was going to happen that I, as a Foreign Service Officer Class Five at that point, would go back to being a Class Six even though I had already been recommended for promotion to Class Four by a previous promotion board. And there were a lot of people in that category and they didn't really think this was such a great idea. And I attended one meeting with about oh, fifteen or twenty officers in that situation. And I just sat around listening and agreeing that we had to organize. I was not one of the, ... you know, in back of all this. Guess who the Deputy Undersecretary of State called in to talk about it one Saturday morning? Old me. [Laughter] Somebody must have made a list and the organizer said, ... "Whom should I call in?" And maybe this fellow (Owen) is amenable, you know, is not too excited or too rabid and talks sense. So I was called in.

KP: Which Undersecretary was it?

RO: I was trying to think. I do know, he was a grand old man in the Foreign Service. I think he was a Deputy Undersecretary, Loy Henderson, at that time. And I was called in all by myself, shaking in my shoes. I had never been in such an august presence before. And once we started talking, I presented what I thought was a reasonable point of view. That we all could see they were reorganizing, there wasn't anything we could do about that, but it did seem unjust that officers who had already been recommended by the board to go up another class, to Class Four, and hadn't become Class Four just because there weren't enough vacancies that year, should not now go back an extra class and almost feel as though they were starting again. And he saw the reason of that and there were some other suggestions and comments, but that was one and they agreed to it. So then you didn't have to go back and then the next year I guess I got promoted to Class Four. That was exciting. [laughter]

KP: In your first experience as a Foreign Service Officer what was the most rewarding aspects of your job? I get the sense that you learned a lot on the job?

RO: Yeah, well, it's rewarding to feel you're doing a good job and it's appreciated and I think it was, pretty much. ... You had a lot of very nice people to work with and the social life was interesting because you met, you know, the British and the French and the Brazilians and there I met the first really cultured black man I had known and was the ambassador from Haiti which occupies about, oh maybe, 40 island of the country to the west. And he was such a nice gentleman that I remember that particularly. I remember one time at a party ... admiring, I guess it was probably the British First Secretary, and he had a beautiful plaid tie and a great many of the British Foreign Service people were Scots actually, why I don't know, but they were. And I admired the tie and the next morning a messenger came and delivered the tie to me. [laughter] You had to be careful, you know, a little bit, not knowing these customs. [laughter] I remember such a thing as the Brazilian ambassador had a big residence and, sort of flat roofs you know, and he had this huge party up on the top of this flat roof and the custom in South America is for dinners to start rather late at night and to carry on. Well this son-of-a-gun got us all there and then he locked the door down from the roof so nobody got home until he decided to unlock it about two or three in the morning. [laughter] That was an interesting party. Sort of fascinating thing, here I'm talking too much too long, but in the Dominican Republic we had a house boy, nice little boy, illiterate really, most of them were, and quite black, but no matter how black a Dominican was he would say that he was Spanish and talk about those black people over in Haiti even though their great-grandfather might have come from Haiti, but they were Spanish, you know? But that's beside the point. He was very nice, a meek little man, a man I suppose, maybe then he was twenty, possibly. And he lived on the place along with a cook living on the place and a maid living on the place.

KP: Which you had grown up in pretty modest circumstances as a child. All of the sudden you have servants.

RO: Oh, yeah. ... Of course, Mary had to manage and plan and order and help her shop and so on, but anyway the, the story is that right next door to us, right over by our little, very modest, swimming pool by the house right there next to it, lived the big general. Not the ... dictator, but his sort of hatchet man, named General Fiaijo. He didn't really ... live there. That's where he had his mistress, right? He spent a good deal of his time there, but then his house was somewhere else. But he had his mistress there, ... that's for granted. Now our house boy at one time was walking by his real residence a little further off in another part of town. And a servant girl in the yard asked for his help in doing something, you know physical, and he did and it was by accident a pickax or something slipped and knocked and broke a stone or something out of the wall, and so they arrested that poor guy and took him and roughed him up, gave him a hard time and kept him, sort of, in jail for a while. And I was so, I heard about this when he came back, pretty subdued and ... you could see bruises underneath his black skin. And we got the full story and I was so mad about this I did a very unwise thing. It could have terminated my career in the Foreign Service. I got my record player out and the marine national anthem. And, of course they were occupied by the marines and a lot of strong feelings down there, you know? And I went out under his mistresses' and his bedroom window by my pool. I played that marine national anthem at full power all night long. [laughter] Young and foolish right? So there was a little protest, the Foreign Office talked to our Charge or something and suggested that Third Secretary Robert Owen needed a little toning down or something or other ... [laughter] so I was called. And

happily it was a charge, which when the ambassador's away the Charge's the, the number two man is in charge. He was understanding and a friend, so I didn't get in any real serious trouble. The same Charge, whom I'm still, the only person left of that particular generation I'm still in touch with, now he's in his mid 80s. Just had his 86th birthday, I think. But I'm not gonna be able to see him in New York because his visit from Buenos Aires is at the same time as my hip operation. But he had no love whatsoever for Trujillo and he didn't care who knew it. Which is not necessarily very diplomatic on his part either, right? And so he was Charge in charge of the embassy and the national something, it wasn't quite the national day he came along, but there was going to be this major speech by the dictator before both houses of their so-called Congress, you know, and all the diplomats were called and all the ambassadors were expected to go, you know, in their top hat, tails, etc., right? And this particular man disliked Trujillo so much that he wasn't going to be pushed around at all. And so he selected me and the other most junior officer from the embassy, from the consulate, to go and represent the United States Government at this very fancy occasion. [laughter] So we put on our top hats, in those days you had to, before you came in, you had to spend a lot of money on clothing.

KP: So you literally go out and buy top hats and the rest?

RO: Top hats and morning coat and striped trousers and special ties and everything. And very expensive calling cards and all that kind of stuff. It was still pre-war protocol. But anyway we went and our presence ... did not arouse great joy on the part of the Dominican Government or the dictator.

KP: It's interesting what you were saying because it sounds like some of the State Department officials really did not like Trujillo.

RO: Trujillo, right.

KP: Yeah, I'm having a hard time with pronunciations today. But our policy increasingly in the Cold War was to, in a sense, support him as our strong man or am I simplifying it?

RO: That's pretty simplified, but it's a complicated situation. ... Just because you don't like someone or you don't approve of their method of government does not mean that you have either the authority or the right or the will to go in and throw them out at great cost of life and everything else. So he wasn't our creature, in that sense, but on the other hand we had important, as most still do, commercial interest in plantations: banana plantations, sugar plantations, other commercial connections, imports, exports, you name it. There as we have in a great many countries. And a lot of American businessmen who are interested and connected or working on construction projects. Lockjoint Pipe was down there while we were there, doing some major construction. So that ... you don't go pushing your weight around too much unless there's some real reason to or unless the lives of American citizens are in danger, as sometimes they are, and which is at least the pretext we used the first time we went in to intervene. ... Speaking of which, I was there during a period when there was an invasion threat from Cuba. That was a little exciting because Latinos are sometimes a little bit, hot blooded let's say, and in that particular period anyway, as soon as the rumors spread about a possible invasion up on the north coast by

these, I suppose by Dominicans from Cuba or wherever, that all of the officials, a little more audaciously or more frequently than previously were carrying their own little ammunition and little gun in their pocket or their hip or whatever. And so you always hoped that they didn't get excited and do something unwise, right? [laughter] And it was in that period that I too had my little piece that I bought from old Harry Hurst, the former marine sergeant. I bought a real cheap Baretta from him for about twenty dollars or something and made a little holster. Because at that point one of my jobs, on occasion, because there wasn't somebody else to do it, I would take the pouch, the diplomatic pouch with classified material or whatever, out to the airport to meet a courier and give him my pouch of outgoing diplomatic mail and get his pouch of incoming mail. And somehow, during that period, it made me feel just a little bit more comfortable having a gun of my own with me. [laughter] Which is really foolish because it's just asking for trouble, but anyway I was young and foolish. The particular invasion didn't materialize. Things calmed down. But it was an interesting country.

KP: What ambassador did you serve under? You mentioned the charge d'affaires.

RO: Yeah, ... well George Sherer was the Charge at one point. See, I haven't reviewed any of this in my mind particularly in preparation for this.

KP: You can also add the names when you see the transcript.

RO: Right. Well, I think the name of the ambassador was George Butler and he had a very interesting wife who had been brought up in the Philippines and had very old-fashioned ideas about protocol. Where she would call all the wives in, including Mary, very early and sort of read the act to them, not the war act or anything, but, you know, just exactly what's expected of you when you're invited here. You never, ever, sit on the couch, that's for senior people. [laughter] And Mary, to this day, finds it very difficult to sit down on a couch at any party because of that particular time. [laughter]

KP: So where were junior people supposed to sit?

RO: You were there, at social occasions you were there to work. You were there to help a conversation go on, to circulate among the foreign.

KP: So you were not supposed to sit?

RO: You weren't supposed to sit much, no. You could on occasion if your sitting happened to be on not the couch, but somewhere else where the ...

KP: So you'd be sitting on chair like this.

RO: Yeah, but ... not be seen down there too often.

KP: This old guard protocol, what were some of the things that were required? And what was modernized during your career?

RO: Yeah. ... It depends still on where you are and what the local customs are. ... But at one time there ... in those days, in the Foreign Service, there was a very definite protocol. When you arrived, on cards, rather complicated, where you had your calling card, you had and your wife had a calling card, you had a joint calling card, you had another card that might have been just your name on it with another line with, you know, your Third Secretary or whatever. And these cards would be sent out, usually by some good secretary, sometimes hand-delivered, or on the diplomatic corps, from you and your wife, etc., the number of cards related to how many people were in the family you were leaving the cards at, that were of adults, right? Husband, wife, etc. And then they would return cards to you and it got a little complicated. And you were suppose to make a social call, a personal social call on the, not a business call, but a social call on the ambassador within so many hours after you arrived. ... And invite him to your house as one of your first social activities rather than somebody else. Some places I guess would carry it even more extremes to branch it up and down the rank table. Usually you had some good, efficient secretary that did most of this, but you had to supply the cards. [laughter] And then sort of check up to make sure, to see which ones you got back. It was sort of ridiculous I suppose, but it served its purpose to introduce new people to a community and remind them of your arrival and then maybe next time they had some big to-do they would include you on their invitation list. ... You never, in the Foreign Service, went to parties just to have a good time. You went there ... to show-the-flag, so to speak, and if there were things that you wanted to know, that they might pass on to you about their own country or their own, not in an espionage way, but to keep one another advised of things that are useful to know.

KP: You were in the administrative then, but you mentioned that you did some information service work.

RO: Well I did a lot of that the second, I was there two years, I did a lot of that the second year. I spent a lot of my time traveling around. ... We had a mobile bookmobile. And had ... American movies, of various kinds, not only fun movies, but also information type movies, ... touring around different parts of the country and we sort of kept that going with local personnel. I like the part that fell to me very often, to meet and greet and help escort around VIPs that would come visiting, Congressmen, I particularly enjoyed seeing, for example, Commodore, what was his first name, Frederick Dillon, who had been head of the U.S. Coast Guard's Light House Service. And he was retiring with the rank of commodore, which is a retirement rank a little higher (than Captain), just slightly below admiral, and he and his wife came and they were such delightful people, you know? And Mary and I entertained them and took them around and showed them interesting places. And we remained friends for many years. Every time we went to Washington, we'd go see them and later on after he died we went to visit Mrs. Dillon in the nursing home and we knew their family. It was really that kind of contact that could be very interesting and pleasant. As I said, I wanted to get away from Ceramics so I could be with people, so I certainly picked the area that's ...

KP: It sounds like you enjoyed a lot of this social obligation?

RO: I did, I did. Not just social, ... dealing with people, liking people. I mean, that's a big part of presenting our country in a favorable light abroad is to be a personable person that other people like. And usually if you like them, why there's a good chance they're going to like you.

LL: What was it like to raise a family in the Foreign Service?

RO: Well, I mean you accepted this as it would be difficult and it was. We didn't have any children of school age there (Dominican Republic). And you have problems with health and my oldest son was the only child we had. He was born just around, just before, Christmas in the Dominican Republic that first year. And Mary was in the hospital while earthquakes were still continuing. We had had fairly good earthquake our first several weeks there. The hospital top floor where she was still shaking when she gave birth to him. But in spite of all the good things we brought in for him and the fruits we tried to give him, why he developed problems with his ankles and then when we were in Finland he had to get braces to, sort of special boots with heavy iron braces on it, and he still has kind of knobby ankles actually. But it doesn't seem to bother him much any more. [laughter] He's age 50 by the way. [laughter] He had some kind of deficiency from there. But it was interesting, we had a laundress, must have earned all of fifteen dollars a month or something, but she got food. I don't know whether she slept at our place or came in. I think that particular one came in. But to do laundry she would start a fire in the back yard and heat a can of water over some rocks in the fire to heat the water to do the laundry. Got a pretty good pounding too. We learned all the basic foods: rice and beans, etc. The cook had a charcoal stove in the kitchen she cooked on.

KP: You were basically a newlywed couple because you had lived together briefly before the war. But it was almost like you were on an extended honeymoon since the time you had been living together.

RO: Right. How did she cope?

KP: Yeah. How did your marriage, how did it go?

RO: You just did what you had to do, day-by-day or week-by-week. You did your job and tried not to suffer too much from little problems of health and temperature and bugs. ... One time, in the back yard, I caught and preserved a tarantula that big.

KP: I don't think there was very much air-conditioning.

RO: No, there wasn't any air-conditioning. [laughter]

KP: Yeah, I am not sure exactly when.

RO: Except fans. ... Well, you adjust to it and although our embassy, we didn't take any siesta in the middle of the day at the embassy, everybody couldn't, a lot of others, all South American embassies [took them]. That's one reason why they stayed up so late at night. They took a long, extended period of rest in the middle of the day.

KP: But the American Embassy just kept going.

RO: We were Americans after all. [laughter] But my job also included, we had a consular agent, who is something less than a consul. Usually someone who's working for a big American company, let's say on their administrative side. But there's certain documents and invoices and various ways that a consular agent can act. Not giving visas, but on other aspects of consular work. And so we had one way up on the north part of the island, northern part of the country not on my end. And once in a great while it was my job to go up and talk to him. I don't remember what we talked about, whatever was going on. We very nearly lost our first baby, Jim, I suppose by going up there because we were going up there and another man came with us and Mary was that far along, was only a couple months, three months maybe, before the birth. They put us in a command car up there and belts (charged) around all these banana fields and bad roads (rutted dirt roads) and everything. It's a wonder she didn't lose the baby then. A little exciting (for her) to hold on for dear life. [laughter]

KP: You would be posted to a very different country, Finland. I think of the Dominican Republic and Finland as culturally very different.

RO: Yeah, well, the story is that I decided I did not want to stay on at a series of Latin-American posts because, basically, I could not see any major changes coming up, speaking particularly of the contrast between, that there's almost no middle class. It's either the people at the top and the mass people below who were, most cases were, I suppose, if not miserable, at least ...

KP: Not too far removed?

RO: Not too far removed from miserable. Even though a lot of fine things were said about the future for Latin America, I didn't see it happening in quite a while. And I also, well, I was aware of the Soviet Union by then and became aware of an opportunity for Russian language and area training as a second post or second activity, following the Dominican Republic where I was only to be two years. So I applied for Russian training and was turned down. And in turning me down they said, "You'll need a little more experience. Why don't you apply for some country contiguous to the Soviet Union, if you're interested, and we'll see if we can oblige you and, you'll get some, perhaps some, appropriate experience." So I asked for Finland and got it. Which of course has its own special relationship then and still does visa-a-via the Soviet Union. Which I won't go into because it just takes time. But the Finns are very valiant and very independent in their ways. They've played a rather careful game over the years and succeeded pretty well at it.

KP: Well the Finland that you were in was still occupied by the Soviet Union.

RO: No, It was never occupied.

KP: But I think the Soviets had military bases there.

RO: Not really. I forget the exact, but they had bases nearby. They had won the Winter War against the Finns. But the Finns really, I guess, had fought so well that they're worthy of respect in other words. And I think ... as long as they were made aware of what their place was, so to speak, the Russians didn't feel they had to occupy it and didn't. There were some pieces of Finland that they annexed and kept a strong military presence in. The Finns didn't need too much reminding that they better behave, right? No, they maintained a careful balance, when we went there was a Social Democratic government in Finland. A Fagerholm government as I recall. And they maintained a good balance. There were extreme leftists, sort of pseudo- or semi-communist group. I forget what it was called now. But the Conservatives and the Social Democrats combined against the communists, although they were a little careful on the relationship with the Soviet Union they never in the sixteen years ever let that extreme left group gain power. And they had relatively free elections and that was it. Interesting country.

KP: What was your responsibility?

RO: I don't want to really go into too much detail here. I'll be all week, right.

KP: Well, I'd be curious about what was your responsibilities involved in the Finnish assignment.

RO: Well, at least it justified my hope for varied responsibilities. Because when I went there, I guess you could say I was assigned to the Economics Section. Ray Ylitalo was in charge and he was an American of Finnish descent and fluent in Finnish, which was a big asset. Was he in charge? Bob Brandon was in charge of economic/commercial reporting. Ray Ylitalo may have done other things there, but I worked with him, but ... he didn't write my efficiency reports, Bob Brandon did. And so I was doing economic reporting, I would go visit factories and interview the people in the factory, say in the cellulose industry, and then be given a tour and come back and write a report on the cellulose industry in Finland and possible opportunities for American investments or whatever, you name it. Or the same with other places where they were making alcohol out of wood, but not wood alcohol. They were making grain alcohol out of wood and drinking large amounts of it themselves, with enough left over to export right? And, of course, a big forest industry related to that. So I traveled around quite a bit. And I would do reports on Finnish agriculture. It was very rewarding because, in those days at least, probably maybe still, why your reports would go back to Washington and if it had to do with agriculture or commerce it would go to the appropriate, not just the State Department, but sent also copies to these other branches of government and a lot of them were very nice in acknowledging these and writing commendations for you and writing letters back saying, "This was a very useful report," and so on and make you feel good. But I kept doing ... economic reports and maybe my closer connection with Ray Ylitalo was when I also started being the labor reporting officer (aka). That was interesting because that meant that I could go to the major labor unions, there was more than one major labor union I would go to. And get to know some of the Secretaries in the labor movement and so forth, I don't mean stenos, I mean people of some authority. And they would give me certain amount of information, we'd discuss how the labor movement was going, and some of their problems and whatever, and I'd go back and write a report and then the Department of Labor would send me a commendation. [laughter] So that was fun. So a lot of ... my learning

how to write engineering reports (at Rutgers) came in handy writing these reports later on for the government.

KP: You were in Finland when the Cold War was really becoming much more rigid. NATO was formed in 1949, but it is heating up all through the period.

RO: Right. Right. Yeah, this was all sort of, I guess, in the background there I was so busy doing what I was doing I would, at that stage I wasn't too, following too closely the Cold War, so to speak. I wasn't, I wasn't doing, I guess Ylitalo was doing political reporting a good deal. He and the Minister (we were a legation, not an embassy). I kind of edged into this, you might say, because labor reporting there was also semi-political reporting. I was too busy, had so many friends and including Finnish friends. There were wonderful friends that owned the building in which we had our apartment. Which was not part of any compound-it was just in town, it was nice, but cold. But anyway, you got used to wearing sweaters around your apartment when the temperature was rarely over 60. [Laughter]

KP: That's cold.

RO: But we enjoyed it. Learned quite a bit more Finnish. Had a lot of good friends, you know, particularly ... good friends in the British group there. Ours wasn't an embassy, by the way, then. When we were there it was a legation. Which is the same thing, its just a slightly different connotation, ... we don't need to go into. It wasn't a lower ranking. It was still the top US representation. But we had a few legations left then, which all were converted or re-titled, really. It was just a different name. ... A lot of good Belgian friends. A lot of these people we kept in touch with a long time-we learned the British are just crazy for party games. [Laughter]

KP: Really?

KP: Costume parties. But anyway that's beside the point.

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

RO: ... [We were] able to join our local Swedish language boat club and took a rented boat out. Much too big a boat for me to sail alone, but I did and had some real adventures on that. With all these little submerged rocks and hidden islands and things around. Survived and it was fun. So that when the time came I was asked, did I want to come back for Russian language and area training I said, "No thank you, not now." Here again, like the Navy. [Laughter] A few weeks later I got my orders to go back to Russian language and area training. I don't know what that proves except that in general its better not to ask for, to ask for what you don't want and visa-versa or something. So we were in the States about a year-and-a-half on Russian language and area training. And that's where I got my polio in Vermont at Middlebury.

KP: At Middlebury.

RO: Yup. The only case in the area and one of the last cases ever in that area, I guess. I was over-doing it. I was working too hard, I believe. All my courses at Middlebury College were given in the Russian language, which my language was not that great yet, and even though I'd had some training in Washington before going up. I was up half the night studying, and using dictionaries, and getting run down. They said that probably was why I came down with the polio. But anyway, that was an interesting period.

KP: Do you have long term health effects from that?

RO: Well, ... not too bad. I've got post-polio syndrome now, which comes many years later. But, I had some paralysis, but I had treatment and recovered pretty much. Abdominal muscles were weak and I had weak hips, but they recovered-the hip abductor muscles. I really came out where most people wouldn't notice, except occasionally I'd drop my left foot too quickly because a muscle is damaged on top of my left foot. I do most everything. Later on I found out I couldn't really play good tennis anymore. Which is a shame. Not that it was so great to start with, but it was worse later. [laughter] I enjoyed it. So anyway, that training included Middlebury, then included the year that I mentioned.

KP: At Columbia.

RO: At Columbia, the Russian Institute. There were several of us assigned to Columbia, Russian Institute, and several others who were assigned for Russian language and area training up at Harvard. And we got Columbia.

KP: What was the emphasis in terms of interpreting the Soviet Union?

RO: No emphasis, you studied everything. You studied the theory of communism, you studied ... Russian and Soviet history, you studied Soviet economics. ... Sort of the gambit to try to fill you in on what was known at the moment. That was an open course, it wasn't classified information and you had some of the great professors that had written books about Russian history and so on. If I had wished to concentrate I probably could have, and also a little bit handicapped by having to go for therapy for my polio, I might have gotten a master's out of that. The other fellow ... that was there with me, Dick Davies, who later became an ambassador, I think he was ambassador to Soviet Union (no) or ... just Poland (yes). ... He did the extra work and paper required to get his master's there. We both did equally well in the courses that we had, but after that, when that was over, why then, naturally, I went to Moscow for the first time.

KP: And you were going, what was your assignment to be in Moscow?

RO: Well, by then I guess I was maybe, Second Secretary. I had been a Third Secretary and Vice-Consulate in the Dominican Republic. I became a Second Secretary and Consul I think it was, in Finland and then I guess I was maybe Second Secretary and Consul in Moscow that first tour. Both just being diplomatic ranks (titles), I mean your work title might be something else. And ... not directly related to your F.S.O. classification, although that would indicate whether you were a first, second, or third secretary. Or a consul versus vice-consul. I'm getting tired. The

Soviet Union, first tour, ... I have to sort of think or I get mixed up on the two tours or what I was actually doing. First tour I went in as a, sort of, so called, Public Affairs Officer at a time when you had very few public affairs with the Soviet Union. But that meant that I was in charge of an office, a sub-office or section of the embassy, that did disseminate a certain amount of information around the Soviet Union. You had responsibilities for an American art or artistic type shows that might come in exchange. We had responsibilities for, related to the Amerika Magazine, which was put out in Russian, which we disseminated and had difficulties getting disseminated properly, checking up on it. Sales were restricted and frowned on to a degree. But I was the Moscow editor for that, which merely meant that I could write suggestions back to Washington on what they might include in this or write reports on what are, checking around at the various kiosk shows, in terms of whether they actually had it or had it hidden under the counter or were actually selling any of it there and in other cities. I had working, for me at least, under my general guidance, two radio operators who got the news from a wireless bulletin and put it down on paper to disseminate. But it was pretty busy and I had several very nice people working for me. So that was really most of my first tour in the USSR.

KP: You were in Stalin's ...

RO: That was Stalin's Russia.

KP: Russia. You get the impression of a very suffocating system and a very ...

RO: Yeah, true. We ... couldn't make very many Russian friends first of all. Anybody who was able to be a friend of yours you knew darn well was an agent. But that didn't necessarily keep you from them entirely, but the other people were in trouble, you see. And there was good, ... they had very high security and there was surveillance, electronically and otherwise most of the time, so you were pretty careful. Although the physical surveillance was less obvious and onerous than later on as I said, during the Khrushchev period. Merely because a local citizen would report you more often, more accurately, and conscientiously during the Stalin period otherwise their necks might be at risk. Then later on, under Khrushchev, well there was some liberalization. And also by then the Russian people's dress and behavior had changed where it wasn't quite that easy to pick out a foreigner unless. ... Obviously you stuck out like a sore thumb during Stalin's period, by your clothing and so on.

KP: Why would you say that so clearly?

RO: Well you dress differently ...

KP: How would Russian's dress in the first tour?

RO: Well, like something from The Brother's Karamazov, or worse. [laughter] But they, a lot of people used to, even then, used to say they weren't followed and weren't under much surveillance. But that was maybe sometimes true for people who didn't have any knowledge of the language and area, pretty hard for them to get in trouble. But if you were a ... Russian language and area speaker, ... of course the authorities assumed special training and other talents,

why they kept pretty close tabs on you. There were some pretty interesting experiences, with the children leading now more of a ... trying not to mix up the time, but anyway. It was particularly the second time when we had our children. ... We'd go to church at the British Embassy where I was one of the readers of the scriptures and things. And we maybe after we'd leave the British Embassy, we'd be followed to there in our car. Second time we could drive a lot more, many more places than we could the first time, couldn't even get a driver's license the first time. Second time you could with some difficulty, and move around more, and fewer areas were closed. But we'd go for a picnic, after church for example, up in some woods near Moscow, and with people following us again in cars, sometimes discretely, sometimes not so. But our children would look always and say, "There are our 'friends,' there are our 'friends.'" And then we'd find that, you know, we'd sit down to our picnic and be having our picnic and see somebody duck behind the trees and "there's our 'friend' over there." [laughter] Kids pick up pretty quickly on these things. I've had a lot of fascinating experiences that would take a whole book, several books. I better get to writing more of it someday. There is also an oral history program in the State Department.

KP: Have you given an interview?

RO: But I haven't given it out yet. I haven't felt, well, like I felt a little bit about this program, it's more people who had real military experiences instead of sort of pseudo ones like mine that should be talking or in combat and so forth. Because I never participated in any really major negotiations or interpreted for Stalin or a Secretary of State. I had a lot of interesting work and a lot of responsibility. ... I had a lot of great fun and some of it not so much fun. I may go back now because I think I've got a lot to offer in terms of flavor of that period.

KP: Oh, no, you really have a lot. Well, and also I mean diplomacy is more than simply negotiating treaties. I mean, a lot of it, 95 percent of it is very routine.

RO: Well it is. ... There is reporting and helping other people or if you're an administrator, getting people out of jams. I mean we had experiences of, for example, that first tour I had a rather small staff and someone was going to leave, okay? So this new person came in, oh boy, I had to get rid of him eventually because he was under all kinds of delusions. At one period there he even believed that they had trained a police dog to follow him around town. Which is conceivable, but it wasn't true in this case, I'm quite sure. [laughter] But he got so paranoid there that ... I wasn't confident that he'd retain ... as much emotional and intellectual balance as he had so I had to, it took me a long while to get a replacement, which meant double work, but still I couldn't risk having him around. And there were people who swore that, and maybe with some justification, that when they on a trip, why that little, tiny, hole in the ceiling meant that someone was taking photographs of them. I've been on trips where they would deliberately, actually, sometimes more or less successfully try to get me drunk, but I didn't do anything I shouldn't when I was drunk. [laughter] But some of that is just Russian tradition, if in travel you go to a collective farm, visiting a collective farm, it took a long time to get permission and you go and then an interminable series of foods would come in that you were expected to taste and then all these toasts you were supposed to answer and God knows what kind of liquor. [groans-laughter]

Horrible, sweet, stuff on occasion. You know, and you just sort of pray you got back to your hotel room and bed without any further trouble.

KP: How much of Russia did you get to see during your first tour?

RO: Almost none the first tour.

KP: You were really confined to Moscow?

RO: Yeah. You could ask for special permission. ... You could go once in a while on a short plane trip, but there was a whole series of very complicated system of opened and closed areas. And some areas were closed but you could go through them, transit on a certain road, others it might be the opposite was true, the whole place was open, but you couldn't get there because the road was closed. [laughter] The second tour it was much more possible to travel. I did a lot of traveling the second tour. Went to one place in Siberia, Yakutsk, way up. It's closer to the United States than Moscow is, on the other way, across the Pacific. ... That was a town with ... no plumbing, no running water in the wintertime. A little bit disgusting. They had ... Hotel Number One was the only hotel. One or maybe two restaurants. They served Spiritus, which is two-hundred proof alcohol, for people who wanted it at breakfast. [laughter] I saw a Yakutsk native come along with a big heavy fur coat and it was up around maybe it was as high as thirty degrees or so, or maybe it was still below zero, and he had his coat open (no shirt) and his little pony pulling this little sled he had. The pony had icicles hanging from his nose this far down. I learned to eat Siberian pony meat. ... They had statistics to show that that was one of the healthiest places in the Soviet Union, theoretically, because they had a higher ratio of hospital beds than most any place else. [laughter] Well, it was because they were all dying of tuberculosis, or a great many of them were, up there.

KP: It strikes me that the Soviet Union in your first tour was really a country that was ...

RO: Well, this was the second tour I'm talking about.

KP: Oh, this is the second tour?

RO: Yeah. That was in the spring. [laughter] And on the way there or back, I stopped in another place, Olyokminsk. And I've often said in a humorous sort of way that that was where only the cows wore brassieres. [laughter] It was so cold that they had these brassieres, sort of, made for the cows when they came out doors, you know, to keep the milk from freezing right in the cow. And at the little store there you could buy milk, but it was in little like soup bowls of frozen [milk]. ... You had a disc, you bought your frozen disc of milk if you wanted milk. Anyway, that's sort of the experience. And that little store there, which is like a country store a little bit bigger than this room, not much, whatever they had they had for sale in that one little store, including a little library and I found ... I was sort of leafing through these little books and I found one written, a biography of Robert Owen, the socialist. [laughter] British socialist. No relation as far as I know. [laughter] I wouldn't disown him if he were. [laughter]

KP: I think in terms of the Soviet Union ...

RO: Guess he wasn't a socialist. He was just the starter of some colony ...

KP: Yeah.

RO: ... community. Like ...

KP: New Harmony

RO: Like New Harmony, Indiana or something. But his teachings were more along the line of ... collective activity ... they approved of as compared to other Americans.

KP: At least in the popular American imagination communism was viewed as very sort of monolithic in the early, particularly in the late '40s, early '50s, that everything was emanating from the Kremlin.

RO: Well, I don't think it was ever quite that bad.

KP: I guess maybe that's the question in terms of the Foreign Service, you know, especially when you're in Moscow. What were your views of the Soviet Union before you arrived there? What would your views ...

RO: Too, too big a question. We modified ... there were controls and they were close. Most people submitted to the controls as well as they could guess what they were suppose to do or what they were not suppose to do. ... The second time, when I went back the second time, having been through the Stalin, some of the Stalin period, and all the shortages and the poor clothing. When we first went back we thought, "boy, this place has sure changed, sure opened up. Great!" The longer we were there the second time the more we realized that, underneath, all the important things had not changed. It was a lot of superficial things had changed and it was a bit more pleasant place to be in that regard. A little more food and a little more personal freedom and until the U-2 was shot down we even had some Soviet friends there for a while, that were maybe more or less regular friends, not just agents.

KP: Not just agents.

RO: Yeah. Surely, but probably questioned by agents, but they weren't themselves agents. [laughter] ... And Eisenhower was going to come visit. Well, then the U-2 blew all that into a cocked hat and our friends stopped calling.

KP: So the U-2 was a real break in what was something of a warming up?

RO: Well it's a complicated story and I know a little more about it and am little less certain in what I really know now that I was ... before I saw some reviews of that period on television and so on not too long ago.

KP: I guess maybe the question I, when it occurred what did you in the embassy know, I mean did you, I don't think it's classified, did you know, for example, about these spy flights before they ...

RO: I didn't personally, maybe the ambassador might have, but ...

KP: But otherwise ...

RO: Otherwise wouldn't have known and we were all prepared to deny such things. But obviously we knew and the Russians knew and they knew we knew and we knew they knew for quite awhile. It's just that they were not, didn't have the capabilities to shoot anyone down before then.

KP: But you say, in a sense, you didn't know that there were these over-flights, did you in the embassy?

RO: I don't really remember, but I don't think so.

KP: Yeah. So you were denying that you were literally saying, you didn't know.

RO: Well you'd deny a lot of things, whether you believe them or not. [laughter]

KP: But some denials are easier if it's really not true. [laughter]

RO: ... One time I denied that a certain person had done anything wrong when I suspected he probably had, and he was declared persona non-grata. One of those few periods where I, I almost was a Charge, you might say, because the ambassador was away. The Charge was out of town or somewhere. The next person down, head of the political section, was unavailable, I forget why. ... But, they wanted to call somebody into the Foreign Office to charge this other person with espionage and say he had to be removed from the country or something. So it ended up they got down as far as me on the list and called me in. [laughter] This particular person had been working for me for a while and I knew very well that he wasn't 100 percent normal Foreign Service. But anyway, you deny things and then you do what you do and they throw somebody out and then you throw somebody of theirs out. Play the ol' game.

KP: You were in the Foreign Service in the 1950s when McCarthy, Joseph McCarthy, was really attacking the Foreign Service, and I'd be curious ...

RO: Attacking a lot of people, including the Foreign Service.

KP: Yeah. But I mean a lot of the ...

RO: The army and everybody else.

KP: A lot of people said it really dampened morale in the Foreign Service and in the whole Department of State.

RO: Well, it was a ...

KP: And really you, maybe, became more careful in how you phrased things.

RO: I don't know.

KP: But I'd be curious from your perspective.

RO: I don't know. I really don't know how many people modified their activities that much, but almost everybody in the Foreign Service had friends who were being unjustly charged. That is, promotions were delayed or canceled or whatever, because of insinuations. And I think if morale was bad, it wasn't so much because of this activity as it was for the lack of support from the top. From the President and the Secretary of State who ... were not willing to back up government officials who were being unjustly attacked and that, that is what hurts morale. It was a bad period.

KP: Because historians also say that Foreign Service Officers, particularly what happened to the China (hands?), became more careful in how they might have analyzed problems. And I would just be curious as someone who was, you know, in the field in the Soviet Union twice.

RO: No, I don't think so. We might've been more careful what, in checking up on the backgrounds of any groups you joined or what magazines you got or something like that, but ...

KP: How about in terms of your action now?

RO: ... I think ... real Foreign Service Officers that I knew and admired were not people who were going to juggle reports or where there too many that would need to be. Of course, China hands, that was a whole special kind of situation in China, because of the Taiwan Chinese and the activities during the war when General Marshall was there. I knew some China hands, not too many, but it was very rough on them where they were. But that wasn't so much a part of the McCarthy business, really, as I recall. It had it's own separate scandals.

KP: Yes, it even predates McCarthy. McCarthy, I guess, is the big name to perhaps sum up that whole period. I guess another name that's associated with Soviet/U.S. relations is George Kennan. Did you ever meet, how much contact did you have?

RO: We served with him. He was my ambassador.

KP: In the second tour?

RO: Second tour. Let's see, no.

KP: Was it first tour?

RO: First tour. Toward the end of the first tour he came in as ambassador. And that was when our daughter was becoming due and we arranged for Mary to go out to Germany to have the baby. Earlier, we had been in Germany and made friends including a doctor at the military hospital in Frankfurt. And we were going to send Mary out to Frankfurt and actually she went out to Frankfurt on the plane when Ambassador Kennan said what he said in East Berlin and was declared persona non grata and stopped being ambassador. But I admired him as a very brilliant person however, I remember staff meetings with him in Moscow in his office. And presumably it was behind a plaque up there, there were microphones and at one point whether they were doing those particular meetings, I don't know. ... He would encourage his officers, very much so, to participate and be inquiring and to study things and take ... the scholarly approach. I remember his having a staff meeting and then leaving his desk and going over to a sofa in the room and kind of putting his feet up at the end of the sofa and his hands back and say, "Now, let's talk about this or let's talk about that." And he listened as much to the junior officers as he did the more senior ones. It was nice to work with him. I remember, although one time it wasn't too enjoyable for me, but he went, he thought somebody should make a big report or study this great Soviet project of diverting rivers ... that then flowed into the Arctic, to flow south for the irrigation and open up large areas and so forth-so I had to ... do a study and deliver a report to him on that at one of those meetings. [laughter]

KP: Sounds like a lot of work. [laughter]

RO: It was, and I'm not sure it was that great of a report. We had rather limited sources of information other than in the press. Also in the Embassy then we had, aside from the people that were wireless people and were getting that kind of news, why then we had, there was a special translation service that was not really part of the State Department. I forget now, we called it the Joint Press Reading Service. I don't know just, it operated more or less independently, but they would ... get ... Pravda and Ivestia and other papers and sometimes the regional papers and make translations and highlight articles that they thought would be of interest to people in the Embassy and in Washington. And we'd have those available and files of them to search through to try to glean useful information on a lot of these things. You can't run a country without a certain amount of exchange of information. And if you're real smart you can learn more than you're intended to. In fact one of my jobs-the second time in the Soviet Union (I was in charge of the internal affairs section). I would sometimes even take home a bundle of regional papers from different republic capitals around the Soviet Union and just sit there and dictate rough translations into a recorder.

KP: I mean gleaning from the Soviet Union, I just remember very distinctly, a political science professors, this is an obvious point now, talking about how do you judge, for example, who was in the power structure by where they stand in the parade?

RO: Yeah, well that was always ... one example of the kind of thing.

KP: I would be curious as to some of the other ways you would glean information. I mean, what is the press and really reading carefully behind the lines? Were there other things that you would know to look for that a non-Soviet specialist would not think of?

RO: Yeah. Well, it's sort of hard right now to pin those down. That was sort of one example. There were also words, the shades of meaning. And not only foreigners like us were looking for the shades of meaning. But these shades of meaning were also of great interest to Soviet citizens. ... Who might be going up or who might be going out. And it wasn't only what was said or what words, but names that were appearing and aren't appearing again for a little while. I was never really good at that particular exercise, some people were certainly much better. But I tried, I sure tried. The burden of work was really, at least in my case and in most offices I knew, was absolutely almost unbearable-you worked so hard, so many hours. And men were expected to also be social and do other things. Particularly the second tour, you go on trips and the trips were very arduous. But interesting, of course. And one way you could talk to people sometimes on the train or the restaurant that would be willing to talk a little bit, honestly, and give you some views. And these were worth remembering and reporting and sometimes you were, they would kind of set you up. In a particular place, like Samerkand, why you'd find yourself with a particular local, sitting on a platform somewhere, drinking tea with a local person who was tied in with the local police or something. One time in one of the southern cities, it wasn't Samerkand. Where was I? It wasn't Samerkand either. It was not (Ercuis?). I get these places ... all mixed up, jumbled up. But this was in Azberzhan. And I got out ... I took trips occasionally with other people, you rarely went by yourself. And on one particular trip I had gone with the Publication Procurement Officer. An earlier Publication Procurement Officer had been Mary's boss when she was working in the Embassy to help out as a wife. ... You would go in stores and see what books you could buy and send them back to the States and then people [who] had more time and expertise would pour through and see what they could learn. Because they weren't normally available in the United States. But somehow or other I found myself ... taken home by this local Uzbek. And it was very interesting, we were talking, of course, ... Russian wasn't his first language, it certainly wasn't mine, but we would get along with the Russian. [laughter] At one stage he ... obviously was uncomfortable with his relationship with the secret police, you know. He knew he'd be asked questions or had been alerted or told he should have me over for dinner with his family or something. Show me a little bit of the real Russia right? ... But he, without actually using the words, he made me aware of his relationship with the police and that he had to report by pulling a book out of his rack, and we weren't under photographic surveillance, that was for sure, and kind of pointed to certain parts of the book [laughter] about espionage and one thing and other. So it was pretty clear that he was trying to give me a message that, be a little careful what you say or we're being monitored or you'll have to say it later.

KP: What were they trying to learn from you? They were obviously interested in ...

RO: A lot of it ... was defensive, I think. You know ...

KP: To throw you off balance and ...

RO: You know, to keep me from learning things. If ... you're whole time visiting a town or somewhere was taken up with one of their people, under their control, why you're not off finding something else you might find out. We used to give them fits by, for example, going visiting cemeteries, kind of wandering around, because there's a great tradition that you can pass, hide, secret messages in cemeteries or something. That somebody else would come on a little later and pick them up, you know, with your supporting some spy net. Of course, we were just really kidding them. On the other hand, sometimes you'd learn something in cemeteries about some part of the past. A number of interesting stones and deaths of certain people all at a certain period of time. That information might tie into something else. Although we didn't do too much of that. But they would have a great time-talk about woods, people hiding behind tombstones. ... [Laughter] And I must admit a lot of us often teased our surveillance by doing things to get them excited or give them a little more trouble. [laughter] Let's see, where are we? Anyway ... I was in charge of a section (Internal Affairs Section) there the second time that did read the papers, did try to interpret what was going on inside the Soviet Union. Just like we had another section (External Affairs Section) that was mostly concerned with the Soviet relationships with other countries, for example. But ours was sort of a home base for what was going on in the USSR.

KP: I guess one, regarding Stalin, because you were in the Soviet Union in the Embassy as Stalin was getting older and his days, biologically, were numbered. Do you remember any of the thinking of what would happen to the Soviet Union when Stalin died?

RO: Oh yeah. I think that ... there was always so much speculation about that, ... idle speculation, that when he died, and I don't how much before, I think, well these sort of old hands, of which I sort of was an old hand although there were older ones too, would suspect that there wasn't going to be any sudden eruption. Any period following the death of a major leader like that, the survivors are going to stick together for mutual defense really. Also, in almost every period, toward the end of someone's life, ... other people have gradually been taking on more responsibilities. ... They don't get credit for it, but they're there. And any kind of infighting is going to happen later on, after they strengthen their individual positions or whatever. ... It's just like all the speculation that went on after Tito. You know, it's in everybody's interest, that's in the power structure, to hold together until they can see where its going, or they're going to be in trouble. And it is in their interest to maintain stability, or at least a seeming stability, in these periods. And then later on, maybe six months, a year or two, three years, then you can start seeing trends in opposing groups. I don't think many of us, more or less old timers or whatever, were too ... taken up with the kind of speculation that what was going to happen. Unless you wanted to try to guess ahead five, ten years or something.

KP: Were you surprised at the liberalization of Khrushchev? Not that it was that liberal, and you sort of said it was a veneer, but compared to the Stalin regime.

RO: I don't remember ever being particularly surprised. Of course, part of our own activity all along had been, to some degree, to try to encourage liberalization of one kind or another. ... Generally, but more specifically on certain aspects, like ... letting Jewish people emigrate that wanted to emigrate and one thing or another. I think a lot of us were much more impressed than the people in the media and academia on ... the difficult economic and other situations that the

Soviets were in and that they just ... could only carry on, I mean, they were a lot weaker in many respects because of this and bad priorities and bad planning. That most people would have believed and they could still ... have high priorities and do very excellently in some fields, but ... it was at a sacrifice for them in other areas of endeavor.

KP: In a sense, your impression of the Soviet Union was really of a power that was many ways weak economically.

RO: Well, ... they had major problems, right?

KP: Yeah, they had really major ...

RO: They had really major problems.

KP: Because many of the problems we are hearing now about Russia, it almost sounds like, a lot of them, they have roots that go far back.

RO: Oh, yeah.

KP: They are not new ones.

RO: Yeah. Well, ... I don't know how much more ... wisdom I want to impart, when I'm not quite sure of that wisdom without a lot more serious thought. ...

KP: Yeah.

RO: You are getting a lot of stuff right off the top of my head. In fact, but on the other hand, I must say that all my background, I was never a real brain, like Kennan, in terms of analysis of Soviet endeavors. On the other hand I have very good viscera, in the sense that of getting gut feelings. And I have ended up very often with the same conclusions as some people that are much more advanced in their expertise. Sort of, second sense of what might happen. In some cases I've proved a little better. [laughter] Some of it may be subconscious, where I've absorbed an awful lot of knowledge and information over the years that I wasn't quite aware that I had. But, then, when the situation develops well you get a feeling for it that is based partly on that submerged knowledge. So who knows.

KP: In between your two Russian tours where were you?

RO: Well, that's it. I was working on Soviet Affairs in Washington.

KP: So you were on the Soviet desk?

RO: I was the Soviet Desk officer. Several times. That's what got me into Who's Who, although it wasn't that important a position, but it was sort of like a "contact person." And then later on I, well I was head of a section that was sort of, ... again, (major) almost like an Internal Affairs

Section, except this was also the section that dealt with the Soviet Embassy in Washington. All this sort of administrative details and it also dealt with our Moscow Embassy. A sort of intermediary, you know, between the State Department and our Embassy on a lot of things. Intermediary between, ... you might say, the Soviet Embassy and our Embassy in Moscow, to some minor degree and State Department officials, and I'd be the one, sometimes, that would take the Soviet ambassador up to talk to the Secretary of State. And once in a great while, maybe I'd be asked to stay on and take notes. I don't know what other things of that sort. Wide range of desk office duties. A sort of man-of-all-trades, involved in everything. Later on I was a Deputy Director of Soviet Affairs, but that was much less fun, that wasn't fun, except when the Director was away. Although I just sort of a manager, twiddling my thumbs and trying to keep track of personnel and, kind of, odd (routine) things that were-- he got the more interesting things. Happily he was away sick a lot of the time. [laughter] I don't know that I'll let that stay in, but still. [laughter]

KP: You can get rid of that. [laughter]

RO: It was in that period I learned that I am not the greatest public speaker. I probably gave the most boring talk at West Point they had ever listened to. The student body. [laughter] I was asked to talk on an impossible subject, what was it? You know, the Sixth Communist Party Congress or whatever it was, it was one of those horribly deadly subjects that the only information that you had was deadly. There was no way to put any kind of interesting spin on it. Just sort of drone on and on. But, I had few places like that where I talked. I had more fun going to talk informally in a smaller group or, ... like when you came back from the Soviet Union why you'd be invited over, maybe, to talk to the CIA people or other people in the Department or the Army War College group or whatever. I'm good at this, sort of, informal level, compared to ... standing out in front of two or three hundred people with a microphone. It was poor material. [laughter] But that was right after, but I mean there we did just about everything. For example, I was there in Soviet affairs, of course, when Kennedy was assassinated. That was a difficult time because our office had been the one dealing directly with the Embassy's Consular Section in Moscow, which had relations to aiding, his return, (the assassin's) return to the United States. And so immediately we were a focal point of the investigation. What information we had and everything that dealt with it. One of my friends is still now, once in while, being queried, who had been a consular officer dealing with him in Moscow. Still they sometimes come around and ask him questions.

KP: Lee Harvey Oswald.

RO: Lee Harvey Oswald, yeah. But you can imagine, whether I was in the department, I think I was in the Department, that day, I forget now whether it was Saturday or Sunday, Mary would remember. But we often worked Saturday morning catching up on what I hadn't been able to finish by Friday night. And I think it was there the word came through about the assassination. But then gradually, I forget how, and I was in the State Department, and the word was going, people were running up and down the halls of the State Department, shouting, "The President's been assassinated. The President's been shot in Dallas." And they got more and more excited. But then you can imagine how our particular group felt when we heard it was Lee Harvey

Oswald and someone said, "Well, he's the one that we provided some assistance to in ... returning to the United States after he defected, right?" So then we got kind of excited about all that.

KP: You were also on the Russian Desk when the Cuban Missile Crisis occurred?

RO: I was, but I didn't, ... I knew there was a crisis, but I was not on the inside circle on that. I have friends that were, but there were very emergency meetings all over the place. All kinds of special information available from highly classified sources that aren't nearly so classified anymore as far as surveillance as so forth is concerned, satellites and whatever. But I remember the excitement of the period, but I wasn't in the "in group." ...

KP: Because in a sense it had become such a big crisis that reached the next level.

RO: ... My level was involved, too. Certain people ... were in on it and who were participating in daily discussions and ... talking with other agencies and going in to brief a secretary or in meetings with the president. In a way I'm glad I was not in that particular circle of information at the time. It was a pretty touchy period. A big mistake, a great miscalculation in terms of what support there ... might have been among the Cuban people.

KP: In terms of the Bay of Pigs?

RO: In terms of the Bay of Pigs, yeah. The Missile Crisis. That was pretty touchy because it was a matter of their judging, you know, how much did we really mean of what we were saying? It was a pretty good sigh of relief went around when the Soviet ships turned around and went back, I tell you.

KP: Did you think they would turn around? If you can remember back, what were your thoughts about how this would play out?

RO: I don't remember what thoughts I had. If I did anything I was praying. But ... all of the real thinking was being kept in very, very, very close wraps at that point.

KP: So in a sense you have only learned all the different options they were considering, way after it happened?

RO: Well, I don't really remember. I mean there were a lot of subjects that I had rather high clearance for. And got into a lot of things, some now which are still very highly classified. Others that are sort of guessed about, but that I wouldn't be allowed to talk about. But, on that particular subject I had limited access. ...

-----END OF TAPE THREE, SIDE TWO-----

RO: ... [laughter] But ... I wasn't too quick to buy what was being said about Soviet liberalization. I was distrustful of the new Russia, let's say.

KP: And this guy reported back to you?

RO: Well, I had access to reported conversations by (and among) Soviets.

KP: When did you leave? You remained as Deputy Director in the 1960s of the Soviet Desk.

RO: Well then, no the Desk is one thing. This is in the middle of the Soviet Affairs Section, right?

KP: Yeah.

RO: I'm trying to think when I went to the Senior Seminar on Foreign Policy. The Director of Soviet Affairs, a man named John Guthrie, at that time ... I was in charge of that other section that dealt with the embassy and so on and so forth. And all their little problems about protocol and housing and God knows what, ... travel. And I was one of the people that drew up our own comparable travel restrictions. [laughter]

KP: So you shut off large parts of the (United States?)

RO: Yeah, we shut off large parts and we, but we didn't just do it, you know, with a dart-board, you know. Well as long as we were going to do it we wanted to do it where it made some, you know, sense. But anyway ...

KP: I once saw the map, and I think *Newsweek* published it. How did you decide where, because I saw the map and I'm curious about what went into making it?

RO: ... We had recommendations from all the different agencies of government. Of what areas they didn't want them in and what they might learn and different priorities and, you know, ABCD, and overlays over overlays over overlays over overlays. [laughter] ... And then compared to what was elsewhere and we wanted, the basic idea, originally, was to let's try to force them to become more easy on the relation. ... And unless we start with something that we can relax ourselves, tit-for-tat basis, how are we going to do this thing? So that's the sort of underline it. Then once, "what are we going to do?" We might as well do a good job and keep them, do as good a job as we can in picking what our priorities are and where we want them out of. ... One particular DOD Army colonel and I did much of the work on that. That was sort of interesting. But I wasn't into very many really diplomatic negotiations, but that (devising the travel restrictions) was a pretty major thing in its way, at the time. And ... during the Eisenhower Administration, that was something. Nice man, but he didn't know how to run a country.

KP: Really? Because Eisenhower has gotten a lot of good press by historians.

RO: Well, he was not even considered that good a man in the military, ... in the sense that he had great emphasis on staff and organization and committees, sub-committees, sub-sub-committees, sub-sub-sub-committees, with all these different people represented. And you've got a mish-

mash of policy that very often ended up somewhat meaningless just because there's so many people contributing and it took so long to arrive at something. And, I mean, I was on a number of these sub-committees and sub-sub-committees and so forth. It was part of my job and it was really hard to get anything really accomplished. And to be ... happy with the result ...

KP: Did things change under Kennedy and Johnson? Do you see a difference in operating style?

RO: Well, different, considerably different personalities and I'm not really competent to give a good judgment. Kennedy wasn't in all that long for one thing. Oh, morale was generally higher because this was a new ... young man with a lot of mystique and his motivation seemed good and attractive and he sure had some guts when it was necessary. In too many administrations, of both parties, the people that come in are basically distrustful of the people in Washington that are there when they came in. And this is mainly even more so of the State Department and not only the State Department and Foreign Service but all branches of the government. It is simple for many reasons, one of which, was background and history and misapprehensions and some pretty poor people we've had in the past, most of whom have not been "career," I might add. [laughter] And people who were inclined to, even if they know you're not going to like the news they give you, they're going to give it too you anyway. And if you don't like the news they give you, why you're inclined to feel, well, get somebody else who gives you the news you want, right? And you can find that ... sometimes in academia, sometimes elsewhere, right? And there's always people willing to give information. So there's gonna sort of, usually, every new administration, the State Department and the Foreign Service have to try to overcome, sort of, preconceived notions and try to prove that they can be trusted and have had a lot of experience. Well there are bad apples here and there, even career people are not always so bright. Why, although, by and large the ones that aren't (able) get weeded out earlier or later. Well, anyway, there you are. It's always a struggle, and some of our best presidents ... would've benefited greatly if they had started right out giving a little more credit (heed) to the professionals.

KP: I have gotten the sense that there's a little tension in the Foreign Service between the career people and then the amateur ambassadors, who get appointed for various reasons?

RO: Well, some of them are not "amateur" ambassadors.

KP: Yes, some are not.

RO: ... They have quite enough experience and they work hard.

KP: Some are very experienced.

RO: ... But still it's a bad policy. ... Except maybe for some of the Arabian Emirates, we're about the only people who have a fairly high percentage of our ambassadors without previous experience. [laughter]

KP: Yeah. They're not just simply distinguished people like Admiral Crowe, people you could make the case for appointing ambassador.

RO: Well, even admirable people can come in, but whose background is dissimilar. But the Foreign Service respects good ambassadors even if they're politically appointed ambassadors.

KP: But there were some persons that literally keep a campaign going, you know? [Laughs]

RO: Oh yeah, lots happened, well still happens.

KP: Yeah.

RO: Important people in media or, not just campaign guys ...

KP: I remember, I think in New Jersey, there was a State Assemblywoman who was appointed by the Carter Administration to New Zealand.

RO: Well, ... some political, and, of course, anyone who's in a career where promotion is important, you want to get to the top, resents somebody being brought in outside ahead of them, it's human nature.

KP: Yeah.

RO: On the other hand, if you get a political appointee and you accept that there's a certain number of these, it's the facts of life, whether you like it or not. And then, you're not going to let it sour you completely or resign as a result. But if that person comes in and they're intelligent and they're nice and they want to learn, they make a stab at the language. If ... they try to get advice from the people who have good advice to give and pay attention to it and aren't playing games all the time, you know. Don't bring in their own cronies from outside to help them out. Why they get respect, ... just like in the military services, the Foreign Service takes orders. You know, ... we're not going to do a bad job just because ... let's say, we had an ambassador that's hard to respect or something. ... Either you do the best job you can or you get out, right? Of course, you're affected by what the atmosphere is in your office and how things are. But, by and large, over the years, it's been a very, a career service in the best connotation. It isn't always true and have these massive reorganizations every so often don't help. ... Because each one ... is an implicit recognition that things are bad so you have to change them, and that they're going to be better just because you change people around and play musical chairs and so on or change the status of one agency relative to another or something else. And that's totally just window dressing in a way. It's better to, if you've got a good organization try to improve it. Give it better guidance, reward its people, give recognition where it's due and you get a better job done. Not just say, "Well, it hasn't been working out too well. A lot of these people must be loyal to the former administration. Let's shake things up a bit." [laughter] And you lose some good people every time that happens.

KP: Yes. I had a good friend in college whose father was a Foreign Service Officer and he talked about the change of administrations and what that sometimes meant in terms of people's careers.

RO: ... Morale depends a lot on the kind of support you get from above and ... if you ever suspect that the people further up don't have respect for you and they're going behind your back to get information from somebody you know is probably not as competent as you are or your associates or whatever, why it hurts, you know. And you can't help but be a little down-hearted by it.

KP: Of the various Secretaries of State when you were in the State Department which one, if you were to rate which was the best Secretary of State, in your period, which Secretary of State would you pick out of those?

RO: I wouldn't, I can't do that.

KP: You can't name one?

RO: No. ... I was very briefly with a number of them, in terms of being present when they were at something and listening to them or introducing somebody to them or ushering somebody into their presence and so on, but ...

KP: What was ...

RO: ... I think I respected all of them as people who were trying, and people who themselves would often be undercut by the White House or other agencies. Particularly advisors, people related to the National Security Council and to some degree that probably even happened to former members who used to do the same thing ... in the Security Council and became Secretary of State and found that they themselves were being bypassed by new people in the Security Council. [laughter] A lot of able people. Yeah, well, I found most of them likable. Except I never could cotton to Kissinger because he just had such a high opinion of his own opinions. ... I've discovered that's dangerous. I've known a lot of really very fine people, but who had a serious flaw in that they had a lot of wonderful great ideas, but they, I find, that they didn't have a hundred percent great ideas and they themselves had difficulty distinguishing the good ones from the bad ones.

KP: You mentioned that you in many ways considered the Finnish assignment as your favorite one, but it competes a lot with your tour in ...

RO: Yugoslavia, yeah. Well, they're really not comparable in any sense of the word. We liked Finland because we were quite happy there, personally, as a family. And we had good friends in the diplomatic corps ... and among the Finns and this made it enjoyable. So that was it. Other places that we've been, like Frankfurt for example. I was there '56 to '58, before going back into the Soviet Union the second time. I was there, again, I was fortunate to be in charge of a small unit. And that had to do with Eastern Europe, and especially specifically with defectors from

Eastern Europe. Involved here again with trying to get useful information, if possible. A part of an inter-agency team. And that was useful. I had here, again, good people to associate with and enjoy. But, I'm not sure it helped my career much. Well, I didn't get that much [out of it]. I was too independent. In other words ... not even the local Consul General in Frankfurt didn't know enough about my work to write a proper report about my work and some of the people in Washington didn't, sort of, care enough. It was an operation and it was going, it was effective and that's all that was kept going properly and it was useful and it was fine, but in terms of advancement I don't think it helped any. But, it was useful. Good place to be traveling from. All over Germany and a certain amount of Western Europe when you were able to.

Career disadvantage of living, you might say, in an American compound with other Americans in what had been a HighCog military compound and commissary bit, which is never attractive, its very much, you'd rather be living in the community. But it was a good two years and I had good people and I did a lot of writing and editing. Much of my work was editing to try to take reports that my people would be writing up and trying to make them effective by improving their English and eliminating the unimportant parts. ... I may be a little too vain on that, later on I've learned that one particular woman officer I admired very much had a particular expression that she used frequently and I kept correcting it. And in recent years I've found that its quite common to do it her way and I've often wondered where she was so I could say sorry. [laughter] Well I was going on what I learned in Freehold High School and freshmen English in Rutgers. [laughter] But there were fascinating people and one particular couple that we liked very much that worked for us and worked for me, he did, and his wife and mine were good friends and are still very good friends, were called into Moscow before we were so they could meet us at the train station in the snow coming down in Moscow when we went in the second time. He was one of these people that suffered under the McCarthy period because he had a "Russian" background, of course, although he was [descended] from a Georgian prince. Anybody fluent in Russian ... McCarthy would wonder what he was up to. He suffered for a while and was held back, but he lived. Wonderful person, he's still working in the Soviet Studies field, instead of retiring, although he's not much younger than I am. ...

KP: Are you ...

RO: ... (That was) an example of one of the fine people that we knew. Here again the people we were working with ... Had some excitement there though once.

KP: It sounds like you liked your career a lot.

RO: I did. I had a lot ... here and there, there were some bad times and one of them was there when I got a, one of the secretaries, I forget, Pat something, but she was a little bit of a psycho. And she didn't show it right away. She was a very nice, sweet, innocent girl, you know, and so on. Very clever in how she presented herself to men. A lot of the women she didn't fool quite so readily. ... She was a conspirator, sort of, interested in conspiracy and creating problems within the office and one person against the other, you know. And it got to a very impossible situation where finally I had to really insist to the Consulate General that she be withdrawn from our office. ... She was accusing other people of things, at least by innuendo, and there wasn't any

justification for it. Guess where they put her when they took her away from my office? Someone who was trying to knock other people. They put her in the personnel section where she had access to all the personnel files in the Consulate General. [laughter] I'm not sure if some people ever believed that I was justified in doing that. I know I was, but she was a very ingratiating, deceptive gal. And that was a difficult period, to reach the stage and do my own investigation where you have to really, sort of, shoot somebody down. And I'm sure, obviously, it didn't help her career for me to have to remove her from our office. And another time in Yugoslavia, where I had helped, substantially, to found the American School of Zagreb, an international school to which other foreigners could come too. But we got it established with State Department assistance and we had, I guess, six grades or whatever, and maybe 30-40 kids from the foreign colony and Americans and my own children in there, at least the younger ones. And we were recruiting teachers. ... Through the State Department we heard about someone that was interested in coming. So I wrote to him, I was Chairman of the School Board, among other little things, and invited him out. We invited him out and we agreed to pay him. And he came, at our expense, to Europe, and had a little bit of a holiday first around and then came down and ... we had arranged for an apartment for him, which his predecessor in the school had had, and it looked just great. And all of the sudden he kind of flared up and said we had misrepresented it and life in Zagreb. That he couldn't bring his family to live in place like this and he was all set to sue us and, oh boy, it got to be an awful headache. And I lost a few years with the next couple of months until this thing got straightened out and we got him away and were able to find a replacement locally, happily, that worked out very well. But, we didn't know it at the time and it was a very traumatic thing to have all this stewing about with threats of suing. Well, we, we were perfectly happy with our life there and thought, by many standards of living abroad, it was far superior to others. But he sure didn't think so. Boy!

KP: Are you surprised at what happened to Yugoslavia in terms of the ethnic conflict?

RO: No.

KP: In terms of the violence?

RO: Not really. Well, I vastly deplore what happened, that it finally reached that stage. But we were very aware of regional differences when we were there. Here again, look how long it took after the death of Tito before they surfaced to the degree they did. But ...

KP: But you were aware at the time?

RO: We were very much aware at the time.

KP: It was a thin veneer, because ...

RO: Well, certainly there were a lot of people that disliked the others, you know, and in a place like Croatia, where I was headquartered. ... I was Consul General not only for Croatia, but also for Slovenia, which is quite a different kettle of fish up to the northwest that had been under Austrian influence. Whereas Croatia had been under Austrian influence, but not that close. ...

Slovenia is pretty uniform, full of Slovenians. Croatia is not. Croatia had then and they still have a large Serb minority and they had lived there for generations in some cases. ... It's such a complicated picture because of, not only religious differences, regional differences, historical differences of who was under the Austrians, who was under the Turks. How they developed separately. Montenegro with primarily Serb types. Animosity was never far [off], and, of course, the period of World War II, where many of the Croatians were associated with Ustashi, who cooperated for their own reasons with the Nazis to a degree and you had the other groups around that were fighting one another. Tito himself was Croatian, but he was more Communist than Croatian in a sense. You had to be aware, and when we were in Croatia, to be aware of whom you were talking to, make sure you didn't say something that might be offensive to a Serb. You learn certain distinctions in last names. You're never found an Ivan who was Croatian. It would always be a Serb or somebody with a Serbian mother or whatever, you know. [laughter] I mean that there were Serbians in the Government of Croatia and in the Zagreb mayor's office and things of that sort. I mean, so you had to be pretty careful. Anyway I was getting on to the war. There were many people around who still remembered World War II, obviously, and they remember this period where they had really a civil war going on in the country. And periods when one group or another would come to a village and the villages would hole up in the church and be burned down, right? And if your father or grandfather or grandmother was in that church being burned down you didn't give up very quickly your memories of this. You know, twenty years later you still maybe were anti-Croatian or anti-Serbian, or whatever, because of this background. It was just there. One little example Mary's probably telling about. That when we were in Zagreb, and we had a lovely residence and good servants and so on, but they were all Croatian, right? Had a chauffeur who put the flag up on my official car. ... I mean I was a big deal there. It was enjoyable to be a big deal. [laughter] At least, Americans weren't quite so impressed as the other foreigners, the foreigners and so on. But anyway, it was fascinating. And I was allowed to be pretty independent of the Belgrade Embassy. I reported directly to the ambassador and would go maybe once every month or six weeks and attend a staff meeting in Belgrade with the ambassador and give them some reports. But I was able to sign my own telegrams to the State Department, for example, and send reports there directly with copies to Belgrade. And we had a pretty good sized establishment there (Consulate General Zagreb).

KP: How large was your staff?

RO: Here again I can't give you good figures, but I suppose we probably had more people than they did at the embassy in the Dominican Republic, plus an information office.

KP: So was it, say, more than fifty or so?

RO: Yeah. Well, ... counting local employees in unclassified positions, more than fifty, right. And then we also had a good size information office than was more directly under the authority of the public affairs people in Belgrade, but cooperated with me and so on and so it was a pretty good size group. Now I forget where I was going. Oh, back on the story ... in our residence we had a separate guest apartment so the ambassador would come once in a while and stay overnight with his wife and stay with us (and other people too, like former Chief Justice Warren and so on.) But that's another story. [laughter] And famous artists that happened to be visiting or playing in

the area and we would host them and have teas for them or luncheons and once in a while they would stay at our residence. ... Anyway, when the ambassador came down why his people there were mostly Serbs, including his chauffeur, who's a very nice man, but a Serb. And one time in the kitchen, with our Croatian maids and cook around, the ambassador's Serbian chauffeur was there and my wife came in and was talking in Croatian to the, Serbo-Croatian, you know is a mixed language, but there're differences in some words. And she was talking to him, I guess, and to the servants and he said, "Oh, what wonderful Serbian Madame speaks." You know, in his Serbian. And he practically got killed by the cook and the maids ... who said, "Madame does not speak Serbian. She speaks Croatian!" [laughter] I mean it was ... almost ... not quite coming to blows, but it was obviously a very definite confrontation. And this is just the surface of the thing, but. ... No, we weren't too surprised when things got worse and worse. But very unfortunate, because we knew many of the places that were desolated and damaged, not only in Croatia, but Serbia and elsewhere. That wonderful old bridge in Sarajevo, we'd eaten there in the restaurant at the foot of the bridge and traveled around much of the area in Bosnia that was so badly damaged. And had known some people there, more or less, but. ... So it was a personal tragedy to us, what happened. Still feel badly about it. ... Think how many generations it's gonna take before there's harmony again, any real harmony.

KP: Yes.

RO: Tragedy. Anyway, ... I was longer in Yugoslavia than any other place. Because I was there, two years, came back on home leave, and went back again for another two years. And we had a lot of exciting things going on there, not just socially. But every year they had a tremendous international trade fair in Zagreb, one of the major trade fairs in Europe, and we would have American participation. And there would be all kinds of ... sometimes VIPs would come and whatever and we would have to be involved in paying attention to them or Congressional groups. ... We have pictures of Mary shaking Tito's hand in the receiving line at the trade fair and so on. I used to see him occasionally, not on any personal level. He would recognize me and look at me with a very steely eye. [laughter] So I had a lot to do with, there was a lot of exchanges of cultural and other groups and, I'm trying to think of the name, Mary will probably mention some of the famous violinists and pianists and so forth who came there that we would be obliged and were happy to host some function for them to invite their counterparts from the Croatian culture. I might say though now that Croatia was not like a state of the United States. ... Because of their own feelings, even though on the international level and the relationships with the party, why they were subservient to the Belgrade government. They nevertheless had many of the trapping and responsibilities of individual governments. I mean they had their own office of protocol, you know, for example I dealt, in that sense, with that office rather than with the office in ... Belgrade. And at certain times of year why I'd be invited to go and meet the President of Croatia and the Vice-President and the mayor of Zagreb and so on and the same thing I'd make periodic trips up to Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, and meet with their big wheels and study what I could in the car on the way up of old clippings of things of what's going on there so I could talk, more or less intelligently, to officials there and impress them a little bit with what was really basically only superficial knowledge, but they didn't know I knew. [laughter] Just made it more impressive. And visit editors of newspapers and trade-union people and much as I had done earlier in the service and sometimes write reports on these things and send them in. Edit reports

of, we weren't just a "consular" consulate general, we were also had a political section and economic section, it was like a small embassy in many ways.

KP: Which must have been very nice. It must have been fun because you said ...

RO: It was.

KP: You had your own car with a flag.

RO: Yeah, it was fun to go pay an official call. I didn't fly the flag (one US flag and my Consul General's flag) except when it was an official call.

KP: Yes.

RO: Really a government call. The chauffeur just loved this rule. [laughter] His name was Andrea. And he spoke very little English, but he knew some. And one time we were going out of the country or at least, perhaps, and we were up in Ljubljana heading northwest, maybe, toward the coast or Italy. And I forget, it was some car that was behind us and tooted or something. I forget what it was, but Andrea didn't particularly like him. So finally when a light came up, why Andrea drove over next to him, opened a window, (Mary and I were in the back), and ... put out his head and said, "Bye, bye!" [laughter] It was funny, I'll never forget that. ... He was a marvelous person, he's died in more recent years. We still usually exchange a letter with his widow at Christmas, written by, I guess, a friend of his daughter's, now grown up. But, happily she writes now in English because we long since, Mary used to struggle so hard with a dictionary to try to read and answer these letters in Serbo-Croatian script and asked me when I no longer wanted to bother. That was an interesting life.

And then after we left Yugoslavia and went back to the State Department and I was put in charge of an office in the Bureau of European Affairs. And it could well be that this office was created for me to some extent because earlier there had been one office there that was for (all of) Eastern European Affairs. So before I came back and then they had been on, for personal reasons. ... How to take care of two equally ranking officers that deserved to head an office were coming back at the same time? Well, that's just a guess, I don't know that for sure. Well, anyway they split the office of Eastern European Affairs and I got the southern part of Eastern Europe, mainly. We called it BRYA, Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Albania. And so I had under me the desk officers for each of those countries and we operated as a bureau office. ... It was fairly responsible, ... particularly since, in that period, we had a visit by Romanian ... President Ceausescu. And so, we also had a visit to Romania, I guess it was, by our president. And so I (my office) was a focal point on both of these visits. You can't imagine the amount of effort that's made to organize these visits agreeably to both sides and provide appropriate security and so on. But, it was nice for me, in that, aside from all the work in our office, I mean, I work overtime to handle all these things, with various other groups participating, of course. ... You'd be invited to the White House and Mary and I were able to dance at the White House party for Ceausescu and I was in the Oval Office when he called on the president and, you know, little perks like that which are nice. Concerts in the White House. It made it interesting.

KP: I would imagine a State Dinner at the White House would be a lot of fun.

RO: Yeah. Well, some of this ... not always that much fun, but, well, it gave me an opportunity, for example, I was thinking of some State luncheons that were not fun, you know. With a hundred people down at the same table and, what to say to the man next to you, who happens to be a head of one of the departments of government, or whatever. We've got nothing really in common with them. But, for example, on the ... I forget whether this was during, I guess it was during the Ceausescu visit, at a party at the White House, but I was there to work. You know, to help introduce people to people. And Golda Meir came up to me and we were talking and she asked if I couldn't introduce her to one of the, maybe it was one of the, I think it was one of the Chief Justices of the ... anyway it was some other big wheel that was present at the time. So in that way it would be helpful to meet her for the first time and also be with her while she talked to this other person. I may be getting some of my things mixed up because we had also a visit by, a separate visit by, the Chief Justice of the Yugoslav Supreme Court. It was the Yugoslav Supreme Court Justice who asked me to introduce him to Golda Meir! And this, sort of, helping him around and being a, sort of, key person in the outfit. Why, I was invited over to the Supreme Court for a luncheon at the Supreme Court. Justice ... Burger was it? I accompanied the Yugoslav Supreme Court Justice to a lunch in Justice Burger's quarters at the US Supreme Court, attended also by former Justice Earl Warren (only the four of us).

KP: Yes. Warren Burger.

RO: Well, he invited me over to be with them when he gave this little luncheon ... in the Supreme Court building for this other Chief Justice. I'm not sure whether our former Chief Justice Earl Warren was there or not. But, anyway, sort of interesting things. You meet some very interesting people and usually the, not always, but usually, the more important the person that you meet, the more humble they are basically. Yeah. I'm sure there are obvious exceptions. [laughter] But, you know, there are people that are easy to talk to and maybe you expect them to be sort of superhuman or less than human, you find out that they're human. ... I remember I was in Moscow when Vice President Nixon visited.

KP: That's the famous kitchen debate

RO: Yeah. I was somewhere else than at the kitchen display at that point. I was at the same over with exhibit while that was going on ...

KP: You were in the building?

RO: I was in the building, yeah. Later on I, I shouldn't say so, but I was privy to some of the things that were reported as the conversation between Khrushchev and Vice President Nixon and it wasn't the kind of language I would like to hear in mixed company. By either one of them!

KP: So reporters had clean up the language in reporting about this debate.

RO: Pretty earthy. They were both earthy men. [laughter]

KP: I read the official transcript of what was said.

RO: Yeah. Well, there were quite a few barnyard expressions. [laughter] But, anyway, that was interesting. But, during that visit, ... remember the name George Allen, who had been head of the Information Agency ...

KP: Oh, yes.

RO: ... Later on he went, unfortunately, to the big tobacco company and then died of lung cancer. But he was in the entourage of Vice President Nixon, who incidentally also has very steely eyes when he's trying to size you up. [laughter] But, anyway, ... officers in the embassy were ... sort of assigned particular members in the entourage to kind of keep an eye on, be helpful to, or friendly to, buy them a drink or have them up for lunch, or whatever, when they weren't otherwise occupied with the great Nixon. And we picked George Allen. So we were nice family people, so what do we do but take George Allen off with us for a family picnic out in the *Serebiny Bor*, it means Silver Forest or something where there're a lot of, whatever they are, white ... trunk trees with silvery leaves (birch) or whatever. That's why they call it that, and so we had a lovely picnic out there. But, then we learned when we got back that Nixon had decided he wanted to see George Allen at a particular time and he couldn't find George Allen anywhere, because he was out with Bob Owen, Bob and Mary Owen, having a picnic someplace. [laughter] That didn't go over so well, but George Allen enjoyed it and I don't think anything happened to him as a result. [laughter] He was a really nice person.

KP: You had seen Nixon both as a vice president and a president. What were your impressions? You mentioned the steely eyes when he sized you up.

RO: Yeah, well, you could tell this was a ... real politician. I mean, he, I don't know how much briefing he had on individuals before, but he had, and to his credit, made a particular effort to meet all the staff of the American embassy and so on, he and his wife. And he seemed gracious enough. And, I don't know, my opinion in it is too much influenced by what happened later on to try to ...

KP: To try to ...

RO: To try to separate the ...

KP: Yeah.

RO: The timing of my impressions. ... I think he was a national disgrace. And the damage that we're still a long way from recovering from, in terms of respect for government and so on. I was very unhappy that, personally, to the degree to which he was resurrected, if you will, from oblivion at the time of death. He did some good things, that doesn't mean he didn't do some good things, and opening things up with China was certainly one of them, but ... I don't know, maybe

I'm too much of a prude, but I think a president should live up to people's concept of a president and should merit respect by their ... behavior and be an example, have their behavior be an example for others and not lower themselves to a rather low denominator. And I think he did. And I think still more of that is gonna come out too. [laughter] So anyway, I had really a rather an exciting time that year, was it '66, '68 ... I guess I came back in 1970, to the State Department and got this happily good job I enjoyed. But then I was approaching the age of fifty, right? I was going to be fifty the next, February 6, 1971. And I long said, resolved, that I wasn't going to be one of these people that, sort of, hang on and wait for promotion and get gradually jobs of less and less responsibility as I saw so many people do. And I had been promoted, maybe, a little bit too quickly in some of my earlier years. Which has as one result a little bit slower promotion later on, in terms of my age and so on. So I got up to class two, which was a pretty (high level)--they've changed the structure, of course, at least once since and probably next week it'll change again.

KP: But that's fairly high rank.

RO: Yeah, it is fairly high. And I wasn't getting promoted. I was passed over a couple of times even though I had a lot of commendations, a certain number of commendations, and I thought I was doing a good job. And the longer you are in a given class the more presumption is, "Why wasn't he promoted last year or the year before?" And that sort of thing. And finally my mother was an old lady, by herself by then, approaching mid-eighties. And my middle son had started ... behaving strangely and bizarrely in high school and was picked up by police a few times and there was no real indication of drugs, still it was, he was too bright for where he went into school so he didn't have to study to get top grades. And that was a worry, taking him to counseling and one thing or another. It seemed to help for a while, but not much over the long run. And so I decided I could retire at age fifty with a, well, they changed the law, too. Earlier you couldn't retire at age fifty with immediate pension. You had to wait a few years to get it, but they changed it so that I could. ... Also I was able to sit down in my office and I calculated that the difference between what I would get retired and what I was getting, actually at a high grade, really at the top of that particular class. Class one would have been the next step, "minister-counselor" step. I probably already was at counselor level, but we go up next to minister-counselor. The difference between what I was getting and what I would get retired was roughly what they were paying the lady that came in and clean my office at night, you know? [laughter] So there didn't seem to be any major financial incentive because I had already, I was at the, sort of, the level of a major general with, I think, maybe 25 years of service, if you want a comparison. Or a GS-17, right?

KP: Yes. Which is very high.

RO: Right. And I just didn't see myself getting anywhere and I didn't want people to feel sorry for me and I had good reasons to get out. I was still young enough, ... I had an awful lot of interests. My year in the Senior Seminar, which was the State Department, still is the State Department equivalent of the National War College. I had gone there after being Deputy Director of Soviet Affairs, but before going to Yugoslavia as Consul General. It's just that I had seen so much around the country, including, you know, Hawaii and so on, and I just had this

wonderful year of being educated by traveling all over with a group of peers that I respected and admired. ...

-----END TAPE FOUR, SIDE ONE-----

RO: ... Instead of staying in there waiting to be promoted, which wasn't so likely, and so I decided to retire at 50, which I did, having because my military service, something like thirty-one-and-a-half years total credit, right? And I also had been wise over the years in saving money and investing it and reinvesting it, so, it was not a financial problem for me. So I got out and I haven't regretted it. I know one thing: I asked Mary one time, of course we discussed this as a family, she said she's been the wife of a Consulate General and she did not want to be the wife of an Ambassador. [laughter]

KP: Well, I'm sure they're asking her, but I mean, it's very much a partnership when you are in the Foreign Service, I mean.

RO: Oh, yeah. They get her for free. Or at least in those days they did.

KP: If an ambassador called my wife in and said, "Now girls, you can't sit on the sofa." She would not ...

RO: Well, there weren't too many bad experiences like that.

KP: Yes. But still. ...

RO: Right.

KP: I mean my wife is very supportive of my work, but she reminds me of the limits in that she's got her own career.

RO: Yeah, well, there were, you know it isn't a life of Riley just because you have servants.

KP: Yeah.

RO: Along with the servants you pick, instead of doing the sweeping, ... you have to make sure the sweeping is done right, you have to make sure people are paid, you have to work out their leave schedules and other schedules. There's a lot involved, you have to make up the shopping list and somebody else may shop where you go along with them, as Mary often did, with the cook to pick out the groceries in a place where it's not quite like the U.S. supermarket. [laughter] And somebody else does the laundry, but you've got a lot more laundry too. [laughter]

KP: Plus there's a lot of entertaining.

RO: The entertaining and a lot of it is obligatory and it had better be done right, right? You do it both for your country's sake and your own pride, you know? And you don't get reimbursed for it

all either. They're pretty generous that way, but not all that generous. And you have to justify it with lists of who you had and a certain percentage should be local people or foreign people. There has to be reasons for it and you try to make each one a success and see that the right people are sitting next to one another and not the wrong people sitting next to one another. Nobody's gonna be hurt because somebody else got a position closer to the hostess than they did. [laughter] And that you've gotta have somebody that can interpret for the visiting star that's in the country at the moment. Sometimes you get Congressional investigating committees and you try to ... be nice to people who are trying to find something wrong with you. [laughter] Yehudi Menuhin was one of the people we had at a luncheon in our home.

KP: You heard a lot of good music.

RO: We've heard a lot of good music. Well, one time there was, visiting Yugoslavia, a small chamber group, oh, about eight musicians, I think this from the New York Symphony, and we had them entertain our guests in our living room. [laughter]

KP: Very nice.

RO: ... They were in a corner there and then we had about 50 people there that got dinner and music. And you don't want to leave people off the list that think they should've been on the list. ... I didn't have to do too much of that. I left that up to my wife and to my deputy who was a very savvy, earlier a very savvy woman, later on a quite a savvy man. And he was also the political reporting officer.

KP: I knew at Drew a number of students whose parents were Foreign Service Officers and it was interesting their perspectives and what it was like to live abroad and to have your father work as a Foreign Service Officer. How do you think it benefited your children?

RO: Well, I ...

KP: And what do you think were the problems?

RO: Well, the problems obviously, do you have enough time to spend with your family? Of course, that's a problem back here too, depending on the job the father has. You have to make a special effort to make sure there's time to do things together. But there's always the problem, too, it's not only hard for you to go into a new environment. But, if it's sort of your career, and you're prepared for it and you know what to expect, but it's hard for a youngster to come in and, every so often depending on how often you move, or even if it's in the States, and make a whole new set of friends. Your other friends are gone. You've got new teachers, new school and then if it also is a different society it's kind of hard to adjust quickly enough. I think children after awhile, do learn to adjust, but later on in life they aren't all that anxious to travel, to some extent. And ours are usually smart, course they had good genes so naturally they'd be smart. [laughter] But it wasn't easy and, but in most cases they came back and when we came back to the States at intervals and they'd find they were ahead, a little bit ahead, of their class. And yet there was one period in Yugoslavia where my older son, the one that later became a problem, graduated from

there just from the eighth grade at our own school we had organized. My daughter went alone to a foreign school in Vienna for awhile. And then she wasn't too happy there and this possibility came up of sending both her and the middle son to a school in Switzerland, the Anglo-American International School in Lucerne in Switzerland, College de Lemman, near Lucerne. Later on my son was able to take credit, he went to this "college." Of course, it wasn't a college at all, it was a, like prep-school or high school level. But anyway, it sounded good on his resume. [laughter] But, anyway, they were there, the daughter and young John, were there at the College de Lemman and we went up to visit and they were doing well. And they learned how to ski, they were taking skiing trips and so on. But, they weren't, over the long run, they weren't happy there, particularly the boy. And they petitioned me, my son John was a very good writer, and in a very eloquent, long letter gave the reasons why they should be removed from that school and come back to be with us in Zagreb. We agreed. And then for a year we worked with them by the Calvert system of correspondence courses for, I suppose you could stick that with the, maybe, the eighth grade. I mean, no, it wouldn't have been eighth grade. It must have been sophomore high school level, I forget just exactly. But anyway, we worked with that system and I was teaching also, I was trying to help my daughter who just never could grasp physics properly. Had my own little lab, I made things and bought weights and worked with her on her physics. But the boy did well and the son of one of our school teachers at the American school in Zagreb, the husband was willing to trade with me, where he was the supervisor for the tests and everything for my son, while I was the supervisor in tests and guidance counselor for his son. We were about the same age, so that worked out. And then when we got back to the States they were both ahead of their class. It was good. But it was not easy for us to have to, you know, have home teaching (the kids).

Even though one period there, with our little school in Zagreb, they didn't have ... anybody to teach them Phys. Ed. or shop, right, or that kind of thing, and so, I may not have helped my career, but I took an afternoon, I think it was a week, unless something else intervened, and I had them up to our residence and had a big room in the basement fixed up for teaching and, sort of, tables like this for desks and I taught them the rudiments of tools and shops and so forth and we built shuffle-boards and things that we could use up in our large attic. [laughter] And arrows, bows and arrows and whatever. And then, in those days, I may not look it now, but I would take 'em outside for some jump-ups and exercise to make some of the mothers happier in the local school. [laughter] Since I had founded the school and was also chairman of the school board and nobody else was volunteering to fill this gap and we couldn't hire any, couldn't afford to hire another person for a school that small. We didn't have any, I forget whether there was any tuition or not, but there it was mostly subsidized. I guess there was tuition, modest, to try to cover the rent of the building. So you see I've been doing a little bit of teaching and everything else along the line. But it was fun. It was lovely to travel in Yugoslavia. It was a beautiful place just to travel and, as we had earlier in Germany, see a lot of the countryside and go out and sort of, explore on a Sunday afternoon or something. The family was not so happy because I was smoking a pipe in the car and I would wait too long before we'd stop for lunch. [laughter] We didn't plan these things, they sort of developed as adventures. Sooner or later we found some little place, country place, where the local people would go for meals or something.

KP: Have you been back to any of your postings in retirement?

RO: No. We haven't really had all that much of an urge to travel. Although I've had more urge since I've become less able to travel and Mary's had less. [laughter] I would like to, but you know, so many of our friends that were of value to us either have died or they were only temporarily in that country too, in their own country's diplomatic service or ours, and moved on. So we're more likely to see them at some kind of a, like Foreign Service Day in Washington or at a Senior Seminar reunion meeting or whatever. Once in a while, somebody will come through this area and stop by and see us. ... The former Icelandic ambassador in Washington and also a former Icelandic ambassador in the UN, ... we'd been in Moscow together and also Washington together at one point and he and his wife have come twice to visit us here when they happen to be in the States. Sit under the tree and have a root beer or something, lunch. So that's gratifying. And there are several other friends we see on occasion. All too many of our colleagues now are not traveling that much any more. But we started having a newsletter. When we were in the Dominican Republic the first newsletter, own family newsletter, was called La Revista Owen and it went out in reporting the birth of our oldest son and we've been doing it ever since-we're still doing it.

KP: I've seen several of them at Rutgers. The archives have some of them. I mean, the alumni office used to keep better files.

RO: Maybe sometime I ought to, if it's of use to the Archives, I oughta provide some of the others that I've, I've got almost every copy. There's one or two that somehow got mislaid.

LL: No. I think that would be very useful.

KP: That would be very useful.

RO: I've often thought, maybe, if I ever live long enough or get the incentive to combine them and take highlights, at least, from them and make a kind of a little book. There's never time.

KP: Oh, I know the feeling.

RO: I'm still trying to learn how to use my computer. [laughter] I'm having great difficulty getting access on the AT&T line. I get into Prodigy, but then ... every time I really want to get in my little error message comes up and I don't know why it's there, but then I have to wait until some other time.

LL: It's not you, it's just the system. It just does that for no reason, essentially. [laughs]

RO: Well, it might be a loose connection or something. I suspect that this area has such a high volume of participants, not just on Prodigy, but on everything. I mean, because of the concentration of electronics over here at Fort Monmouth and then ... in the area, that the lines are just too busy. Although I hope to get some help. My youngest, my middle son is very literate computer-wise and I hope he'll come up and get some of these things straightened out. He's taught computer and helped the people in his earlier company down south (a power company) down in South Florida. Used to go around and help new people get adjusted to their computers

and fix them where necessary. But I need him up here to fix, fix me. [laughter] But by now I've got software from Merrill Lynch. Free software. So I can presumably use their e-mail possibilities and other things. And I haven't even looked at the disk yet. ...

KP: Since Linda's in international relations in Chicago, what would you think of someone going into the Foreign Service in this era? Have you ever given thought to that?

RO: Well, I've given that thought, in terms of: "Would I want my own children, any of them, to be in the Foreign Service?" I don't know. I'm a little bit disillusioned, but that may be partly my age and the old scene always changes and not all of the changes are for the best. And there's all this continual tinkering that goes on that's bad for morale. Everybody wants to get in the act. So I would've found it hard to urge, if anybody feels they have a real calling for it, you know, and doesn't romanticize it too much, because, there's a lot, as you sort of suggested earlier, there's a lot more drudgery and day-to-day stuff and a lot of the, sort of, amusing or interesting highlights I've given are, they don't happen everyday. But if you don't romanticize and if you can get in and I'd say go in and try out it out. And then, but give yourself other arrows in your sheath, have other things you can fall back on and consider as a possibility, rather than being committed to a long term thing. ... I was just awfully lucky in terms of the assignments that I received and places I went. I would much rather be a large, somewhat larger frog, in a small pond than to be lost someplace like Embassy London or Embassy Paris, and there're fewer small ponds these days. The old ponds have grown, you know? [laughter] And, of course, you get some of that when you're in Washington. But, on the other hand, if you're, you may be in a big establishment in Washington. But on the other hand, you're probably in one particular office, maybe a section of that particular office which has specific responsibilities, and maybe they'll give you a chance to grow. So certainly it's nice to live in different countries if you're the kind of person that adjusts readily and are very flexible and are aware that there are many problems involved with raising a family or say a husband and wife that have different career interests. And these days a woman wants to, doesn't want to necessarily be, sort of, an unpaid number two of the husband. She wants a title and a salary, right? And that's not always possible in a way that's agreeable to, I would say there's probably a pretty high, of course there's a high rate of divorce everywhere, but the stresses and strains on a marriage, it can be pretty high in the Foreign Service.

KP: You've sort of had, in retirement, you have not exactly just sat on the porch.

RO: Yeah, I've been a different type of person in retirement. So many of my colleagues have had a specialty, like Soviet affairs or Eastern European and I consider myself Eastern European affairs specialist instead of just Soviet, because I've done both and worked on both in Washington. Tend to feel, well, they wanna keep, they want attention, they want more money, they want to, kind of, continue a career outside the Foreign Service and so they try to parlay their, understandably, their Foreign Service experience into a job in academia or a consulting firm or you know what. I think I was tired of my clients by the time I left, particularly the Soviet clients. You know, I look forward to doing ... something new and different in different areas and that's been my ... activity. I've done a millions of different things in retirement that I enjoy. First and most foremost, I mean I got this working again as a farm. A lot of sweat equity, but I did it. That was enjoyable and a good way to work with my youngest son the way my father had worked with

me. And helped him because he finished up grade school and went on to high school here before he went to Drew. Anyway I decided that my wife had backed away, I don't know how of this is propaganda and how much is true, but I often say that my wife had backed me up all those years, ably and sincerely, but I was going to back her up when she developed this very keen interest in the environment. Starting that last year in Washington and bringing it up here and getting involved in recycling and promoting all sorts of things. And got very active and has been recognized for this. So I've been backing her up in that, but, of course, I'm competitive so, [Laughter] I not only backed her, but I worked a little extra harder and got some recognition myself, I've been president of one environmental group, sort of by the mistake of becoming Vice-President first. [laughter] And ... now I am currently again on the board of a group called the Monmouth County Friends of Clear Water, I have the title, but not too much to do as their Environmental Policy Chair.

KP: You on your survey put, "Democrat, liberal at that." One of the trends I have noticed with a lot of classmates of yours and alumni, many of you became more conservative over time.

RO: Well, it's natural, most people become more conservative over time. I suppose I'm relatively more conservative than, in some aspects, that I was, but I've really ...

KP: You're pretty liberal compared to a lot.

RO: I know, I'm very liberal compared to a lot.

KP: Yes! That would be, yes! [laughter]

RO: I mean, I find it somewhat difficult sometimes with some of my classmates they're so right-wing by now. I still like them, I just feel sorry for them. [laughter] But, a lot comes from your background and in my case, ... Mary's uncle, who was the dentist who owned this house and lived here 'til he died. He was the Republican mayor of West Long Branch at one point and, you know, active locally and so on. My parents were both Republican all their lives. Which is like if they had stayed in one place they would have been Baptists all their lives. I mean it's where you come from. But, Mary and I, our lives were changed by the war (WWII) and I don't know if Mary would be this liberal without my influence or not, quite possibly so. We've always been ready to swim a little bit against the stream if it seemed desirable according to our principles. But, then I could easily be, my mother used to worry about me because she would see these books I brought back from overseas and the war, after the war and I had everything there, you know? And she was a nice woman, but she was not too well educated and she was very conservative and I got some things that she was embarrassed to let people know I had. I mean I had Karl Marx, for heavens sakes, Das Kapital. But I also had the English Philosophers From Bacon to Mill and she was just as ashamed of that as she was of Karl Marx. [laughter] So you see then, for a while there, I subscribed to, belonged to, some veterans group. American Veteran's Committee, I think it was.

KP: That was the American Veteran's Committee.

RO: Which at some stage got pretty well infiltrated, I think, by communists or very left-wingers and that's when I left. Because I didn't like the way they were going and I'm not that far left. ... And then, what was the socialist magazine? That came for a while at our post office. That disturbed my mother quite a bit.

KP: The Nation?

RO: I guess I did, I was getting The Nation for a while. Yeah. That was one of them anyway. But, you know, once they get, anybody gets your, knows you're subscribing to somebody else and you're a little bit this way, a free thinker, or whatever, why then they want you to join them too, right? But, I get all sorts of things from all ends of the media. Some go in the waste basket. [laughter] I try to cut down on all that. But, I mean, I'm not such a weird person. I read The Atlantic Monthly, The New Yorker, and other trashy things like that.

KP: What did you think, you were in European affairs, but what did you think of the Vietnam War? I mean, you were in American Government during much of that period. All except the tail end of it.

RO: Yeah, well, I didn't really have too many knowledgeable opinions. I do know that my oldest son was a conscientious objector and was teaching conscientious objectors or helping them. And that I was, in that sense, conservative. I thought that, I'm a strong believer in supporting your country when it calls, whether you agree with them or not. And I wrote letters on his behalf, but indicating my total disagreement with his position. I'm not sure I'd be that strong anymore, from what we've learned since. But ...

KP: But at the time you really thought that it was important to serve?

RO: Yeah. I believed a lot of the crap, pardon the expression, that we were getting and some of it was true and some of it wasn't, I mean, there were a lot of gross exaggerations and in many ways we were being led down the garden path by people on the ... Almost any real, very bright person, a student on affairs in that area, would know that this was going to be a morass and that it was going to be a lot harder to get out, with any kind of honor, than it was to get in. And that maybe there're other things. It was just, there was no way you could come out smelling very good because the situation was such. You weren't gonna be, you had poor governments in South Asia, you had the neighborhood situation, and we all worried about the domino effect and we had to think of China, and we had to think of the competition between Russia, the Soviet Union, and China, and who was supporting who a lot. It was really too complicated for me to really work out. But, we should have been a lot more careful on that before sooner. And I hope, to some extent, I guess, our lack of care then, what we got into, was some clue to the way we behaved later in the situation in the Balkans. I don't know. Not everybody is a hundred percent right and not everybody is a hundred percent wrong. It's very hard to know just where to go. But I've lost a certain faith in our government, too. In the way they've played some of these issues. Deliberately either misinformed or allowed misinformation to stand on various things, discouraging. But, that's not a very cheery thought. I like to be cheery. [laughter]

KP: Well, I guess, are you disappointed any of your children didn't going to Rutgers? Would you have like to have seen that happen?

RO: Yeah. If Rutgers had stayed the same, sort of, general kind of institution as, for example, Drew has pretty much, why I would have been happy. I encouraged my oldest son to go to Rutgers and he did. After a year he wanted to leave because he felt so overwhelmed by the size of the classes and so, sort of, submerged in the big group. I encouraged him to stick it out for another year, which he did, and then he transferred to Drew. And did well at Drew and then went on down to Johns Hopkins later and became a teacher, got his M.A. at Johns-Hopkins in teaching and taught there and then decided he wanted to be something of a rebel and get into social work and he moved up to Maine, which he liked. He's been there ever since. Sort of anti-alcohol/anti-drugs programs at local hospitals and become a teacher of one thing or another there. Not of school, but teaching personnel in hospitals and so on. And now he's almost, he's not ready retired at 50, as I was, but, anyway, he's got two girls to get through Brown and whatever comes after. [laughter] But, anyway, he did give Rutgers a try and I respected his judgment in not wanting to stay. Our daughter applied to Douglass and was accepted at Douglass, but she had also applied to Drew and was accepted and went there. And applied somewhere else and was accepted, I don't know which one, [I] forget. But, unfortunately, she was captivated after about a year at Drew with news she heard of a, sort of, unstructured, much more free type of education, out in some college in Michigan called Grand Valley College, Michigan. Part of a Michigan system, where you get a lovely time, you learn quite a lot, and learn nothing useful in terms of employment. [laughter] So she moved out there and then had a baby out of wedlock. I had more difficulty in adjusting to that than I might today. But she did eventually go back and finish up at that college in Michigan. So she was able to get her degree with my assistance. And discovered she had a rather substantial talent in art. Started out with painting and so on but soon got into ceramic sculpture-that's one of her crosses there. She made beautiful ones. But she couldn't sell them for less than 75 dollars and nobody wanted to buy them for that much, hardly. Although ... every one's an original. But, still she kept developing her talent and did, she can do most anything. And she's developed a reputation, has things ... in the Grand Rapids Museum ... and things like that. But, it hasn't been too profitable. She has two children, the one graduated and is working out in San Francisco. And the boy is, after skipping class, or dropping out of a special high school for really brilliant kids, he is going to ... Grand Rapids Community College and already got ... one of the highest awards, the sort of two year college equivalent of Phi Beta Kappa. He's got that and will continue and then probably transfer in another year or so to some university up, sort of hopping the University of Michigan, which is really good. And for a Michigan resident very reasonable. [laughter]

KP: Yeah. Yes.

LL: That has an excellent reputation.

RO: Yeah, I know. But a lot of kids wanna be anywhere except near home. [laughter]

KP: But you've remained very active with Rutgers. You've been a very loyal son.

RO: Yeah, well, for many years I wasn't. I was abroad and I couldn't do it. I happened to be back here at an odd year and went up and was only the ninth, would have been the ninth reunion, of course, not a big year. But, I met some friends there and enjoyed it, was still here, went back to the tenth. Some time along the way somebody invited me to be on their, kind of, little executive group, the reunion committee. First thing you know, after a while, I found myself class secretary in a year when the secretary, as I was told, didn't have anything to do, except once in a while sign a paper somebody else had written. And then that was about the way it was. But then I kept on as secretary and then suddenly before the fiftieth came around I found that I was sort of the key man on all the planning and, just by my nature, kind of shoved Vince aside and have taken over. [laughter] We had a president for a while, but I was ... sort of feeding him his lines at the meetings and writing the minutes and agitating around and we had a good 50th reunion and I was rewarded by being made president. [laughter] And since then I haven't been able to find anybody to take my place. [laughter] I even nominated Vince at one point. So there! [laughter] He would have been good, he works hard. He had all that experience arranging reunions, you know, as Rutgers Alumni Secretary and all, I don't know. But, I like to, sort of, shake things up myself now and then. [laughter] He had a tremendous war record, he was a bona-fide hero there's no doubt about that.

KP: Yes, we have interviewed him.

RO: I know.

KP: And Sandra's transcribed his tapes.

RO: I attended his, when he left the alumni association they had this wonderful party for him on the other side of the river. I forget, one of those big hotels, motels, whatever. They even had a military band and slides, it was a great send off. But, I think ... that was really something very suited to his capabilities.

I know how to judge people on ... how they behave and so on and not by skin or sexual preference or anything else, or even how long their ancestors have been in this country. Though I'm inclined to be proud that mine have been here so long. ... that doesn't give me any special advantage, just that I'm interested, I sometimes have found some inspiration in that. But, it doesn't mean that I'm any better than someone who comes from a country where they have a thousand years history as compared to my couple hundred. [laughter] It's funny though, my mother was very conscious of family, and so on, and she yearned to be in the D.A.R. as a young woman. It was very hard for her to get in the D.A.R. because almost all of our relatives were on the wrong side in the Revolution, you know? And ... they don't want you to have loyalist background. [laughter] ... And that same is true, I guess, for Mary's family, ... some of whose descendants are now ... in New England or Long Island or other places, (Canada) because their ancestors left New Jersey ... after the Revolution. But, finally my mother was able to find out that she had an ancestor who was a French Corpsman. Medical Corpsman that came over with Lafayette. And he stayed on in this country and became one of our ancestors and put M.D. after his name. Whether he had any more education or not, probably not, but he had a lot of experience, maybe, during the Revolution, cutting legs off and things. And she ... got in through

him. So that's the way she was, in a nice way. She was very kind to people of all kinds, but she did have these, sort of, feelings about origins and so.

Later on I learned more about my father's family. And one time, there was a family book, and there were a lot of relatives that were up in New York State, where my father's family came from, but earlier over in Massachusetts and elsewhere. And I finally found out where ... the first American Owen (John) was buried up in this little cemetery in New England, near Chelmsford. No, not Chelmsford, that's where the Spaulding side came from. Anyway, beautiful little church and cemetery. And my family drove up there one time and we finally ... offered the children money who could find his (John Owen's) stone first and they finally found it. And I came back and told my mother about it, you know, and she snorted and said, "Was he in the Revolution?" [laughter] I said, "Mother, he died fifty years before the Revolution started and everything." More than that now. There are some who go back there into the French and Indian wars. [laughter] So I know, I kind of enjoy checking out on some of these things. I have about ten years of genealogical research I want to do once I get started. [laughter] But we did one time, by accident, stop at Chelmsford, Massachusetts, on our way to visit the family up in Maine. And, I forget how we realized it, but a lot of my father's family on the Spaulding side of the family came from there. And in the Revolution they were close enough to Lexington where I think about seventeen of them marched over from home, from their farm, over to fight the Battle of Lexington. I don't know what percentage they made of the group. I mean, they weren't a very large group. I've always been interested in history. I probably should have gone into history. But, I can't complain, I've been part of history, you might say.

In retirement I've done all kinds of things. I didn't just stick in the environment, which I'm still in, but for example, I had, related to the environment, there were going to be a major reservoir built, Manasquan Reservoir. And the particular environmental group I was in at the time didn't think this was a good idea. We felt that they should first try all kinds of water conservation, rather than ... stop up a river to make a reservoir. Well, when it turned out there was going to be one whether we like it or not, why, we joined them to an extent, and I got ... on the citizens advisory committee and chaired its environmental sub-committee. And we got a lot of positive changes made in the original plan. So it ended up being a lot more positive in terms of the environment. For one reason it's not on the river itself, it's off the river.

KP: Yes.

RO: So that the river itself is less damaged than, now we helped get it so the park was around it and there would be no motor boats on the water and it would be for fishing and horse-back riding and whatever, and, sort of controlled and you know, a real asset. And I think that it was very helpful. Because there were people that wanted to do it ... in a way much less kind to nature. So that was ... a four year effort that I was going to meetings almost every month. I think it was that long. But that was very interesting. Another time we started going to some church meetings in Trenton, or that area, of the inter-faith meetings. And I found myself on a committee up there, related to educational reform, but, under the New Jersey Council of Churches. That started, and got to be a real exercise. Spent a couple years going up there. I even wrote a T.V. script on that subject, which was never used. [laughter] But, it was fun and you ... meet entirely different sets

of people in these different areas, you know, keeps you busy. But I've slowed down a bit. ... We'll see what I can do to keep up. I'm having trouble getting the class things organized properly now. Too many of my classmates have either passed on or lost interest. ... I can't get our new secretary to act like a secretary, even though I give him notes for the minutes and everything. But, we have another meeting in October at Rutgers at the [Rutgers] Club and we'll organize and see what we can do to get more support for the Oral History.

KP: I am curious of one classmate I interviewed, Simeon Moss.

RO: How are you curious?

KP: I get the sense that he was fairly accepted by his classmates.

RO: Yeah. There wasn't any real problem there. Although I think, here again, we were mostly naïve and not even paying much attention to it, where he was probably much more aware of it than we were.

KP: Yeah. He was, I guess since he was aware, but then, in fact, he didn't have to put up with a lot of ugly incidents. That, in a sense, that he was, in a sense, accepted.

RO: Right.

KP: Whereas, for example, a generation earlier Paul Robeson, at first really had to very much prove himself.

RO: Yeah. I don't know much about Paul Robeson, I know my father admired him greatly and I guess ... was very proud of Paul Robeson as a Rutgers alumnus and for his football player and other sports and activities. But then again, my father didn't seem to ... have any particular prejudice, in fact, I think our ... family, we come from a long line of abolitionists. As you might expect. [laughter] One of my ancestors, my great-grandfather, worked in, was it Elgin, Illinois, with, what's his name that had his presses burned?

KP: Lovejoy.

RO: Lovejoy. And that's why my grandfather's first name is Lovejoy. Named after that Lovejoy. And my father's middle name is Lovejoy. Here again following along.

KP: Well, I saw that for your father and I wondered if there was that connection.

RO: Yeah. I don't think that the family farm was a part of the Underground Railroad, but they were very sympathetic to abolitionists and my great-grandfather, who lost, my grandfather's oldest brother was killed in the Civil War, in northern Virginia. And somewhere I've got a beautiful poem he wrote about his lost son. The Civil War has a lot of meaning to us in the family when we talked about it. Anyway, ... at the end of the Civil War, my great-grandfather went down to Washington and worked in the Freedmen's Bureau trying to educate the freed

slaves one way or another. I don't know too much about that. I've got a diary of his where he does mention some of this. So we, some of them may, we may have been a lot of Republican types, but we've always been, sort of, trying to help people one way or the other. ... Farmers, preachers, and teachers.

KP: And Foreign Service Officers.

RO: Which, you're a little bit about all three.

KP: Well, I think this is a good place to end. Thank you very much.

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

Reviewed: Eve Snyder: 6/98

Reviewed: Kurt Piehler: 10/7/98

Reviewed: Sandra Stewart Holyoak: 4/7/99

Reviewed: Robert Owen: 10/99