RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH CHARLES H. PROUT, JR.

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

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

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

SANDRA STEWART HOLYOAK

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA
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TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: This begins an interview on February 8, 2004, in Hilton Head, South Carolina, with Charles H. Prout, Jr., and Sandra Stewart Holyoak. I thank you, Mr. Prout, for coming out this afternoon and talking to me. To begin the interview, please state for the record where and when you were born. Then, we will start talking a little bit about your father.

Charles Prout: Okay, well, I was born March 15, 1920, in Brooklyn, but my parents moved to New Jersey when I was an infant, … and so, I grew up in New Jersey, in Fanwood, which is about fifteen miles from New Brunswick.

SH: Can you tell me a little bit about your father's background?

CP: Sure. Since I'm Junior, he's Senior, and he grew up in Cleveland. … I've done historical research on this myself and find it kind of interesting. His parents came from Cornwall, in England. They got married and, within two weeks, got on a boat and came to the US and settled in Cleveland, and so, that's where my father grew up.

SH: What were they doing in Cleveland? Do you know?

CP: Yes. My grandfather was; well, first of all, let me say, because you may not be aware, Cornwall … is a very scenic end of England, a toe that sticks out to the west, but it's hard living there. The ground is underlain with rock and there are slate mines and there is farming, which usually consisted of grazing sheep and that sort of thing. My grandfather was a teamster there. He hauled rock and ore from the mines to other locations. So, when he came to the US and went to Cleveland, that's what he became, was a [teamster]. He had his own team of horses and his wagon and he hauled … mining materials. So, my father was born and raised there, as I say, but he obviously had an adventuresome streak in him. … Well, first of all, I should say, he was trained in mechanical fields. His parents thought that would be the best thing, if he could learn something mechanical--that was the field of the future in the late 1800s. So, he became a machinist, or was learning to become one. … Anyway, when he was about nineteen, he left home and went West, with the railroads. He recognized that, although the Transcontinental Railroad was completed, it still was really wild country out there, for the most part. The railroads went through all this. So, they needed places where … the trains could stop and be serviced, as needed. There were various centers across the western part of the country. … So, he went out there and he worked at one place for, I'm not sure how long, and then, when he got tired, he'd move on to the next one, and he eventually got to San Francisco and he decided he liked the ocean. So, he then got into being a machinist on a ship and he sailed all over the Pacific, on a number of trips. I'm not sure how long, but several years' worth. … Then, I'm sure he got homesick, and so, he left and came home, to Cleveland. … He spent a couple of years there, but, apparently, didn't find that too enchanting, because, then, he packed up and went to the East Coast. He thought … he'd work on the boats going out of the East Coast, which he did, and he traveled all over Europe and South America. … Then, he met my mother, who had grown up in Scranton. She was an orphan by the time she was about twelve and was raised by a couple of older brothers and sisters, and then, she had a job as kind of a nanny for a family. … But, she wanted to get out on her own. … So, she decided to go to New York, which was, I thought, a pretty gutsy thing. She was only about eighteen years old, and she just went up and got a job working for AT&T as an operator, which, of course, was a very good place for her to

be. After she'd been there, I'm not sure, eight or nine years, maybe, she met my father, who was between trips on those ships. He wouldn't necessarily stay on the same ship. He'd come back from a three-month trip, leave the ship and spend a little time on land. Then, he'd sign up for another ship. Jobs were always available. … So, anyway, they met and, eventually, decided to get married. One of the conditions my mother put down was that he had to stop going to sea, [laughter] and so, he did. He was on a trip, I think, right after they were married and that was the last one. Then, they settled down and he worked in the New York area for a couple of years, but, after I was born, they decided that they didn't want to raise their child in New York, and so, they went out to New Jersey. They first moved to Plainfield, and then, later, to Fanwood. Fanwood was the place that I remember. I have a sister who's five years younger than I am, who is a member of the Class of '46 at Douglass.

SH: Great. To back up a bit, since your father was in the Navy, what about World War I?

CP: Well, he was in the Navy then, because, you see, the skills he had were just as much in demand by the Navy as they were by the Merchant Marine. Since my father had been a part of the Merchant Marine while he did all this sailing, in World War I he signed up with the Navy as an ensign. He was classified as a machinist and served on converted commercial vessels.

SH: Where was your mother's family from?

CP: They were from Germany, … or Hungary, really. I'd pin it down more Austria-Hungary, [laughter] actually, Bohemia, which is kind of lost in the middle of all that scramble in middle Europe. She was born in Hungary, in a city called Pecs, which is, I think, about fifty miles south of Budapest. Her mother died in childbirth, with her. … She had an older sister and two older brothers. Then, within a couple of years after my mother's birth, her father decided [to emigrate]. He worked in the coalmines in Hungary. The coalmines were very dense in that area. When he decided to take the family and move to the US, they settled in Scranton, because Scranton was a center of coalmining.

SH: Okay.

CP: So, she grew up there. … Initially, they had a little farm, and then, when her father died, they got rid of the farm and she, as I said, was raised by her older brothers and sisters, who, by that time, were married and lived in the city.

SH: What year did your mother and father marry?

CP: 1918.

SH: Right after the war, then.

CP: Yes, right.

SH: You said your mother no longer wanted your father to go to sea. What did he do then?

CP: Well, you see, he was a machinist, so, he had a rather excellent skill to market. In contrast to his father, who hauled rock around in his wagon, which didn't take an awful lot of skill, my father had this [skill], and, of course, he had a lot of experience by that time. So, when he decided to get work … on land, it was relatively easy for him. … I don't mean the jobs were that easy to get, but, if people needed a machinist, there weren't a whole lot of them around. So, he worked, over the years, for different companies in New Jersey, all of which seemed to be in the area, mostly, … of Newark … and Hoboken and places like that. He worked for Westinghouse Air Brake, at one time, I know. He worked for Crucible Steel, and there are a couple of others. I can't remember now, but he was with them for fairly long periods of time. … So, he did that the whole time that he worked. He worked until he was about seventy; I'm just not sure. He retired, but I think it was kind of a thing that he was getting on in age [and] there weren't many jobs available anymore. He retired, probably, when he was about seventy and he died when he was seventy-three. …

SH: Worked his whole life. What about the Depression? How did that affect his employment?

CP: That affected us a great deal. As you can tell from what I said, we were certainly not an affluent family at any time. My father, I guess, earned good money, but it was a workman's type wage. … I was born in 1920, my sister was born in 1925, and so, along about 1929, my mother got the idea that she'd like to go back to work and, of course, she had the telephone operator experience, which, you realize, at that time, that was a sought-after skill. Now, everything is automatic in the telephone system. Anyway, she contacted AT&T and they referred her to New Jersey Bell, and so, she got a job in Plainfield, at the New Jersey Bell office. It was a nighttime job, which she wanted, so she could look after her kids and home in the daytime (between naps). That was part of her idea, so [that] she would be available during the day, to some extent, when … my sister and I were around. So, anyway, … as I say, by sheer coincidence, she got this job in 1929 and I think, about a month after she got it, the stock market crashed and the economy went to pot, in a hand basket. But, fortunately, she was in; she had the job. So, she worked there until about 1940, I guess, give or take. I know that she could consolidate the time she'd spent with AT&T and the time she spent with New Jersey Bell together for purposes of a pension. So, she worked until she was eligible for a pension. She took early retirement at that time. … The point I'm really getting to was, during the Depression, having her working, too, was a great advantage, particularly because, in about 1930, my father lost his job. Business got so slow, he had an awful time trying to find another job, and did not for a period of a year-and-a-half or two years. He was at home, kind of keeping things going there and going out … to interview for jobs, but it was a very, very lean time, because my mother's pay, while it was good and it was steady, it wasn't an opulent amount, by any stretch. … Then, when he did get a job and went back to work, of course, things got a lot better. But, the net of it was, the Depression was a very lean time in our family, as it was, of course, in [the lives of] ninety percent of the people you could talk to. We watched our pennies very closely. … My sister and I were both inculcated with the idea that you don't waste money, or waste anything for that matter. There were times, if I wanted to do something and we couldn't afford it, so I was told, "No." But, generally, we were not deprived of anything significant. In retrospect, I have always felt that was a great experience, within the context of not being a good experience, but it was a worthwhile experience, because it gave you a perspective on life and living that I think kids now don't get,

because we're all so affluent now. If kids want something now, they get it. So, the Depression was a positive growing out of a negative, I'd say.

SH: That is great.

CP: Oh, one thing I was going to say. It skipped my mind, momentarily. Since I grew up within thirty miles of New York and it was a commuter town, a lot of people commuted to New York. I always thought, "Boy, [to] go into New York and work, that would be great." So, I decided, one summer, when I was still in high school, that I was going to get a job working in New York and earn some money. So, my parents staked me to a one-week commuter ticket. … I would get up in the morning and I'd get on the train which took me to a Hudson River ferry, which, in turn, took me over to the Wall Street area. That was where [I looked for work]. Oh, boy, I tell you, was that ever an eye-opener for me, because, gosh, there were little employment shops all over the place. They were mostly upstairs. They had only little doorways on the street, but they'd have a chalkboard out on the sidewalk, with a list of the jobs they had and how much they paid. … Number one, I practically never saw one listed that I could do, because, of course, I didn't really know how to do anything, and there were just teems of people going in and out of these places. … Of course, I'd go in and it wouldn't take them long to get me out of the door again. But, I'll tell you, there's nothing, I think, quite as humbling as an experience like that. When you are walking the sidewalks and could see no prospects of a job, after awhile, you get so you kind of hated to go in. But, here you are, walking the sidewalks, with a lot of other people. … I didn't need a job to live or anything like that, but, still, boy, you talk about a feeling of rejection and a feeling of how tough times were, really were. Well, you know, I didn't even use up that whole one-week commuter ticket my folks gave me, because, after about three days, it was so discouraging, I just decided, "No point in going in, doing that." I was having to buy a lunch each day, and so, I just stopped going. I've thought, many times since, that, except in that kind of a circumstance, you can't really understand how it is. I used to think, when I'd see a lot of these older men walking around, … "Boy, what a terrible thing it must be for them," because, as I say, I had a place to sleep and a place to eat, but they didn't, other than what they could scratch together. … It must have been a terrible experience for an awful lot of people.

SH: You were doing this in high school, but were you also planning to go to college?

CP: Interestingly enough, yes, I was. This was principally due to my mother. She thought how great it would be, and she cherished the fact that she had one nephew who had gone to West Point and she thought that the sun just rose and set on him. She didn't want me to go to West Point, but [it was] the fact he'd gone to college, because there was nobody else in the family who had gone to college. So, she talked it up. She didn't talk it [up] in the sense of pushing me or leaning on me, but she just kind of, constantly, by conversation, kept it in my mind. It would be very difficult, "Maybe we could manage it financially, maybe we couldn't." But, it would be such a great thing for me to have a college education. So, I kind of grew up, through the high school years, not sure I would go to college, but thinking there was a reasonable chance I might be able to do it. It was interesting that my father supported it; he wanted me to go to college, but he never talked about it. It never came up. It was my mother who did all of it. He was the kind of person who saw the glass … half empty; my mother saw it half full. … With her thinking and her backing, even though I knew it would be tough, I never really remember saying to myself,

"Oh, I can't," because she wanted me to take [the] college preparatory curriculum, which I did. It quickly came down that I would go to Rutgers. I never visited any other school. … Well, I did go to Columbia, but that was under special circumstances, but the only one I ever visited with the intention of enrolling there was Rutgers. Rutgers was only fifteen miles away, but I didn't want to commute, and I don't think they necessarily wanted me to, either. They wanted me to do what I wanted to do, and I didn't commute. I lived on campus, but home was nearby and, if things got too tough financially, I could always start commuting. … Also, although Rutgers wasn't the State University then, it had this very nebulous little connection to the state, and the state funded a whole slew of scholarships that were called State Scholarships, a hundred bucks, and I got one of them. [laughter]

SH: Did you?

CP: Yes, so, that was how it came about.

SH: You went to Fanwood High School.

CP: No, it's Scotch Plains High School. Fanwood is a small town, about a mile square, with two thousand population, more or less. Scotch Plains is shaped kind of like a horse collar, around three sides of Fanwood. There's a big clump on one side, on what you would call Scotch Plains. There's another clump on the other side, which, at that time, was all open country. It's all developed now. And there was a thin collar that went between Fanwood and Westfield that linked these two parts of Scotch Plains together. Anyhow, the school system was the Scotch Plains-Fanwood School System. We had a great elementary school in Fanwood, but I went to junior high and high school at Scotch Plains.

SH: In Scotch Plains, was there a teacher who perhaps encouraged you?

CP: … Well, yes, there were a number. I really had some very good teachers I liked and I did well with them. I think, perhaps, the two leading ones would be Robert Adams, who was the math teacher at that time. He later became principal and served as principal of the high school for many years. I saw him about thirteen or fourteen years ago when I went back for my fiftieth reunion, the only reunion we'd ever had. … They invited some of the old faculty members who were still living and still around, and he was one, so, it was nice to see him again. I did very well in his classes, and that, of course, had a lot to do with my liking him. And then, my English teacher, who taught … junior and senior English, Miss Edith Higgins, was terrific. And, of course, that was helpful to me later, because of my interest in writing. I had to do a lot of compositions in her class, which was good practice. So, those would probably be the two who most influenced me, although, as I say, there were a number of others whom I thought very highly of also.

SH: Did you visit Rutgers at all before you enrolled?

CP: Yes, I did. … Rutgers used to, annually, in the spring, have a prep school weekend, which I think a lot of colleges did to introduce themselves to prospective students. … There was a fellow from Scotch Plains High School who was two years ahead of me, but he and I took [biology

together]. He was taking biology late. He and I shared a lab station. So, I got to know him pretty well. Anyway, he went to Rutgers, and it must have been his first year at Rutgers, he joined Beta Theta Pi, and the prep school weekends tended to be focused on the living units. They'd invite prospects to come to spend the weekend and you could stay at the house. So, anyway, he invited me to come to this prep school weekend. Anyway, I went over and it was very interesting. You had a chance to go around campus, meet students, attend an athletic event and interview a professor in your field of interest. In my case, since I thought journalism was what I wanted to do, I had an interview with the head of the Journalism Department. …

SH: Who was that, at that time?

CP: That was Kenneth Olson. … It turned out it was his last year at Rutgers. He went from here to Northwestern, where he became head of the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern. Of course, I didn't know that when I had my interview with him. The next year, I went to prep school weekend again, … my senior year in high school. I had an interview with the chairman of the department again, and it turned out to be a different professor: Charles Allen was his name. After my sophomore year, he, in turn, went to Syracuse, as the head of the journalism school there. He was succeeded by … [Frederic] Merwin. Anyway, the visits were a very nice experience. I really liked Rutgers and, from that point on, … that was where I was going. … There wasn't any question about it, in my mind.

SH: You went there in the fall of 1937.

CP: '37, that was when I entered, yes, and I graduated in June of '41 and Pearl Harbor came in December. [laughter]

SH: In 1937, did you go into a dorm or did you go right into the fraternity house?

CP: No, I went into a dorm. I might add, of course, the fraternities used this prep school weekend as a recruiting opportunity, and so, … the second year, when I was there, the Betas invited me to pledge to the fraternity and, since I liked the fellows I had met, I did pledge, which, of course, is not binding. I could have de-pledged later, if I wanted to. … Anyway, when I first entered Rutgers, I didn't live in the fraternity house, because I wasn't that definitely locked in. I was in Pell Hall, which is [in] the Quadrangle, which was quite new, at that time. It was really the choice place. I'll tell you, the worst place was Winants Hall, because it was so old. But, at any rate, since I was a pledge, I was over at the Beta House fairly often, for special events, occasional meals and things of that sort. … Then, when fraternity rushing came, they asked me if I knew of any other people, freshmen, whom I'd met whom I thought would be good to have as members. On my recommendation, those fellows would be invited over for a meal and social visit. Well, of course, I did know people. … I didn't give them a list of everybody in my dormitory, but there were four or five people that I particularly liked, and I gave them those names. Those fellows, I think without exception, pledged Beta before it was all over. … Anyhow, because I was getting more and more deeply involved at the fraternity and there was going to be an initiation in February, I decided to become a full-fledged member and to move out of the dorm and move over to the chapter house. Then, I lived there the rest of my time at Rutgers. …

SH: What was the first year like, as a freshman, at Rutgers, for you?

CP: Well, first, I should say that it was terrific. Everything about Rutgers, everything about going to college, I just loved. It was a great adventure. … It was the typical, freshman, broadening experience, and I found it to be just great. I knew, from what people had told me, that the first year would be the toughest, from a studying point of view. … I was worried about that, but not totally, because I had done very well in high school and I didn't see why I couldn't do pretty well in college. Nevertheless, … I studied an awful lot and I had to work at it. Most of my courses, I went through in good shape, but I remember, I took French 101, because I had to take a language and French, I thought, sounded like the one that'd be best. That came awfully hard for me, the grammar and all that. I worked like a dog and I just barely got through it. I can't remember, but I think I ended up with a "D." … The professor was a young guy and he was very nice and I liked him, but French just didn't seem to penetrate with me. … So, interestingly enough, the French Department offered a second-year course, they said anybody who got only a "D" in elementary French, instead of moving to French 102 or 202, could take another course that was offered: "French Reading." It was taught by the head of the department, who was a lively, nifty, old guy. I really liked him. He had spent a lot of time in France and he had a lot of interesting stories. We didn't study vocabulary and grammar, but it was built in. You had to know vocabulary and grammar if you were going to read books, assignments or articles or whatever he gave us to read, and then, we had to give reports on them. Well, that just triggered me. I had a great time. [laughter] I did very well and I couldn't get over it. At the end of the first semester, my parents got a letter from the professor, who, as I say, was the head of the department, congratulating them on the fact that I had made the department honor roll. [laughter] I thought, "Well, you talk about rags to riches." But, anyway, I did well in that year, and then, I didn't take any more language, which I've sort of regretted since. I wish I had taken a second language.

SH: What about getting involved with the *Targum*?

CP: Yes. I went out for that right away, because that was, of course, of interest to me, and I worked up to be the editor-in-chief my senior year. …

SH: What did you start out doing as a freshman? What were you writing about?

CP: Reporting.

SH: Just reporting?

CP: Yes. You just … did whatever the editors told you to do: [laughter] writing articles, mostly routine ones, occasionally a special one of some kind, but I enjoyed the *Targum* very much and some people I met there became long-time friends. In fact, one of them, Whitney Shoemaker, lived here at Hilton Head until he died about three months ago.

SH: Really?

CP: Yes. I used to see him periodically when we lived here. He was a year ahead of me at Rutgers. He was Class of '40. Anyway, I did Targum, and then, I was interested and went out [for other activities]. I'm not athletic. I had duffed around a little in high school, with no success at all. So, I didn't go out for any athletic teams, but I was interested in extracurricular activities, especially those with a journalistic flavor. Something which probably doesn't exist anymore was called the Freshman Handbook. It was a little, pocket-sized book that was published annually so that all incoming freshmen had a source of useful information about things to do and how to establish themselves on campus. The Handbook had a small staff of students who would do the work, and I went out for that one year. … Then, a year or so afterwards, I went out for *Scarlet Letter*, the yearbook, and I spent a lot of time on that and I ended up being the editor-in-chief of that in my senior year, too. … I've always been proud that I was only the second person in the history of Rutgers, up until that time, anyway, who was simultaneously editor-in-chief of *Targum* and editor-in-chief of *Scarlet Letter*. The other one was from the Class of 1913, Earl Reed Silvers. … You probably have not heard his name, but he was the head of the Alumni and Public Relations Department at the college. An older man with grey hair, very dignified and very prominent in things. He wrote books, and he had the Rutgers University Press under his wing, too. So, I felt very proud to join his company, as you can probably tell. [laughter]

SH: Were you assigned to report on different athletic events or the musical programs?

CP: Oh, all and every. Obviously, athletic events were an important part, but there were other subjects: Student Council politics, news from the Administration on course programs, news on honor societies, etc.

SH: I thought maybe you had a column that you wrote.

CP: No. I was always in mainstream news reporting and editing. There were columnists, but they tended to be seniors, and there weren't a lot of them there. Whitney Shoemaker was a columnist. … He started as a reporter, but he became a columnist, and I always thought it was a great title he put on his column, "From the Cobbler's Bench," and his name was Shoemaker. [laughter]

SH: It makes sense, right?

CP: I should mention, because of my interest in things journalistic, there was an organization called Pi Gamma, of which I became an active member. Juniors and seniors who had demonstrated they had ability, in journalism, would get the opportunity to be the paid campus correspondent for various newspapers and news services. … So, that was nice, because you got a lot of experience and a little income from it. I became the campus correspondent for the Associated Press, in my junior and senior years. That was, kind of, an extracurricular activity and also a part-time job to boot. You didn't earn that much, but you earned some, and it was fun. I covered all kinds of newsworthy campus events for the AP. Among them, we could sit in the press box at football games and write our pieces. My freshman year, the Director of Public Relations, who knew I was interested in doing this kind of thing, lined me up to be campus correspondent for the *Plainfield Courier-News*, my hometown paper. They weren't paying anything, [laughter] but it was a good experience for a budding journalist. I stopped when I

started with the Associated Press, but that was very interesting, and, of course, the *Courier-News,* in lieu of pay, gave you a lot of bylines. [laughter] So, all my friends, back in Fanwood, were hearing about me, and that was nice. These jobs tended to be more heavily on athletic events than anything else, because the run-of-the-mill stuff happening on the Rutgers Campus wasn't of an awful lot of interest to the *New York Times,* let alone the *Plainfield Courier-News*.

SH: What about mandatory chapel? How did you take to that?

CP: It was okay. I didn't mind it. We had not been a religious family. We weren't anti-religion, we just weren't [religious]. Well, my father, I might say, he was a little anti-religious, but my mother wasn't. … When I was in high school, for reasons I can't remember anymore, probably because I had friends [involved], I did start going to the Scotch Plains Baptist Church. … I eventually was baptized and became a member of the church, but nobody else in the family went there or was baptized. … So, I wasn't into it very much, either. I just accepted mandatory chapel as part of the college experience. It just went with the territory, and I don't recall that I necessarily got any wondrous benefits from it, but, on the other hand, I didn't think it was a total waste of time. Chapel, as I recall it now, involved going once a week, and it wasn't on Sunday, it was during the week and it didn't last a long time. Really, what it consisted of, primarily, was a speech, by somebody or other, and some of those were quite interesting and some weren't.

SH: Do you have any Dean Metzger stories?

CP: Oh, yes. I liked Dean Metzger. As you probably have heard, he was rather dignified, not big, tall or anything, but a kind, dignified gentleman. He was homely as a fencepost, but had a very, very nice manner about him. In fact, if I recall correctly, he'd originally been a minister and that's how he came to this, because [of] the Dutch Reformed Church. I liked him and I knew him quite well, because I was active in campus activities. Naturally, he couldn't get to know everybody as well, but he made it his business to get to know student leaders. I guess it was in my senior year, I was very pleased and impressed to get an invitation from Dean and Mrs. Metzger to come to their home for dinner on a certain night. There were about five or six of us, I guess, all campus leaders. I thought it was such a nice thing. They took these fellows and gave each of us a chance to get to know them a little bit. That's one of my fondest memories of him.

Another one I have [laughter] is more funny than anything else, I guess. When I was editor of the *Targum,* probably in the fall of my senior year, Sam Zagoria, who was a classmate of mine and managing editor of Targum, and I got a command invitation to see the Dean in his office. We went with some trepidation because this was a very unusual event. It turned out to be about what came to be known to us as the "bulletin board incident." You could get in to the *Targum* downstairs hallway all the time, but the editorial and advertising offices were kept locked, except when we were actually working. The *Targum,* at that time, was … semi-weekly. So, that meant there was one day, twice a week, when the place was open and everybody was there and it was humming like a beehive. In-between times, there were stories to be covered. … The editors, usually the managing editor, would make up a list of reporting assignments for all the student reporters, which they were supposed to cover and bring in completed on the days the *Targum* offices were open and working.

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

SH: Side two, tape one.

CP: Well, I was just saying, this talking about the assignment sheet, which was posted on a bulletin board in the hall entryway of the building because it was open all the time and everybody could come in any time to get their assignment. … At any rate, there was a steady procession of people coming in and out, looking at that board. It happened there was a freshman reporter who was kind of an oddball; really all right, there was nothing wrong with him, except that he … kind of didn't fit with the other people. … He had a meek, way about him, and he was kind of [the] butt of jokes. Anyway, one time, somebody sat down and … wrote a sheet making fun of him, which they posted on the bulletin board, next to the list with the assignments, where everybody would see it. I really can't remember anymore what it was, something of a harangue, I guess, but it was all a joke. You could tell it was supposed to be funny, … but it was just larded with profanity. Oh, boy, it was really bad. … So, this kid came in to get his assignment and he found the joke sheet there and he was absolutely beside himself, which I guess you could understand. He took it down, and I don't know who he went to see, probably the dean. All I know is that, one day, Sam Zagoria and I got a communiqué saying that Dean Metzger would like to see us in his office, on such-and-such an hour. Anyway, he sat us down and he talked about it, and he said, "Now, you know, I know you two didn't do this, but you're responsible to control things there," and he said, "and I want to read some of this to you," and so, he did, profanity and all. … He said, "Now, I want you to know, that's what you're making this minister have to say." … It was quite effective, Sam and I were having trouble keeping from bursting out laughing, but it also had an impact. We didn't have any more incidents of that sort. In later years, thinking back on this, I thought the Dean really handled it very well. Had he called us in and chewed us up and down we'd have remembered and taken the necessary action to prevent a recurrence. … But he didn't. He was nice. He made us share the embarrassment that such a thing could occur on the campus and particularly that it happened against a young and relatively defenseless freshman. We got the message and laid down new rules for the bulletin board. We had no recurrences.

SH: What about ROTC? Were you involved in that?

CP: Yes, I was in ROTC for the first two years, which is when you're a private, or corporal. I really wasn't interested in it. It was a kind of a pain-in-the-neck to have to go to it, but it was mandatory at Rutgers at that time. One major reason I didn't want to take advanced ROTC in my junior and senior years was you had to go away for two weeks in the summer for training camp and I didn't want to do that. So, I dropped, much to my later regret when I was drafted into the army as a private rather than entering as a second lieutenant. [laughter] I wish I had continued, but, at that time, that's what I didn't.

SH: What is the most memorable story you covered on the *Targum* in your four years there?

CP: Oh, gee; you mean that I covered personally?

SH: That you dealt with.

CP: Well, I must admit, … frankly, I just can't remember. There were so many.

SH: Okay.

CP: I remember one when reporting for the *Plainfield Courier-News.* I was in the press box and wrote the article about the Rutgers-Princeton game in 1939. You will recall that was the first time we'd beaten them since 1869. The Department of Public Relations invited editors from different papers to come for the football games, not to report but just to enjoy the games from a good seat. It happened [that] the editor of the *Plainfield Courier-News* was sitting up there in the press box at the Princeton game. He got caught up in all the excitement. So, he told me, before he left, "I want you to give us a good sports story and a good color story." Which was great. So, I wrote two rather long articles, both of which they published, and they added pictures. … It was the longest coverage I did for any event (with by lines) that I did the whole time I was in college.

SH: The sports story would be the football game.

CP: Well, the game, and the other was … kind of the cultural aspects of it, you know, the big crowd and the new stadium and the beating [of] Princeton, you know, all that stuff.

SH: I thought maybe you had a specific player that you highlighted.

CP: No, only to the extent that he may have done something unusual in the game. … Excuse me, before you go beyond that. … Thinking back on your question, as it related to *Targum,* I must admit I don't think I had any direct involvement in this story, but it had a great impact, at the time. … It's stuck in my memory anyway. The football coach at the time was a man named [J. Wilder] Tasker, who had been there for a number of years, with notable lack of much success. The students were down on him. "We're always losing, always losing." … The *Targum,* I think, may have hit on it a few times, too, although, we weren't inclined, in those days, to carry on vendettas or campaigns in the paper. But it was just general conversation all over the campus, "Gee, when are they going to get rid of him?" Well, the decision was made and they hired a guy named Harvey Harman, who had been the coach at Penn [University of Pennsylvania], and they let Tasker go. Well, *Targum,* [at] the time that happened, had a big, big story about it, with this giant headline across the top of the front page, "Tasker Out." The article and headline did reflect the mood of the campus, but it was obviously a highly inappropriate thing for a bunch of students to be [attacking him]. I mean, this poor guy, you think of Tasker and his family being treated that way; it was really pretty bad and it created a lot of reverberations. I'd venture to say that Dean Metzger had the editor at that time in, too. Anyway, I remember that story, although I don't really think I had any involvement in it, but it was an incident that happened, and it taught me a good lesson on what kind of a harsh impact a thoughtless article and headline can have on an individual and his family.

SH: As a *Targum* reporter, writing a lot of sports stories, did you have good relationships with some of the athletes that were playing?

CP: Oh, sure. Well, you know, Rutgers wasn't that big a school then and you tended [to know most students]. You didn't necessarily have close relations, but you'd try to get close relations with the coaches, because they could give you cues on stories. … One of the nice things about reporting at that time was, you really got to know the whole campus, not just the particular part in which you were involved. In fact, you're bringing something to my mind now, back on a notable story that I had long since forgotten. Now I'm going to make it seem less impressive, because I can't think of his name right now, the streptomycin guy, Doctor …

SH: Waksman?

CP: Waksman, yes, Waksman. Well, at that time, I'd never heard of streptomycin. He was a professor over in the Ag School and he had a little cubicle of a lab, corner of a lab. But that was where he had developed streptomycin. You know, the world wasn't waiting with bated breath for streptomycin to come along, and so, this was something that he developed doing his research with soil microbes. … Anyway, I was sent over to interview him and do a story about what he was doing. That was extremely interesting. I've always, through the ensuing years, felt like I knew him, although I didn't really. [Editor's Note: Mr. Prout may have been sent to cover the discovery of actinomycin, the first antibiotic to emerge from Selman Waksman's work on soil microbes, a discovery he made with then graduate assistant Dr. H. Boyd Woodruff. Streptomycin was isolated in October of 1943, a discovery credited to Dr. Waksman and another graduate assistant, Dr. Albert Schatz.]

SH: Did you talk to his graduate assistant, Albert Schatz?

CP: Oh, the guy who sued, later? No, … I think I just talked to him, [Waksman]. In fact, at that time, I'd never even heard of Waksman but I was so impressed later. This was after I got out of school; in fact, I think it was after World War II, that streptomycin broke through. You know, penicillin was the wonder drug of the war, and the sulfa drugs were just before the war, but, then, streptomycin came along, at least in a big way. I felt so excited that I had known about it and been involved, in a minor way, way back when nobody really knew or understood what was good about it. So, that was a notable story, but that was part of the niceness of doing both [the] *Targum* and the *Plainfield Courier-News*/Associated Press sort of thing. It got you around into all parts of the college that, … otherwise, probably, you wouldn't have. … You didn't know him, but [Donald] Scotty Cameron was a professor, I think of English, but he was also the curator of the (Rutgersencia?) part of the library, at that time. He was quite an impressive person, … I remember interviewing him and, getting into all different departments of the library. … Something else that came out of the editorship of the paper; I'm sure, not the yearbook, but the paper. The New York World's Fair opened in '39. … That was the summer of my sophomore/junior year. … It was such a success, they decided to continue it for a second year, over the summer of 1940. By that time I was the newly christened editor of *Targum*. General Motors, as a way of reaching a lot of people in academia and getting involvement, invited the presidents of colleges from all over the country for a preview showing of their exhibit to come and to bring, I think it was two student leaders for a special full day at their exhibit which was one of the best and biggest. … So, I was invited by Dr. Clothier, and the other student was, I think, the president of the Student Council. Anyway, it was very, very interesting. … We spent the whole day, most time I ever spent with Dr. Clothier. GM had a huge building with their

famous "Futurama" exhibit inside, which foresaw the development of superhighways. They had us for lunch, I guess it was, and I remember, when we went, either to lunch or to the exhibit, there was a receiving line, not a long line, … but I was so impressed, because Alfred Sloan, who was the Chairman of the GM Board, and their president were there to greet us. They were very, very big, well-known people, particularly Sloan. He was the management genius who, essentially, made General Motors work. After they put all those companies together, he was the one that figured out how to make it go. … That was really quite a heady thing, for a college junior. It also was a special treat to spend the entire day with Dr. Clothier. Of course, he knew most of the other university presidents in attendance and he always thoughtfully introduced us to many of them and included undergraduates in the conversations he had. Anyhow, that was something else that came out of the editorship of the *Targum*.

SH: Did you work in the summers between semesters?

CP: … Between years, yes … again, the money situation. I needed to earn money, and I did. The summer before my freshman year, I answered an ad in the paper. This milkman, who had his own milk route (most big dairies had their own deliveries, but this guy served dairies that didn't). He was a middle-aged man and he needed a young guy to help sling the cases of milk around. … I had to go to work about two o'clock in the morning, because the deliveries had to be made before daybreak to keep the milk out of the heat of the day. I didn't like that. … It was hard work but it wasn't just that; it was dull. Also, I didn't like getting up at two o'clock in the morning, but it was the only job around, so, I took it. But I guess he could tell I didn't care for it too much and, of course, he didn't know I was going to college. I didn't tell him, because, in those days, you didn't bring up anything that might interfere with getting the job. So, as far as he knew, I wanted a job to be his permanent assistant. I'd had to have a smallpox vaccination as part of my getting ready to enter Rutgers and I'd had it just before I started the job. Well, it turned out, apparently, if you do a lot of heavy lifting and that sort of thing immediately after getting a smallpox vaccination, you can create a problem, not with the inoculation, but a side effect, which, in my case, became a big, inflated gland under my arm. So, I developed a kind of a knob under my arm and it was painful and, also, worrisome. So, my mother got me back to the doctor. When we told him what I was doing, he said, "Oh, well, that's the reason." He said, "You shouldn't do that kind of heavy lifting for awhile and the swelling will go away." So, then, I happily took it on myself to notify my boss that I wasn't going to be able to continue the job. I only worked for him about two weeks, and he was very sour on that, [laughter] because he felt like he'd wasted his time and his money. So, I had no other job that summer. I wasn't able to get one. But the summer after my freshman year, I was in the market again. Keep in mind; this was a time when jobs were still very, very tough [to come by]. You know, we're talking about 1938, 1939, 1940. In fact, this would have been the Summer of 1938. … I was out looking for jobs and my mother, as I was leaving one day to go look locally around Plainfield … came to the door and said, "Oh, by the way, I read in the paper that there's a new Pep Boys Auto Accessories Store going to open down in Plainfield. You might look there. Maybe they need somebody." So, I went and I got a job. The store had a manager and an assistant manager and probably two, maybe three, young guys as clerks. We didn't know much about the business, but they taught us. Well, anyway, I enjoyed it. It was hard work. We worked awfully long hours, but all stores did in those days. I think we were open from nine to nine, every day, and probably a little later on Saturday. … They were long hours and some of it was [difficult], because I'm not particularly

mechanically inclined. While a lot of the stuff auto accessory stores sell is not mechanical, some of it is, and I'd have to kind of grope my way around a little bit on that. … I remember that they had their own brand of tires and, if you bought the tires, you got free installation. The person who did the installing was the person who sold them. … So, you'd have to go out in the back, get the wheel off their car and put the new tire on, and get all dirty and dusty and hot and sweaty, and then, you'd go back out on the floor of the store and wait on people. It was tough, but, anyway, it was a good experience. I learned some useful things there. But they didn't know I was going to college. I just went and said I was looking for a job. … The manager was a nice guy, who treated me very nicely. … But, anyway, came the end of August, and I had to go and tell him I was leaving. … I just didn't have the heart to lie about it to him, about why I was leaving, even though I knew that he would know I knew this at the beginning and I sort of took advantage of him, without telling him. … So, anyway, I told him, the last day I thought I could be there, that I was going to have to leave and I said, "I'm going to college and that's the reason I won't be able to work here anymore." … I think I apologized to him, you know, for not having let him know that at the beginning, because maybe he wouldn't have hired me if he'd known that. … I've always remembered, it was such a nice thing, that he said: "Look, … don't you apologize at all." He said, "Whenever you can do something to improve yourself, you do it, and I think it's great you're going to go to college." I thought he was great. … Then, that college year, when I was home, occasionally, I'd stop in to see him, you know, just say, "Hello," and, "How are things going?" … So, that was good, and I earned a bit of money and it was useful. Well, anyway, armed with that experience, the following summer, I got a job in another auto accessory store in Westfield. You see, by that time, I was experienced, so I could sell something. I don't remember whether I told them … I was in college at the time or not. … Anyway, it was more of the same thing, … but it was a good job. It earned me some money, and a lot better jobs than a lot of people got. By the time I got to my junior year in college I could begin to see the end of the tunnel financially. I kind of thought, because I'd been in journalism school now and was beginning to feel a little bit over impressed, probably, with my ability to write, … I decided I'd like to do some freelance writing, and, hopefully, sell the articles. So, I told my parents, "I don't want to take a job this summer. I want to take a shot at this," and I did and I sold a few articles, and I collected an awful lot of rejections slips. … The kinds of articles I sold didn't reap big rewards, so that, from an economic point of view, the summer was a dead loss, but it was an interesting learning experience for me. I would have to try to think up what would be the subject of an article that somebody might care about. Then, I'd have to research it. Then, I'd have to put it together, and then, I had to mail it off. Sending freelance material "over the transom," you get an awful lot of noes. But, occasionally, as I say, one would come through. [Editor's Note: The phrase "over the transom" refers to works submitted for publication without being solicited.] … Then, I'd be all steamed up about that for awhile. … Anyway, that's what I did that summer, and then, the following summer, after I graduated, I already had a job, so, I went directly into that. …

SH: Before we get to your senior year and the end of your college experience, what about Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal? What did your family think of him?

CP: My father thought the sun rose and set on him. He thought he was just the greatest thing. … I don't really remember having too much of an opinion, one way or the other, and my mother, if she did, tended not to express herself, maybe because she grew up during a period when

women didn't have a vote. … She had other things that were on her mind, like how to keep the family afloat [laughter] and things like that. Anyway, my father was very, very high on FDR. I did have a personal experience with FDR. I can't remember now what the occasion was, but there was some big event in Philadelphia which I was attending at Penn, participating in whatever I was participating in. Part of it was that we got to go over and sit in for a little while in Convention Hall. It happened it was the day that Roosevelt came to give a speech. … Along with a million other people, I remember standing near the entrance to the Convention Hall, … when Roosevelt came in, in that open-topped sedan he used, waving to the people. … I was really pretty close and he was a very charismatic guy. I didn't speak to him or anything, but [I recall] seeing him, the first time I'd ever seen a President, one of the few times I've ever seen one in person. So, that was kind of a notable experience, but that was not ideological, it was just that he was a famous guy. I was aware of a lot of the controversial programs he had launched, you know, the bank holiday, wanting to pack the Supreme Court, the NRA, WPA and CCC and all those things, but I was more aware of them just because they were there. I didn't really have any strong opinion about him or what he was doing or not doing. … In later life, I developed them, but, at that time, no.

SH: What about what was going on in Europe with Hitler? Were there any discussions in your classes at Rutgers or at your home?

CP: I don't recall anything in classes, although political controversy was not a fashionable topic for college classrooms then – that came in the 1960s. … Of course, we were all very aware of what was going on over there, but it didn't seem to be something that affected us. It was over there, you know, and, while we were aware of it, and, in fact, in my last year or two, I remember, I got pretty antsy about, "Was I ever going to get to finish college?" the way things were going, but that was kind of a personal, prejudiced thing. I wanted to finish and I didn't want some dumb war to interfere with it. [laughter] … So, we were aware of it, but it was not an overwhelming matter. It was something we talked about privately, but we didn't dwell on it, and it tended to be more of a passing comment type thing.

SH: Were there isolationists or America First-ers?

CP: I don't recall any on campus, ours or anyone else's. I remember, very well, the isolationist movement and, you know, it got to be a very bitter subject in the public media. [Aviator and America First member Charles] Lindbergh went over to Germany and said he thought everything was going to be great and all that.

SH: What about *Bund* activities?

CP: The *Bund*? You know, I can't remember where this memory was. I have an idea [that] it was not in connection with college. It was probably in the summer, somewhere, but, I remember, there was a big *Bund* event in northern New Jersey. It was going to be a procession. … It was at night. The marchers carried flaming torches, wore the brown shirts and all this. It consisted of young [people]. It was kids. … It was kind of an answer to the Boy Scouts, … except they were a little older. … At the time, I don't think [you would], at least I didn't, connect it so much with, "This is something being done by Germany to develop support." I knew it had a

connection with Germany. Maybe I wasn't perceptive enough, but I wasn't [political]. In later years, particularly because of the Vietnam War, young people became radicalized in a way they didn't before. So the *Bund,* I remember it and I remember thinking, "Gee, it was kind of scary, the way they chanted and did all this stuff," but, beyond that, I don't remember an awful lot else about it.

SH: I was just curious. It happened in some people's towns, so, they were aware of it.

CP: Maybe that didn't happen in Plainfield, I'm just dim on it.

SH: As you prepared to graduate, did you already know what jobs you wanted to look for?

CP: Yes.

SH: Were there people on campus recruiting?

CP: Yes. …

SH: Also, please talk about the draft.

CP: As I told you earlier, I didn't take the second two years of ROTC, but that wasn't because of not thinking about the war, but I didn't care about it. I didn't want to go … away for two weeks of summer camp training in the summer. Therefore, when I was getting ready to graduate, I was concerned about the draft, the peacetime draft had started in 1940. At that time, before the war, the draft was a one year [commitment]. As a student I was not at risk for the draft, but after graduation I was vulnerable. So, I was conscious of that. Again, it didn't overwhelm my thoughts, but I was aware of it. … Anyhow, now, coming to the jobs, I majored in journalism and I enjoyed journalism. … If I do say so myself, I was good at it, but, as time went by, I began to be more and more uneasy about, "What kind of a job opportunity was I going to have?" because we were still in the Depression and journalism jobs were hard to get. If they were hard to get generally, they were hard to get in spades in journalism. … Of course, during the time I was in undergraduate journalism, I was in and out of a number of newspaper offices. I remember one paper, it might have been *New Brunswick Home News,* when I was in there one time, and here was this little, old, hunched over man, with white hair, looked like he was a hundred years old, sitting over in the corner, clicking away on the typewriter. I thought, "Holy smokes, I don't want to end up like that." [laughter] … Really, initially, I thought, journalism was my field. … I was going to take a shot at it. … However, I wanted the big-time journalism. The New York area papers, which, of course, were the ones that I looked to, … Newark and New York, was where the likely possibilities would be. Well, none of the New York papers hired kids right out of college, with one exception, the *Daily News* hired people to be copyboys, at fifteen dollars a week, … and even those jobs were hard to get. But those … didn't have much appeal. So, I decided to check out non-journalism jobs via on-campus interviews. The Student Employment Office coordinated campus interviews by recruiters who were looking for people. … They would post notices on the bulletin board, "Such-and-such a company is going to be here on such-and-such a date," and all you had to do was sign up for an interview. My thinking was, "Well, … I might not be able to get a job, but it might be a good idea to take some interviews. It

would be good practice. … I'd learn a little bit about what seemed to work well in an interview and what didn't." … So I decided I would sign up for a few of these. I just sort of picked among [the profiles]. When the companies would arrange to conduct job interviews, they would send a little profile, telling you, if you didn't already know, … a little bit about the company, and, also, telling you a little bit about the job opportunity, so that you knew what you were interviewing for. Most companies were hiring to fill a class of people who would become executive trainees. … So, anyhow, I picked out a few that I thought looked interesting and I took the interviews, spread over a period of, probably, a couple of months. It was very interesting and very educational to learn about how they conducted themselves and learn about how I should conduct myself. Anyway, with the passage of time, I was duly impressed. I got job offers from three companies, and you can't imagine how exciting that was, in that era, when jobs of any kind were so hard to get. I got an offer from General Electric, but, for reasons I never understood, … it was in their accounting department. Oh, God, I wasn't suited for an accounting department. It was a training program, they said, but they wanted me to work in the accounting department. So, I was pretty sure I didn't want to go to that job, … but you didn't have to answer right away. So, I held off to see what else turned up. Then I got an offer from Sears Roebuck. What they wanted was for their trainees to be assistant managers of their retail stores, learning to be qualified, eventually, to be a store manager. Well, there was a Sears Roebuck in Plainfield, and (Jack Wallace?), who had been the Director of Public Relations at Rutgers, but had left to go to work for Sears, was working as the assistant manager. I made it my business to go and visit with him and find out a little bit more about what [the job entailed]. I could have done the work, but it didn't appeal to me. … Oh, I forgot to tell you that, when I was in high school, I had a job, Christmas and Easter, busy seasons, during the school holidays, and on weekends, during busy season, in a retail shoe store. Between the retail shoe store and the retail auto accessories store, I was not enamored with the retail business. They worked long, long hours and they don't get paid too well. … Anyway, it made me feel good to have these two jobs in my pocket, but I had interviewed with the Vick Chemical Company, which is the Vicks cold remedies company. … They hired about thirty or thirty-five … [college] graduates each year to go into their executive training program, which took approximately a year to complete, and then, at the end of that, they would offer some people permanent jobs. … It involved a lot of traveling and a lot of selling, but selling from the manufacturer to the retailer. … That part and the traveling sounded good to me, but I was also very impressed, because their program was predicated on the idea that they wanted creative thinkers, because they wanted ideas. The lifeblood of their business was people who could generate ideas and put them into effect in the marketing field. That was appealing, because I thought I had that. In fact, they even talked about writing as an evidence of your creativity. … And then, I had known a couple of Rutgers fellows … who had gone to Vick in prior years. In fact, the editor of *Scarlet Letter* two years before me had gone there. I talked with him and became convinced that Vick was the place for me. … It sounded like my kind of thing. So, I kept out on the two other job offers by not giving them an answer, because I was hoping that Vicks would come through. Well, doggone if Vick didn't, and, in fact, kind of almost a record setter, they hired three of us from Rutgers that year, … as far as I know, the most they ever hired from any one college, in one year. … So, I took that job and turned down the other offers. It was around the first of July, we all came in to New York, which is where Vick's headquarters were, and we had a one-month orientation program. Then, we went out in groups, but working individually, to call on retail accounts. I went first to Chicago, with a group of six, and we worked all of Chicago during the remainder of the summer. … Then, I went with a

smaller group, I think there were three of us, who started at the northern part of Ohio and worked our way down to southern Ohio. When it got to be wintertime, when the cold season comes on, we moved to the South to call on country stores. I traveled up the State of Georgia from south to north. I then leapfrogged to Kentucky and West Virginia. Then I was drafted, which was in April of 1942, about nine or ten months after I graduated. I had an interesting experience with getting drafted. I got my first draft notice when I was home for Christmas, right after Pearl Harbor. But I'd worn glasses since I was a fifth grader, so when I went to the draft board I found out my eyes didn't pass. So, I had a 4-F deferment, but, of course, those classifications didn't last very long as the Army was expanding, because they kept lowering the physical requirements. … I think it was around the time I went up to West Virginia to work, in February or so, that my mother forwarded a new draft notice stating that I had to come in again. By that time, I knew that my eyes would pass and I was going to be drafted, but here I was, in West Virginia. They wanted me to show up at a draft board in New Jersey to take my physicals, and then, no telling when I'd actually be called. This was just to find out if I passed. So, I wrote a long letter to the draft board, explaining what my situation was, and I said, "I just can't come all the way to New Jersey. Isn't there somewhere in West Virginia I can take this physical?" They wrote back and said, "Sure, you can go into any draft board and get them to process [you]." They gave me an introductory letter, to any local draft board.

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

SH: This is tape two, side one. Please, continue.

CP: I was in Huntington at the time, and so, I said to myself, … " I won't be in Huntington long enough to get the physical." But I was going from Huntington to Charleston. So, I arranged, by mail, with the Charleston board to come in to have a physical when I got to Charleston. … When I got there, I passed and they filled out the forms and sent them back to my draft board. I used to laugh about it at the time. I doubted there was anybody who went to so much trouble to get drafted. [laughter] Anyway, that's what I did. … I immediately notified Vicks. I wanted to get home and have a little time at home. So, I just wrote them or called them and said, "You know, I really want to stop right now. I'll finish Charleston, and then, what do you want me to do with your car?" [laughter] because, you see, I'm driving a company car. … So, they had me drive it back to their home plant, which was at Greensboro, North Carolina. … Then, out of Greensboro, I caught an airplane, which was only the second time I'd ever been on an airplane, and headed home to New Jersey.

SH: When was the first time you were on an airplane?

CP: It was while I was working in Ohio. … The supervisor was with me and it got to be a weekend and I'd never been in a plane and he'd only been in one once or twice. So, we went out and hired one of those "ten dollars, fly you around the field" deals. [laughter] It was all very exciting.

SH: For a young man raised in New Jersey who had not done a lot of traveling, what was it like to be traveling all over the country, the Midwest and the South?

CP: Oh, great, I loved it. I loved it, and I still do. I love to travel and I find every place extremely interesting. I was just wrapped up in it. I thought it was great.

SH: Was there anything shocking or untold?

CP: No, not that I recall. You know, I knew that conditions … were different in the South than they were in the North, but, no. … To give you a quick answer to your question, I liked the South very much. In fact, I later met and married my wife; she's a North Carolinian. … During my working career we lived in the northeast and Midwest, but after we retired we moved south. We've lived down here now for about twenty-two years. And of course, before retirement, I came [to North Carolina] all the time to visit family. I like the South very much and have always felt very much at home here.

SH: Did you meet her before the war?

CP: No, I met her during the war, and it was one of the great pluses of my military service. When I was drafted, I went as a private to a camp that doesn't exist anymore. It was just temporary, Camp Croft, which was outside of Spartanburg, South Carolina. In Spartanburg is a very excellent, small girls' college, Converse [College], which is still a women's college, which … makes it a rare breed anymore. … Anyway, being a basic training camp, everybody at Camp Croft was in basic training. So, we all did the same stuff all week long, and it was in the summer and it was hot. But we got off on Saturday afternoon and Sunday, and so, everybody wanted to go into town. They ran big cattle trucks to get us in there, but Spartanburg's not that big a place and Camp Croft was about twenty thousand. So, they'd dump all these soldiers on the streets of downtown Spartanburg and you could hardly fight your way up and down the sidewalk. So, along with several fellows I'd gotten to be friendly with, I decided to walk out Main Street to get away from the downtown area and the crowds. When we got out a little ways there was this pretty, little college campus. It was summer, nobody around, but [it had a] green lawn and trees and benches to sit on. So, we went in and we'd sit on the benches in the shade and enjoy ourselves. Well, it was a great thing, to me. … Eventually, when I met my wife, I learned she had gone to Converse and I knew all about Converse, or something about it, anyway. [laughter] … After basic training I went to officer candidate school at Fort Benning, Georgia. I was then assigned to Fort Jackson at Columbia, South Carolina as a bright and shiny second lieutenant. My wife and I met on a blind date two weeks later and were married three months after that.

SH: What do you remember about Pearl Harbor?

CP: Of course, like everybody else, it's etched in my memory. With Vicks [on] December 7th I was working in the vicinity of Atlanta. I was out in a couple of suburbs, kind of industrial suburbs, south of where the airport is now. … I was living in an Atlanta hotel, because there were several of us working in Georgia, and we were all staying in Atlanta. It was not a bad drive from there to my territory and it was a lot more fun to be in the city than [the suburbs]. … Atlanta, of course, wasn't nearly as big or [as] modern city as it is now, but, again, it was interesting. I enjoyed it. I was interested. … Anyway, another fellow and I, who were staying at the hotel together decided to go out and do some sightseeing around Atlanta on a Sunday afternoon. It turned out to be Pearl Harbor day. We'd been out, driving around, looking at

different points of interest. When we got back to the Henry Grady Hotel, there was a cluster of people down at the far end of the lobby grouped around a little table radio. … We wondered what was going on and we walked back there and that's where we heard about Pearl Harbor. The shock was visceral. … The next day, I was going to be working in one of those southern suburbs, but … it was announced that Roosevelt was going to address the nation and Congress at a certain hour to ask for a declaration of war. It was the middle of the day. I wanted to be somewhere where I could hear it, and so, I found a restaurant that had a radio, and, of course, you didn't have to ask anybody to turn the radio on. Everybody was glued to their radios. … So, I went there to have lunch. Of course, the subject of war set off a whole string of very disquieting thoughts. You knew your life was to be turned topsy-turvy and as a young college graduate all my thoughts were shifted instantaneously from career to Army and survival. I guess you would say it was exciting, but it was alarming more than it was anything else. It was such an unknown.

SH: You knew that the United States was going to war, but, at this point, you were still 4-F.

CP: Yes. But I had a pretty good idea that would change in a hurry. See, after Pearl Harbor, they knew they were going to need a lot more people in the military than was true during the peacetime draft. They lowered the physical requirements quickly, and eye requirements were the first to go.

SH: Where did you report after you were drafted?

CP: I reported on April 3rd. [laughter] It's another date that doesn't get away from me, April 3, 1942, and was sent to Fort Dix.

SH: In 1943 or 1942?

CP: Oh, I'm sorry, '42. I was sent to Fort Dix, which was a processing center. The draft boards all over New Jersey, and probably other areas, sent their recruits to Fort Dix. I was only there for a couple of weeks, while they gave us shots and issued uniforms and all that kind of stuff. Then, I was put on a train that ended up in Camp Croft, at Spartanburg. … Basic training took three months. That was standard in all branches of the Army. Camp Croft was part of the infantry and infantry is, by far, the largest part of the Army. It's also one of the least desirable branches to be in, I might add. [laughter] … I was very conscious of that, but, while we were taking basic training, which was hard and it was also worrisome, because of what we were going to be getting into after the end of basic training. … So, anyhow, … you recognize, the mix of people you get in a place like that is all over the lot, … but there were four other fellows in my platoon, who were also college graduates and we just, naturally drifted together and spent our spare time together. … About halfway through basic training, there came an announcement about how you could apply for Officer Candidate School, if you wanted to. So, the five of us immediately decided that's what we wanted to do, but there was also an uncertainty. … We all talked about it, because, if the infantry is a bad, risky branch to be in, being an officer in the infantry is even more risky. [laughter] … But we all decided to apply. I've always remembered, this one fellow came up with a great line. I think he went to Penn, if I remember correctly. … In those days, I'm not sure whether they do anymore, the dress officer's uniform was an olive green jacket and a

twill trouser, which … was light colored, kind of having a little pink tinge. They were familiarly referred to as "pinks." In our conversations about the potential risks of being an officer in the infantry, this fellow said, … "I'm going to apply. If I'm going to die, I want to die with pinks on." [laughter] … So, we applied. Of those five, in fact, one fellow had not gone to college, but he was a great person who was of interest to us and vice versa; four of us were accepted for OCS and he wasn't. … I got really heartrending letters from him for some time after. He was just crestfallen and didn't know what in the world was going to become of him. It was tough, but, anyway, I was accepted. … This might be time for another little anecdote, which I think is interesting. I still had my glasses and I still had [problems with] my eyes, and I was not at all sure I would be able to pass the physical for OCS. They had tougher physical requirements for officers than they did to just be a private. … We had to go through a physical exam at the post hospital and I was really on needles and pins, as to how I'd make out. I went sailing through, with everything being fine, until, finally, I got to the place where they were testing eyes. … It was just an alcove in the corridor, which provided an opportunity to be out of the traffic. … There was an eye chart at one end and you stood at the other end and the examiner asked you [to read it]. I couldn't read the line he wanted. … I had this tech sergeant who was doing the test, and he was the nicest guy, one of the nicest guys I've ever met. He was patient with me. He said, "Well, try again." Then, "Well, I'll tell you what; just close your eyes for a couple of seconds and open them. Sometimes, you see better," and, "Take your glasses off and rest your eyes." Well, you know, he couldn't do this for very long, because it would hold up the works. … Boy, I just saw my chances going through the floor. But, finally, he said, "Well, look, come with me," and he took me across the hall and into a room, which was obviously a room that was used for eye tests, too, but it was an empty room, dark, … had nobody in it. … He seated me in a chair and there was a chart down at the other end, a different chart, one of those ones with a halo of light around it. … He said, "Let's see what you can do with this." I couldn't read it, and, finally, he said, "Well, I'll tell you what; I've got to do a couple things. Why don't you take your glasses off and close your eyes, rest your eyes, and I'll be back in a couple of minutes and we'll take another shot at it," and he went out and closed the door. You know what I did immediately was walk to the other end of the room and memorize it forward and backward, [laughter] and, when he came back, I zinged it off. Well, I've thought of that incident many, many times since. I'm sure he knew what I was going to do and he gave me the opportunity to save myself. If it hadn't been for him, I probably wouldn't have made it to OCS, and a lot of things would have been different in my life. … Anyway, toward the end of basic training, the word came as to who had been accepted for Officer Candidate School and where you were going. … Mostly, we all went to Fort Benning, because that's the Infantry Officer Candidate School. It was like advanced basic training, only in spades. It was much, much more difficult, and, of course, more advanced, because you had the prior training. It lasted three months. I graduated in October of '42. When you graduated, you got an automatic leave, about ten days, and then you reported to your operating assignment. So, I had the chance to go home and I had a nice time before having to report to Fort Jackson, which is just outside of Columbia, South Carolina. Fort Jackson is a much bigger post than Camp Croft was, and it still exists. It's been there for many years. So, anyhow, I reported in to Fort Jackson and I was assigned to an infantry regiment, which is where all these new second lieutenants were going. When you went in, the Colonel, who commanded the regiment, interviewed everybody. He talked to you a little bit, he looked at your record, … probably to help him decide where he wanted to put you in the regiment. … Anyway, I was assigned to an infantry company and I had great trepidations, because I didn't feel that I really

knew enough to be too effective. It wasn't my kind of thing and I had very few intuitive skills to bring to the job. Anyway, there I was. … By gosh, it was only three or four days later, I got a message to report to Colonel (Ellis'?) office. He was the regimental commander, and the regiment was part of the 100th Infantry Division. … I should have explained; the 100th was a new division being created right there at that time. As is standard practice in the military, the 100th had what is known in the Army as a cadre, which are experienced officers and non-coms who have been taken from other units and brought together to be the nucleus of the new unit. You've got to have somebody who knows what they're doing. Then, they filled in the bulk of the officers and the bulk of the non-coms and that's where we new lieutenants were sprinkled all through the division. But the division still didn't have soldiers. The draftees would come later, after we were organized. Well, anyway, Colonel Ellis said that Division Headquarters, which was the top unit, was looking for someone to be an assistant G-2 and, primarily, a public relations officer. He remembered … talking with me about how I'd worked for the AP and I'd studied journalism and how I'd sold some articles to national magazines, and so he had suggested me. … He had sent my record up to headquarters and they wanted to talk to me, … for which I was everlastingly grateful to him, [laughter] because, as you can see, I felt I could be a real contributor there since journalism was my specialty. So, I went down and was interviewed by the head of G-2. G-2 is military lingo for the military intelligence section of any headquarters. In addition to the commanding general and assistant commanding general, every headquarters consists of four major subdivisions. One is G-1, which is personnel. Next is G-2, which is military intelligence; G-3 is operations; and G-4 is supply. I was interviewed by the head of the G-2 Section and, apparently, he liked me, and so, he took me in to meet the chief of staff, who's a really high honcho, a full colonel, and we talked a little bit and, apparently, he liked me, and so, then, they took me in to meet the commanding general, which was very unusual. He was the first general I'd ever met. [laughter] … We talked a little bit and everybody sprinkled holy water on me, and, from that point on, I was an assistant G-2. I did a lot of military intelligence work, too, but, among other things, I specifically had the public relations function. I moved to a new housing [unit], … where the officers for division headquarters stayed and was billeted with a young guy who was a cavalry [officer]. Cavalry was practically dead, but he was a cavalry second lieutenant. The cavalry was mechanized at this point. They didn't have horses anymore, but, anyway, he was a nice guy and he was a Southern fellow who'd grown up in Georgia. I [was] there probably a week, I guess during which I came to learn he was kind of a ladies' man. … He was always on the go and he was in and out all the time. One day he said to me, "Hey, … I've got a date Saturday night. Would you like me to see if she can find somebody for you?" and I said, "Yes, I'd like to do that," and so, he did. We went and I met my wife. She had finished Converse and she was working as a continuity writer at the local NBC radio station. We hit it off right away. … She and the girl who arranged my blind date, and three others, were all living together in a shared apartment. When I took her back, … I remember, this was a Saturday … I asked her if she'd like to go out Monday night and she said, "Yes," and so we started going out every other night, until we started going out every night. … She doesn't like me to tell this story much, but I do anyhow: A month after we met, we were engaged and, two months after that, we were married. Of course, you have to put it in the context of the time. It was a very, very uncertain time. Nobody knew what was going to happen next and, most particularly, as related to me, I had no idea how long I'd be around before I'd be sent overseas. So, it was a case [of now-or-never]. … We were quite sure we were deeply in love with each other, because we questioned each other: "You know, this is going awful fast," [laughter] but, anyway, we were

married in February, and then, as it worked out, it was about a year-and-a-half before I went overseas. … Of course, we had no way of knowing that in advance. As proof of the rightness of what we did: last week we celebrated our sixty-first wedding anniversary.

SH: Did you go back to her home to get married? How did she meet your family?

CP: Yes, I met her family at Christmas, which was a month before the wedding. She didn't meet my family until the wedding.

SH: Where in North Carolina was she from?

CP: Southeastern, a little town called Tabor City. It's about thirty miles inland from Wilmington, North Carolina. It's a rural town. Her father was a livestock dealer in town. You were asking me about the South and how I liked it, and I have, I think, a funny story. We didn't have a car, so, to get to her home, we had to take the train from Columbia to Florence, [South Carolina], and then, her mother and sister drove about forty-five miles to meet us. With gasoline rationing and gas stamps, they had an awful job scratching enough together, but they drove over to meet us at the train in Florence and drove us back. Anyway, her mother said, after we'd met, "Charlie, would you like to drive?" and I said, " I don't mind," and so, Dot and I got in the front seat and her mother and sister got in the back seat. We were driving along, and her sister, who has always been kind of a chatterbox-type person, and very personable started asking me questions: "Well, Charlie, how do you like the South?" I said, "Oh, gee, I really like it. I think the South is terrific." Then, I can't remember exactly, but she probably asked me things like, "How do you like Southern pine trees?" "Oh, I think they're terrific," and, "How do you like southern beaches?" "Oh, I think they're great." But I'm saying to myself, "My gosh, everything she asks me, I'm saying, 'It's great.' I'm going to lose credibility." About that time, she said, "Well, Charlie, how do you like Southern fried chicken?" and I said, "Well, now, I will have to say, I think that's something about the South that's overrated." … My sole experience with Southern fried chicken, up to that point, had been back in New Jersey, when my mother, who was a very good cook, read a recipe in the paper on how to do Southern fried chicken. She made it for us and, oh, it was a disaster. We all thought it was awful and we said, "Boy, we don't want to ever have this again." Of course, knowing what I know now, she probably got the wrong kind of chicken, to begin with, and, second, technique is an important part of making Southern fried chicken come out well, and, of course, she didn't have that. Boy, there was a dead silence in the car, and then, this voice, out of the back seat, came and said, "Well, that's what we're having for dinner." [laughter] … I tried the rest of the drive to dig myself out of that pit I'd made. When we got home … and it got to be dinnertime I was uneasy. So boy, I had a piece of this fried chicken and it was one of the best things I'd ever put in my mouth. I raved about it. Anyway, they were passing platters and bowls around for second helpings and, when the chicken came to me, they said, "Now, Charlie, don't feel you have to have any more. We understand." I said, "Oh, no, no, I want some more, I like it." … It was a funny little episode in the family, that I've remembered longer than anybody else. Nobody else involved remembers it, except me telling it, but, boy, it's etched on me. Anyhow, that was my introduction to my future in-laws. [laughter] …

SH: Did you get married in North Carolina?

CP: Yes, at her home. … There wasn't a Presbyterian church in her town. They were a rather prominent family and had zillions of friends, who were just great, and, boy, they were so gracious to me. It doesn't happen as much now as it used to, but you still hear people from the North who say, "Oh, you know, they don't like me because I'm a damn Yankee." You know, I've never experienced that. Now, admitting, I had a special entrée, with getting married, and so forth, but I just never experienced antagonism or unfriendliness. Of course sometimes we joke about it: "Oh, you're a damn Yankee, you wouldn't understand that," [laughter] but it's all in good fun. … So, my experience [in the South] has been totally positive in every respect. In fact, I think, if I might add, just on a social/cultural level, if you lined them up in rows, people in the South are, generally speaking, a lot nicer and more friendly than most people from the North. I run into people from New Jersey all the time, because there are so many Northerners who live down here now. … Sometimes, I am kind of embarrassed because here are people from my home state who are acting boorish while the locals are being nice. [laughter] But, anyway, go ahead, what were you going to [ask]?

SH: After you were married, were you unable to have a honeymoon, since you had to return to the Army?

CP: No, we did have a honeymoon, because I was able to manage to get a leave. My boss, the G-2, it so happened, went to West Point. He was only about a year older than I was, but, being a West Pointer, he had, built up grade. He was a major at that time. He had been at Fort Jackson with the 77th Division, and then, he was one of the cadre that was transferred over to help form the 100th. So, while he had been in Columbia, he'd met his wife and they'd gotten married about a year before we were. It was pretty easy to get him to agree to me having some leave time for a honeymoon. … My mother and sister came down for the wedding, and that's when Dot met them. She hadn't met my father, because he felt he had to work and couldn't take time off. So, we took our honeymoon by going to New York. … We spent a few days in New York, because Dot had never been there, and I showed her around there. Then, we went out to New Jersey to spend two or three days with my family. … I can't remember precisely, [but] I'm sure I must have driven her over to New Brunswick to show her Rutgers, but, anyway, that was when she met my father. So, we had, probably, a week or eight days for our honeymoon, which was pretty good at that time.

SH: Did you then return to Fort Jackson?

CP: Yes. We had been fortunate enough to find an absolutely idyllic place to live. With the post there, Columbia was pretty filled up. … It happened there was a professor at the University of South Carolina who had a beautiful, big brick house in one of the nicest subdivision areas, really, in the whole city. It was really a beautiful place. … They had, in their backyard, a little brick house, kind of matching the big one, which was a guest house, where they could put people up. They had decided, in keeping with the war and all the problems everybody had finding [lodging], to rent that guest house out to somebody, and it happened to be us. We heard about it through somebody who Dot knew and we called and got it. It was a little two-room thing. It consisted of a living room with a sofa bed and a kitchen and a bath, and that was it. … But we

even had a little, tiny garden outside the door. It was just charming and, although we ended up only being in it, I guess, about four months, … it was idyllic.

SH: How was the 100th formed and where did you go?

CP: The 100th formed at Fort Jackson and was in training there for about ten months. Then we went to a maneuver area, which had been established by the Army in Tennessee. A maneuver area is a rather sizable tract of land, encompassing towns, farms and all sorts of things. I don't recall the dimensions anymore, but I would suppose the Tennessee maneuver was as big as a county, or maybe two. … The Tennessee Maneuver Area was where all the units, or at least all infantry units, in the eastern half of the country went for advanced training. Maneuvers are where you play at fighting a war. … They have referees who keep track and were out there with the troops. You get credit when you knocked out an "enemy" position, or you were killed because you didn't. The maneuver area was run by the Second Army, which is a high command. You've got a division, above that you've got a corps, and above the corps you've got an army. The Second Army ran the Tennessee Maneuver Area. Well, how it happened I never knew, but due to my public relations background, Second Army reached out and plucked me out of the 100th and took me up to the Tennessee Maneuver Area, in their headquarters, to be part of their public relations section. It was temporary duty, not permanent, and I was a little uneasy about that. I thought I might not be able to get back to the 100th. Anyway, Dot and I went up to Lebanon, Tennessee, which is a small town, county seat, east of Nashville that was where the headquarters of the Second Army was. It was on the campus of a little college, Cumberland University, which they'd completely taken over. The college wasn't operating. … Its claim to fame was that Cordell Hull, who was then the Secretary of State, graduated from Cumberland University. … Anyway, you weren't supposed to take your wife up to the maneuvers, but we weren't about to not go together. My wife, by the way, was pregnant by that time. … Anyway, we took the train up over the mountains and … rumbled into Lebanon. Of course, the little town was just inundated and it was very difficult to find a place for your wife to live there. If it had been difficult in Columbia, it was much more difficult [in Lebanon]. The best you could hope for was a room. We got a room through the Travelers Aid Society, but we didn't like it and my wife got out immediately and started looking. … She found one in a big, old house where they were renting … rooms to about five different military couples. So, it was rather nice. It was on kind of a pretty little street, right across the street from the campus. [laughter] … The rules were, I had to eat my meals in the mess hall; however, there was no rule which said I had to sleep in the billet on the campus. … So, anyway, there was a lady down the street who was operating a dining room in her home. All the wives went there to eat. … Dot would eat there and I would eat over [in the mess hall]. Then, I'd go home, after dinner, and, we'd spend the night together. Occasionally, I would go down and have dinner with her at the boarding house. It was really quite a different world, but it was an interesting experience. … Anyway, I was there four months, and then, the 100th Division was ordered to the Tennessee Maneuver Area, to go on maneuvers, out in the field, not at the headquarters. At that point, … I then transferred back to the 100th. … By that time, Dot was getting on in her pregnancy, so we decided it would be best for her to go home to stay with her family. Since I was already out in the boondocks with the division she had to go home by herself on the train, a twenty-three-year-old gal, very pregnant, but she got there okay. … I was on maneuvers with the 100th for two months, and then, from there, we were transferred to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, as our new post. … By that

time, unfortunately, Dot had had a stillbirth. Fortunately, I was able to go home briefly on emergency leave. When the 100th was sent to Fort Bragg, Dot came up to meet me. … We were at Fort Bragg for, probably, about eight months, I guess, and, … by good fortune, again, we got a nice, little brick house that we rented and it really worked out quite well. Of course, again, everything was always on edge, because you never knew, [from] one minute to the next what was going to happen. Eventually, the 100th division was sent, to Camp Kilmer. That was the embarkation point for service in the European Theater of War. …

SH: What month and year was this?

CP: This was October of '43. … No, wait a minute, no, October '44; we were married and it was a year-and-a-half later before I went overseas. We were married in February of '43. This was October of '44.

SH: Okay, it is before the Battle of the Bulge, but after D-Day.

CP: Yes. I didn't mind a bit missing D-Day. [laughter] At any rate, we were sent to Camp Kilmer, but, at that time, everything was very hush-hush. … They didn't want anybody to know the division was even moving, let alone where it was going because of fear that German spies would find out and be able to trigger a submarine attack on the troop convoy. … So, among other things, you weren't allowed to let anybody know that you were at Camp Kilmer, but there were my parents, ten miles away. I don't remember how, I guess I did it by telephone, I let Dot know. … I couldn't tell her where I was going to be, but I suggested she come up and visit my parents. [laughter] … So, she did, and I managed to get over to Farmwood two or three times, and see them. We were at Camp Kilmer for a couple of weeks, I guess, and then, we shipped out. Our convoy, including our division and other units as well, was the first military convoy to go through the Straits of Gibraltar after the South of France had fallen. We went through the Straits and up to Marseilles, which had only been liberated a matter of weeks before. The port was undamaged so they were able to bring the convoy in and unload. … Then, we went by truck caravan, which is a typical movement that infantry divisions do all the time, to get from Marseilles to the front lines. We went into an area you probably don't know, the Vosges Mountains, V-O-S-G-E-S, which is a mountain range on the border between France and Germany. Most particularly, Alsace is in the Vosges Mountains. … You may remember that Alsace-Lorraine was a great area of contention, through the years, between France and Germany, because it was part of France. The Germans took it away in World War I, then the French got it back, and then the Germans got it back in World War II. So, when we got there, it was in German hands. The battlefront was right at that point when we went into the frontlines in October of '44. … We fought through the Vosges Mountains and out to the Rhine River, and on through northern Germany to the end. The frontline in Europe, if you thought of it in terms of the military units, the British were at the northern end of the front, under the command of British General Bernard Montgomery. Then came the Americans, and we had the biggest sector. … First was the First Army, which General Omar Bradley commanded. Then came the Third Army under the command of General George Patton. And then, there was the Seventh Army, which is what the 100th joined. … Then, beyond the southern end of our lines were the Free French, who had been recruited by the French, with the help of the Allies, to get people out of Northern Africa to come and help. They were between us and the Swiss border.

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

SH: Tape two, side two. Please, continue. You were talking about the First Army.

CP: So, anyhow, we went into the frontlines. We fought through a major part of the Vosges Mountains, and then, we came to an important stronghold of the French Maginot Line. You may remember that the Germans built an armored fortress line to keep the French out. They called it the Siegfried Line. The French in turn built a line, I'm talking now between World Wars, called the Maginot Line, which was the same kind of thing, except the guns were pointing toward Germany. These lines consisted of concrete pillboxes, buried halfway in the ground, with lots of concrete tank traps in between and lots of big artillery guns. They never worked. They were worthless, really. When the Germans came in and captured France, they just went around the Maginot Line, and then, after they took it over. Then they turned all the guns around so [that] they were aimed back toward France. … So, when we came, this was a major obstacle. And we hit the Maginot Line at one of its major fortifications. The fortification centered on the town of Bitche, B-I-T-C-H-E. It's a moderate-sized town, but, you can imagine, the American soldiers had a lot of fun with its name. … Just as we were ready to attack, we were stopped by orders from SHAEF. The Battle of the Bulge had occurred up north, and, in order to contain that very dangerous German breakthrough, … SHAEF [Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force] had to pull units in from other areas to help. If the Germans broke through into the American rear area, it would have been a debacle. … One of the most important units they wanted was the Third Army, with all its tanks and agility of movement. So, they pulled the whole Third Army out of the line, leaving a great, big hole next to the Seventh Army. Then the Seventh Army had to spread out and cover both its own front and the front that the Third Army had left, which meant that our line was very thin. … There was a lot of concern at the time that the Battle of the Bulge may have been a feint to cause us to do just that. Then the Germans meanwhile, might be lying back in the woods and going to come in and really hit us hard where our line was so thin. Later, of course, we all learned [that] was impossible because the Germans had no reserves and an attack in the south was impossible for them. They had put everything they had into the Bulge, but we didn't know that at the time. So, anyhow, we sat for about three months on the frontline, in front of, well, not in front of, but close to, this fortress of Bitche. As a result, the GIs in our division adopted the nickname that we were the "Sons of Bitche." [laughter] After the war, little membership cards were issued certifying we were "Sons of Bitche," unofficially, of course. … It's been a fun thing over the years. Anyway, the Battle of the Bulge was contained. There was a regrouping, and then, in the spring we launched what became the final offensive of the European war. We captured Bitche. It turned out not to be too bad, because, after they'd lost at the Battle of the Bulge, the Germans pulled back from Bitche. So, we just had to really walk in and take it, but … there was quite a fight to get to the Rhine River and to get across the Rhine. We went across at Mannheim and went on to the beautiful university town of Heidelberg. Heidelberg was saved. Both sides wanted to preserve it. I've been to Heidelberg several times, in later years, and you'd never know there had been a battle there. Of course, you wouldn't know there'd been a battle through any of these areas. They're all built-up or re-built now, but Heidelberg, with all its ancient treasures, was special. … The Neckar River is a major river coming into the Rhine in that area. We came in at Ludwigshafen-am-Main [Ludwigshafen-am-Rhein], and that's where we went across. Then, we wheeled and

went down the Neckar River to Stuttgart. Then, from Stuttgart, we went down into southwestern Germany on our way into Bavaria. In this pell-mell movement, there was really no fighting going on. The Germans were retreating and the Americans were advancing and you didn't often see each them. By that time, we'd been in the frontline without relief for about, oh, I guess, seven months. So we were pulled out of the line for rest and rehabilitation. That became, really, the end of the fighting for the 100th Division. But, I do have an interesting little thing you might be interested in about the war in the Pacific, as it affected the 100th Division. See, after the war ended in Europe, we all went into bivouac-type areas, … in towns and cities where we all had responsibility for occupation. … There were many more troops in Europe after the fighting than were needed, so headquarters had to do something with them. So, we all were in our occupation areas. Ours was around Stuttgart, quite a significant area. … Along in, I guess, July or so, of '45, a notice came out from Supreme Headquarters that designated divisions and corps, all of whom hadn't been in Europe for as long as some of the troops who had been in Africa, Sicily, Italy, and D-Day were going to have to go to the Pacific. … Boy, I'll tell you, next to not wanting to be in Europe, not wanting to be in the Pacific was the fervent desire of all troops. Aside from the tough fighting in the jungles and the islands, we knew an attack on the Japanese home islands had to be in the offing. … Anyway, we were designated to go. So, the division was told to pack all its weaponry in cosmoline. You don't know what cosmoline is, maybe, but it's a sticky, ugly, greasy substance and everything metal is packed in that, because it protects from rusting, particularly if you're going to ship it overseas. … It's a pain in the neck to put on and it's hell to get it off. … At any rate, the division was told to pack all of its weaponry and get ready for transport to the Pacific. Meanwhile, we were to send … one officer from the G-2 Section to a special school, just outside of Paris, to learn about Japanese intelligence. I was the one chosen to go. I was ambivalent. I thought it was great to get to be near Paris for a couple of weeks, but the whole outlook of the Pacific was terrible. I went up to the school and it wasn't in Paris; it was about sixteen miles out. It was, in fact, on the grounds of a French chateau. We were living in … the livery stable, but, I mean, the chateau was the setting, generally. They had flown a bunch of intelligence officers in from the Pacific, who were familiar with the military situation in the Pacific. … They gave us lectures on Japanese tactics and how to identify their planes at a distance. You have to be able to recognize planes by their silhouette, because, often, you see them coming at a distance and you can't see enough of them, but if you have learned how to differentiate between the silhouettes of our planes, the British planes, the Japanese planes you know how to react quickly. [laughter] … So, anyway, I went back there to learn about Japanese intelligence, and it was kind of a nice little interlude. I had a weekend in Paris in the middle of it, but it was … right toward the end of that weekend that the first atomic bombing, of Hiroshima, took place, and, of course, you know, it was gigantic news everywhere. … In one respect it was horrible, when you thought about it and you heard more about what was happening on the ground in Hiroshima, but I can tell you, there was nobody in the Army in Europe who was not in favor of that bombing. It gave us hope [that] maybe we wouldn't have to go over to the Pacific. … There had been a lot of talk, including at this meeting I went to, about … what was anticipated to be a horrendously bloody invasion of the main islands of Japan. Expensive in terms of lives, because it was felt the Japanese, who were very tough fighters, would fight especially hard to defend their home islands. It would be absolutely horrendous. … I remember writing a letter home to my wife, expressing my mixed feelings about this. Anyhow, I went back to the division at the end of our seminar, and I hadn't even had time to set up meetings to teach some of our intelligence personnel when the second bombing of Japan occurred. Then V-J Day.

Boy, I want you to know, there were a bunch of happy people around the 100th Division. [laughter] I didn't get to come home for about six months after that, because, again, we were not high on the totem pole for being cycled home. Of course, what we were doing on occupation duty wasn't difficult at all, so it wasn't bad at all. I got to come home in March of '46. … When they sent us home, we didn't come home as a division. We were all parceled out to other units, and I was with a tank destroyer battalion, which I knew nothing about, but it was just a way to get home. When we got back to Kilmer, we were assigned out to the Army post where we would go to be released. I had requested that I be sent to Fort Bragg so my wife would be able to come to meet me. The last day I spent on an Army post, while still on active duty, was April the 3rd, 1946. The first day on an Army post had been at Fort Dix, April the 3rd, 1942, and I always thought that was an interesting coincidence, to happen to be the exact same day. Now, I didn't tell you, as I was going through the account about rank because it seemed unnecessary. But now may be the time. Of course, I started out as a private then was commissioned a second lieutenant. I was promoted to first lieutenant while I was on my honeymoon. They sent me a wire to tell me.

SH: Nice wedding gift.

CP: Yes, … but the promotion from second lieutenant to first lieutenant, during the war, came kind of quickly. In peacetime, it takes much longer, but, during the war, it was a common thing, to be promoted within three or four month. It didn't mean you were brilliant. … While I was still in this country, I guess it was while I was at Fort Bragg, I was promoted to captain, and then, toward the end of the war, I was promoted to major, and that was the rank that I had when I left the military.

SH: What were you given the Bronze Star for?

CP: Not a specific act. In the scheme of things concerning decorations there are zillions of ribbons, for service in various theaters of war or this battle or that one. Those are not medals. They're just called ribbons, and everybody gets several of them. I had several for being in the European Theater, for being in the Rhine Offensive, that sort of thing. Then come the medals, which are much more significant. They aren't handed out wholesale. In the total scheme of the medals, if you figure the Congressional Medal of Honor is the highest one, the Bronze Star is the lowest one. [laughter] It isn't usually associated with an individual act. If there were an individual act, the person would have gotten a higher-ranking medal. … You got a Purple Heart if you were wounded, didn't make a difference how you got wounded. [laughter] You might have tripped on a rock, you know. … [For] the Bronze Star you had to be recommended, and the commanding general was nice enough to include me for one of them. … It was representative, really, of what you might call exemplary service during a combat situation, but not because you personally went out and were shot or something like that.

SH: What specifically were your duties when you were part of the 100th as you went up through France and into Germany?

CP: Well, as I mentioned, I was an assistant G-2 with major duties, including public relations. The rest was regular intelligence. While we were in this country, public relations was a fairly

significant thing, but when we got into combat, the G-2 stuff got to be more important. … In the public relations area I had a staff of three enlisted men who worked for me. They were journalists, too. … During combat there were a lot of things the Army didn't want you [to report on] for security reasons. They didn't want to disclose where your division was and what it was doing. So, we primarily kept track of events vis-à-vis individual soldiers in the division and whatever happened to them, whether they got a promotion, were they a hero?, obviously, did they get a medal?, etc. We would send out hometown releases by mail, back to the men's hometown paper, where, of course, they always got big play. … We thought that was an important morale booster, because, of course, the soldier probably didn't even know we were sending the release. But, boy, he'd immediately get a letter back from his family, telling him, "Oh, we're so proud of you," and, of course, that would boost that guy's morale. And, of course, it was a good morale booster on the home front, as well. That was kind of routine stuff, and I didn't do it, but I had the men who were with me doing it. … Then, in addition, war correspondents, who were covering the war, always wanted to be out around [the front]. They wanted to get firsthand accounts of the battle and of the people participating in it. All of the correspondents were accredited to Supreme Headquarters, which was back in Paris. They had a whole hotel that did nothing but house war correspondents, the Hotel Scribe, which is a pretty good hotel even today, and it's famous. When the correspondents wanted to go out to the front, they would go out to the next lower command from Supreme Headquarters, which would be an army group. As it implied, it was a group of armies. Seventh Army, of which we were a part, was a part of Sixth Army Group. Well, the army groups operated what were known as press camps. They would be twenty-five or thirty miles behind the front, so [that] they were out of the fighting, but they would offer housing, meals and information about the front. … The correspondents would come in there, and then, discuss with the army group's public relations people what kind of story they were looking for. The public relations people would then send the correspondents to the units and areas which fit their needs … Anyway, when they were ready to go out, the army group would … contact us and say they were sending certain correspondents through, when they would be there and that we should take care of them. I didn't have any capability to house them. I could give them a meal, but … they were on their own other than that. … We would welcome them in. They could unroll their bedroll in our area if they wanted to and we'd talk about things the 100th was doing, things that particular units were doing. All their dispatches had to be passed by censors back at Sixth Army Group so there was no concern about classified information leaking. They'd say, "Well, I think I'd like to go up and spend a day with this battalion, and maybe that one." What we'd do is, we'd take them up to the unit they'd chosen, because that close to the front, travel was kind of chancy. You didn't always know where the battalion headquarters was, because things would move. The last time you knew they were at one place, but, sometimes, they wouldn't still be there. … We had a number of famous correspondents come. I don't remember all of them, but I remember Walter Cronkite and Bob Trout. … Now that I'm trying to think of them, my mind is going blank a little bit, but there were a number of them. There was a Dick somebody or other from CBS, oh, Dick Hottelet, Dick Hottelet, yes. He was fairly well-known then, but he got to be very well-known after the war. He was a younger guy. … He was one of Murrow's people. [Editor's Note: Journalist Edward R. Murrow employed several war correspondents, known as the "Murrow Boys," during World War II.] So was Cronkite, later, but Cronkite, at that time, wasn't; Cronkite was covering for UPI, I think, United Press, which had a broadcast end to it. … So, anyhow, that was it as far as the correspondent's were concerned. When we were in combat the function of the

G-2 Section, and of all the Gs was to help the commanding general. They really gave him eyes and ears to enable him to do the things that he needed to do to operate the division. He had to make decisions, but he had to have information so the G-2 and G-3 sections were the ones right at his elbows. They were in the forward command post with the commanding general, assistant commanding general, and chief of staff. The G-1, which was personnel, and the G-4, which was supply, were in the rear echelon, which was a few miles back, out of the fighting, … because they didn't need to be right where the fighting was. … So, in the case of the G-2 Section, and what I was involved in then is, we collected and analyzed information about what the enemy was doing in front of us. We would do that by collecting information from our own fighting units, through interrogating prisoners that we would take, by sending out scouting patrols through the front lines for brief scouting sorties, etc. This latter was almost always at night. They'd … go out and be back, say, in two to six hours. Their objective would be to work their way through the lines, then, make a little sweep behind the enemy lines and observe what was going on. … Particularly, you wanted to know, "Do they have reinforcements?" because, if they had reinforcements built up, it probably meant they were going to make an attack. If there were no reinforcements back there, the chances are they were in a holding action, and it was very important, of course, to know that. … Then, it was important to know which German units were there. If they had one of their crack fighting units there, you were probably in for a tough fight . If they had a run-of-the-mill unit in front of you things probably would be easier. Because the Germans were getting so hard put for troops toward the end of the war, they began drafting older men and young kids into what they called *volks* divisions. If you could find out that the division, or the troops, whoever they were, facing you were in one of those *volks* divisions that was almost an invitation to go ahead and attack, because they wouldn't be effective in defending. On the other hand, if the opposition, for instance, was a hardened *panzer* division, that was another story. And it was part of our job [to find that out]. We had to know; it's called the enemy order of battle. You have to know not only what kind of tactics the Germans used in fighting, but, also, you had to know their units by name, by number, etc. Armed with that information, you knew that the Second *Panzer* Division was really tough, but the Tenth *Panzer* Division was all beaten up and probably wouldn't be as tough. Obviously, if you could find out what division … or what unit was out there in front of you, it gave you a feeling for what to expect as you tried to move forward. With that kind of information, from myriad sources, coming into the G-2 Section we maintained a big operations map and on it we had the frontline plotted. We'd have acetate covers, so [that] you could write with wax pencils. We'd also then mark in the different units of Germans that we were able to identify. The G-3 people, who handled operations were concerned with our units. We were concerned with the enemy's units.

SH: I see.

CP: … What would happen [was], the commanding general, or the assistant division commander, or others who needed it, would come in, particularly at night, because we kept this so-called war room operating twenty-four hours a day. There was always an officer on duty. So, no matter when they came, there was someone to answer their questions. … They'd ask for a briefing while standing there, looking at this map. Then they would ask questions: "Now, tell me; explain about that; tell me about this." Usually, the G-2 would give the briefing, unless he wasn't there for some reason then the assistant G-2s would fill in. … It became, really, an interpretation of [the data], translating from numbers on a map to realities on the ground. For

instance, you could say things like, "Well, this German unit wasn't there yesterday. They've come in since then, and that may mean so-and-so and so-and-so." The G-3s would do a similar thing, because he'd keep track of our own units. … "This unit just got into position and they've been out of the line for two days, we've really got to give them a few hours to kind of settle down. They're all in a jumble right now," … or, "I would estimate it would take two hours to get this battalion from where it is to over where we want to use it, but … they have to use roads that are pretty narrow and it'll take awhile to get there." You know, that sort of thing. Nothing about combat is good. I mean, it was varying degrees of not so bad. I didn't have it as bad as the guys who were right in the frontlines. Depending on whether we were in a defensive mode or an offensive mode, Division Headquarters might be up close behind the frontlines or as much as a mile behind the frontlines, because you've got to leave room for the regiments and the battalions and all, and you try to allow depth, so that they can absorb blows without breaking. … Wherever it's located, division headquarters is still a lot better place than being in a foxhole, I tell you.

SH: What was the closest call you think you ever had?

CP: I guess the toughest I had was, one time; … I don't know that it was a tough time, maybe it wasn't, but I didn't know it, and given those circumstances, it doesn't really matter. [laughter] I had been sent back to SHAEF Headquarters in Paris. I was just back there a couple days and [was about to] come back to the division. … During the time that I was there, … I knew the 100th Division had launched an offensive against the Maginot Line at Bitche to get up to the Rhine River. I had a jeep driver and we knew that in that kind of situation you always had the problem of finding your unit again, because the frontline is fluid things move fast. So, when we were coming back, we knew the offensive had just jumped off, but, of course, that wouldn't mean that anybody had moved at all. It depended on how successful that attack had been. … Anyway, when we got to Sixth Army Group headquarters, I stopped in at the G-3 Section, to find out if they could tell me where the 100th Division headquarters was. Of course, they had their big map, too, with troop dispositions on it. [laughter] … They told me that, "We're not sure. It probably has moved, but we don't have the latest information. We suggest you stop at Seventh Army Headquarters and they'll have a closer touch on that." It was beginning to get kind of late. It was well after dark Seventh Army headquarters. I asked the same thing and they told me, "Yes, they have moved. They're not where they were. They've moved up toward the Rhine, but we're not sure just exactly where, [laughter] but they're up in this area." They showed us an area. What had happened was that the Germans, after the Battle of the Bulge, had essentially evacuated the area between where the frontline had been and the Rhine River. They were going to make another stand at the Rhine. So, they had pulled out, but, of course, our people didn't know that until they started to attack and they didn't find anybody there. In that kind of a situation, you've got a pell-mell rush. It stops being soldiers walking on foot; you climb into trucks and you leapfrog ahead, as far as you think you can get. … So, as a result of that, Alsace, which is where the Maginot Line was, was now, essentially, empty. … So, anyhow, we got down, trying to follow the sketchy information Seventh Army had given us. You wouldn't believe it unless you experienced it, but, when a front moves fast like that, there becomes an absolute vacuum behind it, because the enemy is moving, withdrawing, and your troops are moving fast to keep the pressure on the enemy. There's nobody behind them, because the rear echelon people are still way back where they were before, and they don't come up to fight.

[laughter] They come up later, after it's safe, and so, consequently, you're going through this absolute no man's land and, particularly, at night, there was not a living soul to be seen. It was something to being on the moon, I suspect. The people were all in their houses with their shutters closed, hoping they will not be injured. … So, anyhow, we're driving through this area and I remember, … particularly, going through the city of Saarbrucken. It's moderately well-known, but a city of, probably, a couple hundred thousand. Well, it was just … like a graveyard. I mean, there wasn't anything but rubble. When you're driving through an area that's been under battle that way, between the artillery bombings and the enemy blowing up bridges, as the Germans did as they retreated, you don't know where [you are]. … There's not a sign, because one of the standard things that every military does, particularly when they are evacuating an area, is take down all the road signs, because you don't want to make it easy for the enemy to find their way. … So, we came along in this jeep in this absolutely desolate area and all I had was a revolver, and the jeep driver had a revolver. We'd drive, drive; we'd think, "Well, we think there's a road ahead." We'd drive three or four miles up that road and we'd come to a blown up bridge. So, then, we'd have to turn around and go back to find another road that we thought would [work]. You know, it took forever, and going through Saarbrucken, which was really, mostly, rubble by that time. We had the same thing; you couldn't get through streets. You know, you'd come up and there'd be rubble blocking the street. Then, you'd have to go back around, try to find [a clear route], and always wondering if there were mines, … and, also, of course, never knowing whether some of the houses might be shielding Germans who slipped in there and were bypassed. … Here, they'd find us coming along and think it was a particularly good opportunity to get hold of a jeep, so [that] they could fool our troops. … So, I think maybe that was the hairiest event I was involved in. It was really a scary night. It took us practically the whole night to get through, and we eventually caught up with the division at daybreak. They were not quite up to the Rhine River, but near. … It wasn't dangerous in the way it worked out, but, on the other hand, we didn't know that. [laughter]

SH: Do you now look back and see how World War II impacted you as the man you are today?

CP: Oh, very much, always have, yes. I've often said, and I think it's true, if you survived it, war was one of the greatest experiences you could have. But, boy, I wouldn't want to do it again. [laughter] … The things that you took part in, the things you saw were very maturing, and they were just exciting. I remember so clearly, when we were going overseas, we were part of a big convoy. Because of the German submarines, you had to have a big convoy. … They'd put all the troopships and supply ships together, and then, ring them with destroyers to fend off submarines. I remember standing on the deck one afternoon. It was about sunset. It was a clear, beautiful day, and the sun going down was glinting off the water, and there were ships as far as you could see, in all directions. I could not see ocean that didn't have ships in it and I remember thinking, "My God, what a sight." And, of course, you'd never see that except in wartime. When I came home, I came back on one little, old Victory ship, sailing all by itself, through the middle of a storm. [laughter] I didn't know whether it'd survive.

SH: Do you remember the name of the ship?

CP: That ship, no. It was a Victory ship. I don't remember its name. The one I went to Europe on was the *George Washington*, which had been a passenger ship, and was larger than most of

the other troop ships. … It didn't hold the entire 100th Division, because it couldn't hold all of it. … It had been a cruise ship, or an ocean-going vessel, for a good many years. It was not new, but it was, of course, stripped down for troop movement, and the troops slept in hammocks. … Coming back on that Victory ship, I often have remembered this. As I said, we went through a storm in the North Atlantic and, for two or three days, the sea was really rough. … I didn't get seasick, but I wasn't at all sure I might not. … When you were down below, in your cabin, the ship groaned something fierce. All the bolts, as the ship is tugged one way and then another, squeak and they grind, and it's kind of scary, but it's also kind of annoying. You want to get away from it, and particularly since I was afraid I might get seasick if I stayed below decks too long. I thought the better place would be up in the fresh air. So, I spent a good bit of time on deck. … I can remember so clearly, I was on one of the upper decks, not the main deck, but looking out to the forward [area], and the sea, oh, the waves were just huge. … The ship would … come to a big wave and it'd go, [imitates creaking], just shaking, you know, fighting its way, trying to get to the top, … and the bow would go under water. The ship would dive into the [wave], and then, to get it back up, there was this great shaking motion, or sensation, and, eventually, it would break through and we'd be up on top of the wave for a minute, and then, we'd plummet down to the bottom of the next wave. … I remember thinking to myself, "Boy, I hope this ship can hold together," and then, I thought, "Oh, that's silly. They're made for this sort of thing. It's all right." … Of course, it was all right and I got home without incident. A year or two later, after I was long gone from the Army, there was one of these old Victory ships that had been converted to commercial use that was coming from Europe to the US, and they got in a storm and the ship broke in half. … It got tremendous news play, because, … while the captain put the crew off in lifeboats he stayed with the ship. He stayed with the aft end of the ship, which was a little bigger, and I guess a little [more stable], after the bow broke off. He was there for a week or two. … I didn't know at the time, but it's something to do with the tradition of the sea, and, also, the ownership of the ship. If a ship breaks up, or is otherwise abandoned, it's fair game. Anybody who goes up to it and gets on and says, "This is my ship," it's their ship. It's a law of the sea. … There's a technical term for it, but, anyway, as long as the captain stayed on there, nobody else could take it. But, meanwhile, the press was covering this like mad. Airplanes were going out, taking pictures, so that it was big news in the papers, for at least a couple weeks. The only thing that kept going through my mind was, "My God, I'm glad I didn't know about this when I was coming home from Europe!" [laughter]

SH: For sure. We just have a few more minutes to talk.

CP: Okay, well, whatever fits your needs.

SH: I would like to quickly wrap up the interview with your post-war career and your family.

CP: Okay, well, my family, I told you about my wife, meeting and getting married. We celebrated our sixty-first wedding anniversary last Friday.

SH: Fantastic, congratulations.

CP: Happily, we live in a retirement community here. That's why we came to Hilton Head. We retired, originally, to Skidaway Island in Savannah, but, there was not a quality retirement

community like this one here, the Cypress, and we moved here ten years ago. … One of the features of a retirement community, a good retirement [community], is that it has its own nursing facility, and that's true here. Unfortunately, my wife is now in the nursing facility, but we were able to go out and go to a restaurant and have dinner last night, and so, we had a nice time. … Anyway, we have one son, Jerry. He is a vice-president of FMC Corporation. I don't know whether you're familiar with it, but it's a large company. The initials originally stood for Food and Machinery Corporation, but, when they grew far beyond that, they went down to the initials, like IBM did and others. He is vice-president in charge of their Washington operations. … He and his wife live in Northern Virginia and have four sons. … Through his good effort, [laughter] we have a good-sized family.

SH: You just had the one son.

CP: Yes. As far as my post-war career goes, I returned to Vicks. They had done a very nice job of keeping in touch with the fellows who were in the military, and we got newsletters regularly, keeping us [abreast] of what was going on back in the office. So, I went back, because I liked Vicks and I wanted to work there. The executive training program I was in was designed to run for a year and I'd only been in it nine months. But they didn't try to pick up on that after the war. … They had a subsidiary in the prescription pharmaceutical industry, which they had acquired, in Cincinnati. A man from Vicks had gone out as head of that company and he had selected me to join him. I was there for about two-and-a-half years. I was still kind of a trainee, because, obviously, there was a lot I didn't know, but I learned. … Then, I was transferred back to New York, with Vicks, because the prescription pharmaceutical company had an international operation located with the Vicks people in New York. … I went to the international operation and I was there six years and it was an extremely interesting period. I became a market manager. If you think of the world, no one person can take care of everything, so, you have certain countries [assigned] to certain people, and I was the market manager for the Philippine Islands and for Puerto Rico. … Apart from being a very stimulating business experience, and learning a tremendous amount while doing [it], … of course, that was the kind of thing that I really wanted to go to Vicks for in the first place. …

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

SH: This is tape three of an interview with Charles Prout. Please, continue about your career. We got cut off with the last tape.

CP: Okay. Well, I think I was talking about the responsibilities I had in the international area and the stimulation, that that was one of the things that originally had made me want to go to Vicks. … I felt I got some great training, and particularly since I had not studied business in college, I was starting a little behind. … Anyway, I did that and, at the end of six years there, I made a shift. I took a job with Mead Johnson & Company, which is also in the pharmaceutical business, and infant nutritional products, most famous for Pablum, and Poly-Vi-Sol and Metracal are some of the more famous ones. They were headquartered in Evansville, Indiana, and I went there as director of public relations. That was the angle that I got in through, but my marketing experience served me in great good stead while I was there. I did a lot of marketing. … Anyway, I was … at Mead Johnson for nine years, and, again, had a tremendously interesting

and rewarding experience, doing lots of things that I never dreamed I'd get to do, that worked very well. … Then, I took a job with Cutler Hammer Incorporated, which was an industry shift for me. I had previously been in the drug industry and Cutler Hammer is in the electrical and electronics industry. But, of course, what I was doing by that time was general management. It wasn't important for me to know the product technicalities because there were all kinds of people around who knew the technical side but the people who run the whole affair have to have some broader skills. Anyway, I went to Cutler Hammer, which is headquartered in Milwaukee. I went there as director of corporate relations and, about five years later, was promoted to vice-president, and, also, corporate secretary. … My range of activities was broad. I got back into international business, to a degree, and did a lot of traveling around the world on business. … Then, Cutler Hammer was acquired by the Eaton Corporation in Cleveland. To give you a scale, Mead Johnson was about a two-hundred-million-dollar-a-year sales company. Cutler Hammer was about a five-hundred-million-dollar business, and, while I was there, we grew to about eight hundred million, … but, then, we were acquired by the Eaton Corporation, which is headquartered in Cleveland, and Eaton was about a four-billion-dollar company. Eaton was primarily in the automotive and truck components business. They were a very big, important factor in that industry. I could bore you with the kinds of things you find on your car that are made by Eaton, but I won't. … At any rate, we were acquired by Eaton because they wanted to diversify into the electrical field. I moved to Cleveland with Eaton, becoming a vice-president of Eaton. I was near retirement by this time, and so, I went there with the idea of being there about three years. … I was vice-president of communications while I was there, and then, I retired, and that's when I moved … south to Savannah, and, later, here. My wife was an awfully good sport all through the years … we lived in the North. She was always cold, but she was very nice about it. When we lived in Milwaukee, she just was cold all the time, but it was exciting and the snow was exciting. It's a lot more exciting in a place like Wisconsin than it is in New Jersey. You know, in New Jersey, it snows and turns to slush. In Wisconsin, it stays white on the ground and it keeps piling up and is continuously beautiful. At any rate, she likes to say that, all the time we were living in the North and the Midwest, I'd always promised that, when we retired, we'd go south. I don't really remember ever promising, [laughter] but it was certainly a thing that I wanted, too, because, you know, … I wasn't interested in staying in that cold weather, either. We've had twenty-two years now that we've been living in this area.

SH: I am glad you kept your promise. [laughter]

CP: Yes.

SH: Thank you so much for taking time to do this.

CP: Well, you're very kind, and I apologize if I've run over.

SH: Not at all.

CP: I'll now mount my pony and get out of here. [laughter]

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

Reviewed by Michael Golden 12/12/07
Reviewed by Jason Smith 12/12/07
Reviewed by Julia Gourley 11/19/08
Reviewed by Patrick Lee 11/21/08
Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 11/24/08
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 11/30/08
Reviewed by Charles H. Prout 1/15/09