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NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH WARREN SAWYER

FOR THE

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INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Warren Sawyer on July 18, 2008, in Medford, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth. Mr. Sawyer, thank you very much for having me here today.

Warren Sawyer: Thank you.

SI: To begin, can you tell me where and when you were born?

WS: I was born in Philadelphia, April 8, 1920. I'm eighty-eight years old.

SI: Great.

WS: Eighty-eight years young, I prefer to say. [laughter]

SI: That is good. That is a good way of looking at it. What were your parents' names?

WS: My father's name was Burritt F. Sawyer. He comes from a Scottish [background], the (Frazier?) Clan, Scotland and Wales, and my mother was Edna May--Edna June, rather--Gingell, G-I-N-G-E-L-L, and she went by the name of June Gingell. I'd guess they were probably married, I don't know, around 1918, 1919. They're both dead, of course, now. My parents were divorced when I was five years old and we went to live in New York City with my dad's brother, who was responsible for the divorce. ... We went and lived in New York City and I was there until 1933, when I left my mother to go to live on a farm up near Ithaca, New York, with two aunts, one of them a real aunt, my mother's sister, the other one just a courtesy aunt.

SI: What do you know about your father's family history?

WS: I know nothing, really. His parents died when he was just a baby and he was raised by an aunt who lived to be quite old. ... I don't know a thing about my uncle, ... my dad's brother, except [that] he appeared on the scene when we went to New York to live. He had come back from World War I. He was a lawyer, graduated from Harvard, and he came back from the war and I guess he took up with my mother. I really don't know. That's just hearsay from relatives. ... He was a lieutenant in World War I; just those two boys, and there are some cousins somewhere or other. I've never met them. I don't know them. Who they are and where they are and what they are, I don't know.

SI: What about your mother's family background?

WS: My mother's family, she grew up, was born, in West Pittston, Pennsylvania, up near Scranton, and she had this sister, Florence, and ... my mother was the youngest and Sister Florence, and then, an uncle, a brother, was Gordon. He'd married, lived in New Jersey, traveled for the Armour [Meat Packing] Company, never had any children. My aunt, my mother's sister, was never married, no children. So, my brothers, two younger brothers that I have, we have no cousins, at this level, just a small family. ...

SI: Do you have any memories of Philadelphia?

WS: Well, not really. ... I don't know where we lived when I was that small. I have some pictures of somebody by the name of (Bartrum?), a nurse that took care of us, babysat for us. I really have no memories prior much to 1933, except the Depression, of course. ... One of the great influences in my life, really, was the coming home from school on the subway. We lived down in Greenwich Village--and I got off before we got that far in the subway to listen, up at Fourteenth Street, [to] these fellows, in the Depression, preaching anarchism, Communism or whatever it was. I didn't know--heavens, I was just a young kid--but I got quite intrigued by their talking, the big crowds gather around them and Socialism and all the rest, and I got quite intrigued, even as a kid, with all this stuff. Today, I'm a Socialist. My feelings and attitudes are social and political and I've been active, ... but hearing these guys talk, ... they were very radical. People in the Depression days, the veterans from World War I, three of them on four corners, selling apples or tangerines or oranges, three for a dime, was a lasting impression. ... I'm an abstainer as far as smoking and drinking is concerned. One of the biggest influences, [laughter] just a simple, little incident in a five-and-ten [store], it was Prohibition and this guy bought a bottle of Bay Rum, which, in those days, was a hair tonic. ... I saw him buy it and, walking on home, right after he left and we left, here, I found him drinking this stuff, behind a stoop, a set of stairs going into a house, and what desperation, to get a little bit of alcohol, to drink hair tonic. Really, I have it to this day, as if it happened yesterday, and I've been an anti-alcohol person all of my life, most of it since then.

SI: Do you remember, growing up, knowing if there were a lot of speakeasies [illegal bars during Prohibition] in the neighborhood?

WS: A lot of what?

SI: Speakeasies.

WS: Oh, yes, been in the speakeasies. ... After we got our groceries, we'd take our potatoes and knock on the door with a little round hole in it, the person looked through that hole and if they knew you, you were allowed entrance. You'd get your bottle of wine or gin--London distilled dry gin, we always had in the house--and wine. ... We had it underneath the potatoes, and I guess people were afraid cops would stop them, I don't know, but we always took groceries in there and put our potatoes over the bottles. ... We always had cocktails and wine at my home, with my uncle and my mother. That's 1933 on, ... or, I beg your pardon, prior to 1933, because that's when I went to the farm. It'd be about 1927 or 1930 I guess, is when this uncle and my mother went to New York with us kids. So, I've sipped all that stuff, tasted it all and didn't like it, so, I didn't anticipate developing a habit. [laughter]

SI: It is interesting that you were living in the middle of Manhattan, where so many of the images of the Great Depression emerged from, like the breadlines, people selling fruit on the corners.

WS: Yes, yes.

SI: Do any other sights of the depths of the Depression stand out in your memory?

WS: I guess, the only other thing I can think of is men sleeping on benches, using newspapers to cover themselves. That's a lasting impression as well, but I think that, essentially, as a young kid, that about sums it up, my memories of the Depression.

SI: How did the Depression affect your family? Were you impacted by it?

WS: Well, we moved a great deal. Well, you think of twelve years of primary and high school--in those twelve years, I went to seven different schools, and so, I moved around a lot until I was thirteen. My foundation for study is terrible. I am not a good student. I like to read, but, in those seven schools, when you think that, in one of those schools at the farm, I was there for six years, you can see how often we moved when in New York City.

SI: Was that all prior to 1933?

WS: Yes.

SI: Wow.

WS: !@#\$\$% In New York City. ... We were poor, [therefore], we moved often. One place, we stayed one night only, moved into hotels and apartments, couldn't pay the rent. ... Another lasting impression, of course, is a family thing I'll never forget. A friend of my uncle's gave us, we three boys, presents for Christmas, only one time. I got a bicycle, my brother got a train and I don't remember what my other brother got, but these were Christmas presents, just a friend of the family. ... Coming back from school one day, shortly after Christmas, I suppose in January sometime, they were gone. ... We were told, by my mother, that they were stolen, but having found out later that they were used to pay the rent, so that that is a family thing that would stay with me, of course. Doing that to young kids is, I don't know, forgivable or not, I don't know, [laughter] keep a roof over the head.

SI: Do you remember anything you would have to do to try to cope with the hard times? For example, would you have to go out and hunt for coal?

WS: No. We always ate. My mother was a stenographer. She's also a musician, a professional piano player, and she worked in WJZ New York, accompanying artists that came to record in the radio station. My uncle, I don't remember him ever working, even though he was a lawyer, but she was also a stenographer, taking good shorthand, for a man who was writing a book. ... That gave some employment and that's the only thing I can think of, in terms of employment. My mother had infantile paralysis when she was fourteen, was a cripple all her life, ... but she was a great piano player. As a matter-of-fact, when she was fifteen years old, in West Pittston, she was playing the piano in the theater. In those days, you had one reel of movie, and then, you had an intermission, while [they were] taking that reel out and putting the new one in, and she was playing in the theater on those occasions. ... I suppose she played for other things, but she told me about this playing in the theater at fifteen years of age. ... Later on, besides accompanying other artists in New York, she also had her own trio at one point. What she was paid, I have no

idea, of course, but she had her own program, with a violin, a cello and she on the piano. How long she did that, I have no idea, but ... I just remember that it happened.

SI: Did you take an interest in music?

WS: I still have a great deal of interest in music. I sing. Unfortunately, I cannot play any instrument. ... Over on my piano, you can see my music there. I'm just beginning to learn a little bit myself. I have basics, but I do not know how to play, unfortunately, one of the greatest losses of my life, because I did not always have a piano available, when I left my mother. ... It just wasn't available, but I love to sing and I like opera. I like classical music of all time, all kinds, but, particularly, symphonies and that kind of stuff.

SI: Were you always involved in choral groups?

WS: Yes; well, as much as possible. In my career here, I was forty-five years in the real estate business and it's a very demanding thing, as far as time is concerned. So, I didn't have a lot of time to get involved in choral work, and so on, but I did find time to join a group, if there was a group around, yes. ... I'm anticipating, here, this fall, to join a group, the South Jersey Choral Society, or some such name. I don't remember what it is.

SI: Do you remember any of the groups that you sang with before you left New York?

WS: When I was up in Upstate New York, near Ithaca?

SI: No, I meant in the city, in Manhattan.

WS: In the city, before 1933, oh, no.

SI: No.

WS: I was just a young kid. I was thirteen in 1933. So, I sang, just liked to sing, on my own, that's all.

SI: You talked about going to see all these different speakers on the street. Did you go anywhere else to hear people speak? Would you go see somebody like Norman Thomas?

WS: Well, I heard Norman Thomas. I voted for him every time he ran. I can't say that I remember any formal speaker, back in those days. Well, I was too young. I just picked this stuff up [on] the street, off the street, but I've heard Norman Thomas many times. I've met him and he spoke at Byberry when we were there as COs [conscientious objectors]. He has a brother and a sister. Evan Thomas is his brother, a doctor in New York, who's a pacifist. He has a sister who taught at Westtown School, the other side of Philadelphia, a Quaker school. His sister taught French. My wife and I met her. Of course, my wife taught there at one point, too. ... That's about all, the only real Socialist I've heard, a formal speaker, that I was interested in hearing.

SI: What did you think of Franklin Roosevelt, particularly since you were living in New York and he was the Governor before he was President? [Editor's Note: Franklin D. Roosevelt served as New York Governor from 1929 to 1932, when he was elected President.]

WS: Well, of course, again, when he was Governor, I was not aware of anything.

SI: Okay.

WS: I was too young. [laughter] I thought Roosevelt was certainly an answer to the situation at the time and I'm all for it. We need something like that now, I think, for all the people that are unemployed and having a terrible time. Of course, I'm all for socialized medicine and all those things, which would be things that Roosevelt might have been for, too, but that was too early to be bringing it up politically, a long time before that gets passed, even now. [laughter]

SI: Why did you move from Manhattan to Upstate New York?

WS: I went there on my own. I was probably on the ... road to being a delinquent. I guess, I don't know this, just looking back on it, never thought about it at that time, but I was very unhappy. ... I was a member of the Catholic Church. My two brothers and I were acolytes [someone who performs ceremonial duties during services] at St. Patrick's Cathedral, in the High Mass with three priests, and I would not say that the religion was the cause of it at all, but ... this is an incidental thing. ... I was very unhappy, gangs, and, in the family, ... I heard all about "kikes" and "wops" and "niggers" and "dagos" and all that sort of thing, and I guess it just kind of rubbed me ... the wrong way. I didn't think of it at the time, but, as I look back on it, [it was] the way I feel, I think, and so, that, and with my mother, I was fighting her all the time. So, I decided that I would leave and I gave my mother the choice, either she sends me or I leave--take her choice. ... So, she wanted to know where I was, so, she sent me to the farm. I'd been to the farm, visiting, previously, at summertime for a while, or even at Christmas. So, I was well familiar with the farm, my aunt being there, and then, the courtesy aunt is the one who inherited the farm from her father. ... Mentioning St. Patrick's Cathedral, she brought a priest in to talk to me and counsel me and this sort of thing. I was in a rage, terribly behaved, throwing things around, picking up furniture and throwing it. ...

SI: While you were talking to the priest?

WS: Oh, no. [laughter] That was an interview in the evening, but I was so mad that I'd pick chairs up and throw them around, all this. It was a terrible thing. ... So, I got her to send me to the farm and that was 1933, in September, and I just enjoyed life there and grew into my teenage [years]. Things settled down for me. My aunt was a very, very strict disciplinarian and I've had the whip many times, because I was still revolting. Young men change when they get in their early teens and they're a problem for most of their parents, I guess--at least I certainly was. [laughter] Leaving the Catholic Church, going to Poplar Ridge, New York--that's the name of the village, north of Ithaca, where the farm was, it's a little community, about 150 people--and, as I said, I was very happy there, but there was only one church, in a little village. It was a Quaker church. In [the] Philadelphia area, they only have "Silent Friends." People meet on the basis of silence, but, across the country, there's a pastoral system of Quakers, Quaker churches. If you

attended there on a Sunday, you wouldn't know the difference between the form of a Methodist church service ... than a Quaker church, I mean, choir, a collection, all that sort of thing, sermon, but they always had a silent meditation time, even though they had a minister, which made them different from the Methodists, maybe. Anyway, I went there for five years, from 1933 until 1937. It took me time to read and think and attend all the conferences and this sort of thing, Sunday school and young people's groups, and so on. ... After that five-year period, I decided this is going to be the thing for me. So, I joined, at seventeen, and one of the things that appealed to me, of course, is the gentleness. There's no more "wops," "dagos," "niggers" and that sort of thing, and the peace testimony, [the belief that violence and supporting violence is wrong], of course, was a very prime thing for me. The tolerance, understanding and accepting of other people for who they are, regardless of race, creed, color, appealed to me at that age and I felt that it was part of the Quaker message. ... I just took it on and have liked it ever since.

SI: Were your aunts involved in the church?

WS: Yes, we went to church every Sunday.

SI: Okay.

WS: ... My aunt, real aunt, never belonged to any church, but this courtesy aunt was born and raised there and she was a member from birth.

SI: In your family, though, there had not really been any history with the Quaker Church.

WS: I'm the only Quaker in my family, yes.

SI: Yes, all right.

WS: My mother was a Catholic when she died. My two brothers, one of them married a Lutheran, they went to a Lutheran church. My youngest brother, I don't think he ever went to church and claimed to be [in a] church anywhere. At the farm, of course--we had to go as kids. It was a requirement, [laughter] not really a requirement, just [that] we did it, like any family, two old maid aunts and three boys. They had also adopted, prior to my coming in September '33, they had adopted an orphan themselves. So, they already had a girl there, a little girl. ... I left New York City, as I told you, in September and my two brothers came the following March, because my mother could no longer afford supporting them in New York. So, we had four kids being raised by two maiden ladies.

SI: Would you go visit your mother?

WS: No. My mother and her sister, my aunt there at the farm--well, my aunt was very argumentative. ... My mother's whole family practically disowned her because she joined the Catholic Church and there was a great deal of antagonism with my aunt, particularly on her side, and berating my mother for all kinds of things, but my mother did come to the farm a couple of times to visit. We were required by my aunt to write letters to her, but she never came to the

farm but two or three times. Terrible shouting matches went on when she came to visit, from my aunt, berating her for all kinds of things.

SI: Mostly religious-based?

WS: To tell you the truth, I don't know, because I was upstairs listening in the hall. [laughter] I got out of bed and I'd hear this ranting going on. I'd go out in the hall, but I don't remember what it was. I have no idea, but all I know is that [they had] loud arguments. [laughter]

SI: Growing up on the farm, what was a typical day like for you? What chores did you do?

WS: Well, as a thirteen-year-old--thirteen to seventeen, actually, I left the farm in 1940, with the draft and that kind of thing--but just kids growing up on the farm, you helped bring in the hay and we drove the horses. We had a tractor, but you couldn't afford [gas for] tractors, so, you used the "hay burners," as we referred to horses. They're hay burners--plowing, rolling the ground, using rakes, side delivery rakes, and so on, for bringing in the hay, working to fill the silos, up there in the silo, tramping the corn down, when it was pumped up there, with the machinery that they had, bringing in hay with big hay racks, hay rigs. I don't know, I could look at it as--I was very happy, I guess. I worked, lawns to mow, ... a big garden, ... a lot of weeding to do, of course, and to support all of us through the winter. We had no refrigerator, had an old crank washing machine, but raising the garden meant that [we had] a lot of weeding. ... We would can a hundred cans of tomatoes, quart cans, fifty cans of peaches, twenty-five cans of cherries, for an example. Everything was canned that could possibly be canned. Potatoes, turnips, all those things, would sit in crates in the cellar, the coolest place. As I say, we had no refrigerator, but storing this stuff all up for use for another whole year, cans and cans and cans, quart-size, of all kinds of vegetables and fruits, no freezer. ... When we went to shop in the Depression, of course, we took produce, chickens or eggs, to customers in the city, Auburn, which was sixteen miles away, go there once a week and take produce, and so on, in to swap for a hundred pounds of sugar or a hundred pounds of flour or whatever staples of that sort that we would need. ... Bartering was a very common thing in those days, for a lot of farm families.

SI: When you say it was north of Ithaca, how far?

WS: From north of Ithaca, twenty-five miles, on Cayuga Lake. Poplar Ridge is a little bit of a village, and so, we were twenty-five miles to Ithaca, sixteen miles to Auburn, which is a big, well, middle of New York, sizable city--Columbian Rope Company, American Locomotive. There's also a prison there, so that it was a sizable city. I don't know what the population was.

SI: Was it a difficult transition to go from being a city kid to doing all this farm work?

WS: I never felt that it was difficult. I was just enjoying it, away from all the drunks, away from the guys sleeping on park benches. You know, in thinking about this not long ago, during Prohibition and as a kid, I saw more drunks than I have ever seen since Prohibition has been repealed. They were drinking all kinds of stuff, but you don't see drunks in the streets anymore. I haven't seen any for years and years and years.

SI: Do you remember any violence from your time in Manhattan? Do you remember it being a violent time?

WS: No. I guess, well, again, I was only a kid, I don't recall anything like that. We had street fights sometimes, competition with kids. Most of the time, after school, we lived right just two blocks from Washington Square, at the end of Fifth Avenue, and we were always playing hockey on roller skates and rolling around in this Washington Square Park, and there were rivalries, but it was fun. ... My brothers and I, we'd wear out a pair of skates, so that the ball bearings were falling out of the wheels by the end of the summer. ... The cement was hard, of course, and the wheels got worn down pretty quickly, but that was an everyday occurrence, if the weather was okay, we were playing hockey on skates.

SI: Did you have any little jobs when you were still in the city?

WS: When I what?

SI: When you were still in the city, did you do any work?

WS: No. Well, again, I left there when I was thirteen. So, no, there's no work to do. We spent our time playing or going to school or going to church, all that kind of thing, Catechism class.

SI: Earlier, you mentioned being in a gang, or gangs in general.

WS: I was not. I was never in a gang, but there were kids fighting, of course, competition for this and that, and they'd get [into fights], just like kids do, I guess. I was never involved in anything like that.

SI: Since you were moving around all the time, did you have to keep making friends or were you moving around in the same area?

WS: Yes, of course.

SI: Okay.

WS: Going to, roughly, seven different schools in twelve years, constantly adjusting and readjusting to your life, your home, where you live and the people that you meet, but I wasn't aware of [any impact]. I'm just a normal kid, or I guess normal. I don't know, what's normal? [laughter]

SI: Did your education settle down when you got to Poplar Ridge?

WS: Well, yes, because that's where I went to school for, well, from thirteen on until ... twenty. My background was so bad in studies that ... I didn't get out of high school until I was twenty. ... It settled down in the sense that it was the same school, ... but that's a terrible [thing], upsetting, dragging, taking kids, moving kids around like that, and I'm not blaming anybody. It's just [that] you couldn't pay the rent, so, you moved. ...

SI: Would you have to move in the middle of the night?

WS: Once, I remember doing that, yes, only once, and that was because there were cockroaches in the hotel. ... We didn't know how long we were going to be there, but we went into this hotel; I don't remember the name of it or where it was. ... Everything was in New York, was in Manhattan, and there were cockroaches, and so, we moved out. I don't even remember where we went, how we went or anything, but I just remember the occurrence, that we did not stay there.

SI: What was the name of the school that you went in to in Poplar Ridge?

WS: Sherwood Central. It was Cayuga County and they had busses going all over the rural areas, bringing people to school. It was four miles from where I lived. ... [laughter] Just to give you an example of how much of a disciplinarian my aunt was, we all made our own beds, of course, in the morning, and, if my bed was wrinkled--she was a nurse, they were very strict, ... they were Army nurses--and they were so strict that if my bed was not smooth and straight, no wrinkles, she would call the school. ... I'd have to walk home to remake the bed and walk back to school again. That gives you an idea of what a disciplinarian she was, and so, I grew up with that and she always said, "A job is only worth doing if it's done well." [laughter] Well, you know, I don't think anybody else ever had [to do that]. I only did that once or twice, and that's enough, but four miles walking, right in the middle of the morning. [laughter] So, that's kind of carried over. I'm a kind of disciplinarian with my own kids, ... not to that extent, but I can appreciate it. [laughter] Here are two women, as I say, as I look back on it, two women raising four kids, and three boisterous boys, was certainly not easy for them to grow into it, from a baby on up. Here, we're coming in as teenagers and, gee, they had a tough job, I think. [laughter]

SI: You described what sounds like a pretty heavy workload at the farm.

WS: No.

SI: No?

WS: I wouldn't feel that way. I milked cows, got up at four AM. We did that one winter. ... One of my brothers and I got up at four AM, milked cows. We had a farmer who lived in the tenant house that my aunt owned, went with the farm and when you had a tenant back in those days, we, my aunt, paid for the seed and fertilizer and that sort of thing and the farmer did the work, and then, they split the benefits at the end of the season, whatever that might be. That's the way it worked. ... So, one year, the farmer had gone somewhere else to work, but he still retained this farm. In other words, he enlarged his operation and he went and lived somewhere else. ... My second older brother and I milked cows and we got bonuses and we got money for milking, of course, four o'clock in the morning, then, as soon as you came back from school, but that was the only long-term thing that we did that was work. Everything else, we just did. After all, the aunts didn't ask us to come there. We had to contribute to the living and I paid for all my own schoolbooks, my doctor bills and that sort of thing. We did get some money, but not much, made money from the produce when I had a garden, every year, and I don't know. You'd look at it as work, of course, but it wasn't a big paying operation at all. [laughter] You're just expected

to contribute to the family, like any kid would to a family, his share of doing something, mowing a lawn, whatever. ... During the summer, we just had a great time working for the farmer, not getting paid, just to be a help, and that's the experience there.

SI: How many hours a day during the school year would you work on the farm?

WS: As I say, working, come home, do the chores, five hundred chickens, ten sheep, geese, all these animals to be fed, and so, you did that twice a day, night and morning. I don't know, ... have any idea of the time. I'd just come home, change your clothes, go to work, feeding, milking, whatever it might be, horses to take care of. In the summer, of course, it was you worked all day.

SI: Did the farm have modern equipment that would help you do these things?

WS: Well, oh, sure, we had farm equipment. It was a small farm, diversified farm. It was only sixty-four acres and we had a sugar bush, maple trees and did sap in the spring. ... We had wheat and corn and oat and barely in the fields, and, sometimes, buckwheat, but not very often. ... It's just regular farm work. We had an apple orchard. We had five acres of woods. ... It's not like farming today, where you have these great big, big tractors that cover ground, acres and acres. You plowed it along with two or three horses, three horses to plow, because that's hard work. ... We had a tractor. As I said, we didn't use it, because you didn't have the money to buy the gas. You're supporting horses, you'd better use them, and I can't answer beyond that, really.

SI: One of the reasons I ask is that there is an exhibit at the Rutgers Library now on farm equipment. One thing in particular that stood out in my memory was this board-type device that helped people sort eggs, weigh the eggs, candle them and all that.

WS: Yes, yes.

SI: Did you have boards like that, or did you have to treat each egg individually?

WS: We did our own candling for our customers, and different prices for regular sized eggs and jumbo eggs and that kind of thing, because we had egg customers taking many dozens of eggs to the city every week and making money. I say the aunts did this, not I, but, as far as the farming ground is concerned, you know, plows and side delivery rakes. In those days, you plowed your field, and then, you rolled it, and then, you stirred it up to plant with a cultivator, but we had all that stuff. Every farm was independent in those days. ... We did not all have silo filling equipment, because those guys that had ... would go out and rent their silo filler in the various farms when it's time to fill [the] silo, but we all had, as I say, plows and rakes and cultivators and that kind of thing, yes.

SI: Were there any bad years that you remember?

WS: I wouldn't be aware of that, bad or good.

SI: Where the crops did not come in the way they were supposed to.

WS: I wouldn't know about that, as far as income or profit is concerned. I don't know anything about that at all.

SI: Or where the weather was particularly troublesome.

WS: Well, again, ... in terms of weather, the only thing I can remember in terms of weather was in 1938, when we had the worst winter. We had twenty degrees below zero for two solid weeks, night and day. It didn't vary. It just got to twenty below zero and stayed there for two weeks, and, believe me, that's kind of cold. ... Every day, there's the frost [that] would sit up on the wires of the fences and the tree limbs, an inch high the frost would be, beautiful to see, and then, the sun'd come out and, of course, that would be the first thing to melt, but it never got ... above twenty below zero for two weeks, 1938. ... We have snow up there, snow fences all over the place, so that it doesn't drift into the road, sometimes, very effective and, other times, have so much snow that it would come in and drift as high as the snow fence was, yes.

SI: Was the farm very isolated from other areas?

WS: No. It's, ... as I say, a small community, my farm adjacent to the neighbor's farm. ... Farming today is so different, you know, tremendous acreage and great, big tractors, and nothing like that in those days. ... Practically all farms were diversified, having the crops, as I mentioned, and cows and chickens, an individual little operation, biggest they could handle with two horses, keep them going.

SI: In school, did you start developing an interest in any subject or subjects?

WS: Yes. As I say, I was a very poor student, and so, I spent my time looking at the encyclopedia. I hated mathematics, I hated science, so, instead of doing my homework, or, at study halls, doing homework or studying that particular subject, I spent most of my time going page by page through the whole encyclopedia, beginning with A to Z. I have had an interest in history all my life, not that I remember it at this point, [laughter] but I've always liked history and geography. Those were ... my two best subjects, and my study halls were spent going through the encyclopedia. [laughter]

SI: As you got older, did you continue your interest in Socialist thought?

WS: Oh, yes.

SI: Did you read Socialist writers?

WS: I think, yes, and still am, because of my earlier years, seeing what I saw, I developed an interest in sociology. When I was in eighth grade, I thought that I wanted to be a social worker in the slums of New York, but that was not to be. I'm not a college graduate. To get anywhere in social work, you have to have at least a master's degree, they tell me, and I have no degree whatsoever. ... It's interesting. ... I've lived in a lot of places. When I lived in Delaware, Ohio, I was very frustrated in my work and I went to Ohio Wesleyan to take aptitude tests. ... I was a

young man then, comparatively speaking, [laughter] and took two days of tests. ... As a result of those tests, social work would be the last thing, even if I qualified education-wise, that I should go into, because, according to the test, I would take my work home and worry and think about my cases all night and this sort of thing, and have a terrible time. I should never get [into] anything like that. That was five percent ability to work as a social worker; ninety-five percent said that I should be in selling. I quit my job the next day and went into sales and that's where I've been ever since, and I'm very happy in sales work, but I always felt that way about social work. It was just an emotional thing, I guess, seeing what I saw during the Depression, that I wanted to do something about it.

SI: Were you in Delaware, Ohio, after World War II or before World War II?

WS: Oh, after World War II, yes.

SI: All right.

WS: ... Before and after World War II are two very separate stories and life, very different--married and kids and all that sort of thing, yes--but I'm glad that I took that test in Delaware, because it steered me to where I ought to be, because I had been frustrated in my work for quite some time.

SI: As the 1930s progressed, obviously, there was a lot going on overseas, with Hitler taking over Germany and Central Europe, as well as the Japanese expanding into China. Was that discussed around your home or in church, a need to do something?

WS: Well, when I joined the Quakers [in] 1937, I was joining a religious body and I looked at it as a religion. However, I joined because I felt that it was much more than a religion. It was more of a way of life than a religion, how to live, how to treat your fellow man, all these sorts of things. ... To me, what Quakerism said to me is that, "Be concerned, be involved in peace," etc., etc., and I've been a peace activist since I joined in 1937. ... It's taken various forms, I mean, in terms of demonstrations later in life, and the conferences. I went to all kinds of conferences when I first joined and meetings all over New York State, visiting other Quaker churches, and, as I say, meeting these young people, all this and that. ... That's been something of an emphasis, I guess, in my life, as far as hoping to, I don't know, change the world or at least ... get people to know and understand and be tolerant of others and not be covetous, in terms of getting a hold of other countries and that kind of thing. So, I'm still a peace activist. ... We have a demonstration here the first Saturday of every month, here in Medford, with all, you know, "Peace Now. Get Out of Iraq," all that kind of thing, in front of the meetinghouse right here in Medford, the first Saturday of every month, and I'm there. [Editor's Note: Mr. Sawyer is referring to the 2003 War in Iraq.] I'm involved in all the peace things and have been.

SI: At these conferences that you would go to before World War II, was what was happening overseas a major topic of discussion?

WS: I suppose. It probably was, because, here, we're building up. You know, we furnished Japan scrap iron prior to World War II and sold it by the boatload, and then, they turned around

and used it against us. ... One of the interesting things, and I don't recall at all where I picked this up, because I had looked at a lot of magazines and papers, and so on, but it's interesting, to me, it's damning information, ... and it was not [well-known], must have been squelched pretty quickly as a news item, Knox, the Secretary of the Navy under Roosevelt, and Secretary of War Stimson, ... Stimson particularly, said to Roosevelt, somewhere along prior to 1941, he said, and it was quoted and I'll never forget this, it was quoted in this article, Stimson saying to Roosevelt, "We're all set now. All we have to wait for is," for Japan, "to strike," and, of course, that's what happened, but, see, wars are--well, I don't know. I shouldn't say--this is a pretty strong statement--that wars are planned in advance. Politicians plan things and do things and let the little man fight or suffer the results of their decisions, of course. Later I found, in a book, confirming this happening. ... I think that, in terms of today, in terms of Iraq, ... I would suspect Bush had these plans, Cheney, in order to increase the value of their stock in oil and plan to take and control a country after the war is over. Now, that's only my own feeling. I could be way off base, and maybe I am, but that's still the way I feel. They went in there with the idea, in the long term, of having control of that country because of the oil, thereby enriching themselves on oil stock. I'm probably way off base and I slander against a person, I guess, [laughter] but I'm a very suspicious guy, in terms of politics and politicians. That's the way it is.

SI: Did you always feel that politics was tied to other factors, like economics?

WS: Well, politics is involved in all that sort of thing, all of our national efforts, ... our laws, our international relations, all that sort of thing, yes.

SI: Were there any rallies or demonstrations prior to World War II, leading up to it?

WS: No. ... Prior to World War II, after high school, I did go to college for a year and I was busy trying to be a student, [laughter] went to a Seventh-day Adventist college. As I say, my school records were very poor. There was an article in *The Reader's Digest*, around 1938 or '39, about this college in Nashville, Tennessee, run by the Seventh-day Adventists. ... This article was saying about the opportunities--still, the Depression was on--about earning your way through college, that you'd go half-time work and half-time study. ... We looked into it and I got accepted and I went, prior to World War II. The Summer of 1940, I worked at *The Philadelphia Bulletin*, where my dad had been for thirty-five years, and I worked there as a copyboy in 1940. 1941, I worked on a farm, but I went to this school in September and I worked from six in the morning until noon and had an hour to change my clothes; worked on the farm. They had an eight-hundred-acre farm. They had a lot of industries, self-help kinds of things, canning factory, etc., and sanitarium. Class at one o'clock, until five, study in the evening, then, repeat that same procedure every day. In the Depression, everything was figured at ten cents an hour, in terms of paying for tuition and all that sort of thing. Everything was geared to that kind of level, for meals and everything else, because they raised all their own food. Seventh-day Adventists are, essentially, vegetarians and it was an interesting experience, but only went there prior to the war, and then, got drafted, like everybody else, you know.

SI: What were you studying there?

WS: Just studying. [laughter] At that point, I really didn't have any goal--at least I don't think I did. I just went, took the required subjects. Then, I went back for the half year prior to being drafted in 1942, but it was interesting that the Seventh-day Adventists are very much evangelical, in terms of trying to gain members and that kind of thing. My roommate left the first day that I was teamed up with him. He was a Seventh-day Adventist from Arkansas and he saw that he was not getting anywhere in terms of trying to convince me, and so, he left and went to live somewhere else, in another room. ... I got a different roommate after that, who was not an Adventist, and we got along fine, but I didn't like listening to these guys trying to convert me. [laughter]

SI: Were you and your second roommate in the minority of people who were not Seventh-day Adventists?

WS: Yes, the Adventists have a number of schools. Up in Michigan, Kellogg's has a school up there, [Andrews University, originally Battle Creek College], they have another one [in] Loma Linda, California. ... These are colleges and they're all in the majority in their schools, unlike Quaker schools. Quakers are a minority in their own schools, but the Adventists are a majority in their own schools, yes.

SI: This was in Nashville.

WS: In Nashville, yes.

SI: What was it like to go to the South? Had you ever been in the South before?

WS: No, I hadn't. I was not overly excited about the situations there. [laughter] After the war, married, at one time in my career, I was transferred in my business down to Memphis, Tennessee, and so, I had had that experience previously. At that time--I can remember so well, this was after the war--when we lived in Memphis. In Memphis, black people were only allowed to go to the city parks, with pools, and so on, on Thursday, and they could use the pool on Thursday. Well, black people have to work and they weren't allowed in those parks any other day except Thursday afternoon. So, they were deprived of the opportunity, really, except for a stay-at-home mom could bring her kid, but, essentially, ... it wasn't really used by very many blacks. I can remember so very well, in our house, we had what they call a floor furnace, have a grate in the middle of the living room, or in the hall, and your furnace is down there and the grate is there so [that] you can get down and service the furnace, if it needs any work. ... Blistering hot day, ... getting our furnace checked for the winter, a white fellow and a black guy came to do the job. The black fellow had to get down in there, in the hole, to do the work, while his supervisor, whatever he wants to be called, white guy, sat up above. ... My wife thought that the fellow needed a glass of water. So, she brought two glasses, one for the supervisor and one for the black fellow down in the furnace, and the white guy says to me, he says, "He doesn't need it." This is the attitude of whites to blacks. In those days, a black man in a gas station could not carry any money. If you got three dollars' worth of gas and you gave him five dollars, he has to go into the little office and get change from the manager. ... He did not carry money in a gas station, in those days.

SI: This is after the war or before the war.

WS: This is after the war, when I was ... transferred there in my job. ... Of course, the bus segregation was very noticeable, prior to the war and after the war, but I was so busy with school before the war that I was not [aware], and the school was outside of the City of Nashville, about nine miles. So, we're somewhat isolated from the goings on in the city. ... I did not get involved in anything at that time, really, just too busy and working on the farm, and so on. After the war is an entirely different story, when I got to that point of being involved. [laughter]

SI: Going back to your work with these conferences prior to the war, was Civil Rights discussed? Was there any action taken to help support the Civil Rights agenda?

WS: No, not that I recall, ... just conferences where you talk [laughter] and express your opinions and learn and that sort of thing, but these were Quaker conferences, a yearly meeting where we get [together] and conferences for young people. In New York State, Quakers came together once a year, as they do here in Philadelphia, to discuss plans and things and what's going on and lots of stuff to read, of course, but that's a typical conference kind of thing, talking, gabbing and reading, you know.

SI: What was working for the newspaper like?

WS: Working at the newspaper?

SI: Yes.

WS: *The Philadelphia Bulletin*? It was an interesting summer. 1940, I made fifteen dollars a week. I thought I was going to get rich. ... It cost seven-and-a-half cents--you bought two tokens on the subway in Philadelphia and that'd take you from one end of Philadelphia to the other--just for one token, seven-and-a-half, got two for fifteen cents. ... I lived with my father that summer. He had come to visit us at the farm only once. I guess my aunt felt that it was [important] that we at least see him. It was the only time we'd seen him since the divorce, ... but he got me the job, in the Depression, as a copyboy, *Philadelphia Bulletin*. ... Newspaper people, there, at least, at that time, were heavy drinkers, and going out to the men's room, they weren't going out there for the servicing of a men's room. [laughter] They went out there to get into their lockers. They all had whiskey bottles. ... They built up a good immunity to alcohol, apparently. I never saw any of them drunk, but they were nipping that bottle all day long. The experience was interesting. My father was hoping that I would be a newspaperman, but that would have no interest for me whatsoever. In 1940, Wendell Willkie was running on the Republican ticket. [Editor's Note: Republican Wendell Willkie was defeated by Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1940 Presidential Election, but became a staunch supporter of Roosevelt's interventionist policies in support of the Allies on the eve of America's entry into World War II.] He came into the office there and shook hands around. *The Philadelphia Bulletin* was supposed to be an independent paper, but leaning towards Republicans, at that time, but it was not my kind of life to do that, but, at fifteen dollars a week, I was earning my [way]. To get into Madison College that year, in September of 1940, you had tuition, an entrance fee, of sixty bucks. So, getting fifteen dollars a

week for eight or nine weeks, I was going to be able to handle that sixty bucks and that was my aim, which I did. [laughter] I enjoyed the money. The job was okay.

SI: Did you work on any stories or were you mostly doing work around the office?

WS: Yes. I was a copyboy. What you did [was], ... as stories came in, you took the copy to the man who was going to write the story. The reporters that came in, you take the copy to him, and then, you're moving around between the desks. This guy is writing this story, this fellow's writing this story, so, whatever's coming in, you take to that particular rewrite man. ... My dad wrote the headlines, or did the headlines for the stories that came in, and he worked there, I think, thirty-five, something like that, years.

SI: Did you see the same kind of Depression era things in Philadelphia as in New York?

WS: At that time?

SI: Yes.

WS: I wasn't in the city, except to work.

SI: Okay.

WS: I mean, come in there at nine o'clock in the morning, out at six, and go out to Ardmore, which is a suburb of Philadelphia, and I wasn't involved in anything. Here, I was footloose and fancy-free and went to the movies and all that kind of thing, but didn't get involved in anything.

SI: Okay.

WS: No. ... From his house, I walked to the Old Haverford Meeting for Sunday morning, and my dad was not a member of any church. His wife was a Presbyterian, but I walked to a very small meeting, over at Old Haverford, they called it. That's about all, the only involvement that I had, beyond work, that summer.

SI: That fall, the draft was instituted.

WS: The peacetime draft started in 1940. I don't know what month it was started, but they started drafting people in, the younger men. I don't remember what the age ranges were for that first initial draft. I think it started at eighteen, but how far it went, twenty-five or thirty, I don't know, years of age. That did not involve me, because [the] peacetime draft, even though I was of age, I did not get drafted until after the war started. [Editor's Note: The Selective Service Act of 1940 required all twenty-one to thirty-five-year-old males to register for the draft. These age parameters were expanded to eighteen to forty-five years of age after the United States entered the war.]

SI: Did you have to register?

WS: Oh, yes, everybody had to register, of course, and, as far as COs are concerned--my youngest brother, December the 8th, he volunteered for the Marines and he got in. My next younger brother waited until he was drafted and he went into the Army, but I was the first one, other than my youngest brother volunteering, I was the next one to be involved with the government, being drafted on February the 6th of 1942. I was still at Madison College at that time. The Seventh-day Adventists, primarily, go into the medical end of things and that is their strong point as far as the draft is concerned. Some of them probably went into the regular Army, I don't know, but, primarily, they're into the health aspects of the Army, medical. I got drafted. I was in for four years, all except for two weeks. I got discharged on my wife's birthday, January 16th, 1945 which was a nice present for her. We had been married. We got married in October of '45. ... Let's see, now, wait a minute, I've got those dates mixed up, haven't I? I was drafted in '42, yes, that's correct, '42, and for four years, and then, I got married just before the war ended, yes, in October, but that's another story. [laughter]

SI: What was the experience of being drafted like? Where did you have to report?

WS: Well, let me say this: I was quite immature at twenty years of age, twenty-one years of age--again, schooling, and so on, and living in the country, no man in the house, two women. So, in many respects, I think I was quite immature, as I look back at it. When the draft came along, I mean, prior to the draft, when I joined the Quakers, in 1937, I knew that I would not go into the Army and it didn't matter what the law said. ... The law provided for conscientious objection, [refusing military service on religious, ethical or moral grounds], and that's a 4-E classification. ... So, I registered as a CO and I didn't have any trouble getting the classification that I wanted. Some people did, of course, and I waited until the draft occurred and I was at Madison College and I was told to report to Buck Creek Camp in North Carolina, which was located about forty-five miles east of Asheville, a little town called Marion, North Carolina. [Editor's Note: The American Friends Service operated CPS Camp #19, a National Park Service base camp known as Buck Creek, from August 1941 to May 1943.] So, I was there for six months, fighting forest fires, and we were building a national park. We got paid two dollars-and-fifty cents a month. We paid ourselves, actually, because the "peace churches," the Mennonites, the Brethren and the Quakers are the three peace churches, and, when they took on the responsibility of Civilian Public Service, they also were going to pay us two dollars-and-fifty cents. [Editor's Note: Over thirty-seven thousand men classified as conscientious objectors (COs) were drafted during the Second World War. Many served in medical services and other noncombatant roles in the US Armed Forces. In response to the institution of the peacetime draft, the National Service Board for Religious Objectors (NSBRO), comprised of the Mennonites, Church of the Brethren and Quakers, known as the "peace churches," negotiated with the Selective Service to establish a civilian-run alternative service program, the Civilian Public Service (CPS), in which over twelve thousand COs served from 1941 to 1947. Those who served under the CPS' aegis carried out work projects in camps, volunteered for medical experiments, fought forest fires and served in medical institutions. The CPS included COs from over 200 religions as well as non-religious pacifists. The peace churches supported many by paying their room-and-board fee as well as a two-dollar-and-fifty-cent monthly expense stipend. Over three thousand pacifists chose to go to prison rather than submit to either noncombat military or CPS service during the war.] We were supposed to, if we could--a lot of these people, when they were drafted, were already professional people, out of school, and so on. I wasn't, and some had money--and they paid their

own way, thirty-five dollars a month, to maintain themselves. ... The three peace churches, in talking with Selective Service, said that they will do the whole thing, handle the men, set up the camps, and, well, not set up the camps exactly, ... Selective Service was involved in that, but they were going to take the responsibility of the men in these camps, furnish those dieticians and all the things that are necessary. The [National] Park Service had people there, of course, rangers, and so on, fighting forest fires, and in these what were old CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] camps is what we lived in, kind of a barracks kind of a building. ... That's what it was, old CCC camps, but, as far as the CO status is concerned, I got my 4-E. Now, there were a lot of men in prison because they would not even register for the draft and there were those, also, who would register, but would not report for induction or would not take a physical exam, and those guys got three years or five years in prison. I do not know the breakdown of that, other than to say that there were about three thousand fellows in prison because they would not cooperate with the military. ... In CPS, there were a total of about twelve thousand, in the country as a whole, doing ... land reclamation, reforestation, all kinds of [work], building a national park, ... which I did in North Carolina, now known as Crabtree Meadows. It's on the Blue Ridge Parkway. That sort of thing went on in the very beginning. Those were the primary types of work that we did.

SI: Did you ever consider not registering or resisting?

WS: Again, I was immature. I never even thought that deeply. I just knew that I would not go into the Army, so, come what may. It just so happened [laughter]--I mean, I did everything I was supposed to and they provided civilian work under civilian direction and I did that, but I am not a philosopher by any stretch of the imagination. ... Lack of education and being somewhat immature, I just took it as it came without going much beyond requirement, to register, and so on, for myself. Of course, afterward--I would never cooperate again. ... Looking backward, I should have gone to prison, and, if it ever--it won't--but, if such a thing happened now and I [had to choose], I would not register. I would go to prison first. Of course, that's easy to say now. With the age I am, I don't have to worry, [laughter] but, in thinking about it later, of course. As a matter-of-fact, during the war, ... the law was that you carry your draft card and, later on, I think that it was in 1944, I sent my draft card to the President. Nothing ever happened as a result of it, but they could have come and hauled me off to somewhere. ... Nothing ever happened, but that's what I did, as my feelings and thoughts matured, developed or whatever word you want to use there. [laughter]

SI: As your feelings matured, you saw any kind of service, even the CPS service, as aiding the war effort and something you would not want to do again.

WS: I would not do it again, not that it necessarily aids the military, but just the idea [that] the more noncooperation is the way that we're going to be bringing about civilians not doing the will of the politicians, to go out and fight the politicians' wars. That's the way I look at it. We dig our own graves, so-to-speak, and the wars are going to go on so long as people are willing to serve, but I don't know, that's the way I feel. [laughter] ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: Do you remember where you were when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

WS: Oh, I guess everybody does, [laughter] at Madison College. Madison College had a number of international students. Some of my best friends there were from other countries. ... There was a guy from Mexico. Robert (Koo?) was from China. His father was in the government in China, as a (hand?) treasurer or some such thing, and then, (Ichiro Nakashima?) was a good friend of mine, a Japanese, and he was an Adventist. The other two were not, or, no, the Mexican, Pete, was also an Adventist. Bob (Koo?) was not. December 7th happened and, December 8th, never saw him again. Sometime in the night of December 7th, he disappeared and I was never aware of, I mean, what happened. December the 8th, you know, everything's changed so dramatically. What do you do? What do you think? What do you say? ... I did not try, I admit, to find him. How are you going to find [him]? Well, where do you go? It's such a new experience for everybody, but Bob (Koo?) and Pete--what was Pete's last name? I've forgotten--I've got pictures of these guys. I took each one of them home in the summertime, or I took Pete at Christmastime. I say I took; we hitchhiked, from Nashville to New York, and had him at home for Christmastime, Peter. In the summer, Bob (Koo?) and I hitchhiked home, giving him a place to go away from school, before he went wherever he went for the summer, but I [had] lots of experiences with international students. I liked international people and, when my first wife and I, we lived in Lexington, Kentucky, we were involved with the international students there. We had eleven Indian friends, and from India, not American Indians. We took them camping with us, down the Cumberland Falls, and they were in our home. ... We were only a few blocks away from the university [University of Kentucky]. They were there to get their master's degrees and our home is a [home] away from home. They came anytime they wanted to. We had them for Thanksgiving and, you know, all this sort of thing. So, we were quite involved with them, are still friends with them--matter-of-fact, just went to Bethlehem four weeks ago and for overnight to visit a friend, one of those eleven guys. ... We were very close. They were, most of them, single, a couple of them got married. ... One of them got married in our house, here in Moorestown. The mother came in from India and they had an Indian wedding right in our house, here in Moorestown. ... So, we were close with some of them. We still communicate at Christmastime, of course.

SI: Did things start to change immediately after Pearl Harbor?

WS: I got you off the subject, didn't I? [laughter]

SI: No. [laughter]

WS: I'm sorry, I tend to ramble sometimes.

SI: No, that is fine.

WS: Immediately after Pearl Harbor, I guess, the main thing was (Ichiro Nakashima's?) disappearance sometime in the middle of the night. Then, I stayed there, of course. December 7th, I was still there. We worked in the farm, no change for me, other than not seeing these guys, and then, February the 5th, I was hauled off to North Carolina in the draft. The project was fighting forest fires, when there were any. We were near Mount Mitchell, which is the highest peak in North Carolina. The project that we worked on was the top of one of the mountains, just

plain, solid, primeval forest, you might say, never developed, and we were building a national park to be called Crabtree Meadows. As far as a recreational park is concerned, there were never facilities. I've visited there twice, since then, and there were never facilities, like public bath houses and all that sort of thing. It was not built intended for long-term camping. Persons or people would ... go there for a weekend or an overnight in their own tents and that sort of thing, because there were no long-term types of facilities, a commissary and all that sort of thing, that some parks have. It was a smaller operation, but it was very nice. We put in roads and paths and all that sort of thing. My own feeling, in six months, as far as, again, my interest in social work, I guess I was unhappy and wanted to get out of there, doing something that would be more worthwhile in terms of helping mankind. Here, we have a war going on and there [would] certainly be things to do that would be of a lot more important in terms of humanity is concerned, so that, again, my interest in social welfare began to take root, in terms of seeing what I could do. So, I was looking for something else and I got the opportunity to go to Byberry, here in Philadelphia, the Philadelphia State Hospital for the mentally disturbed people, and so, ... after the project in North Carolina, from February until September, I got a transfer to this mental institution, where I stayed for three-and-a-half years. [Editor's Note: Opened as the Philadelphia Hospital for Mental Diseases in 1912, the institution at Byberry quickly fell into a cycle of overcrowding and poor conditions for patients that led to a 1936 grand jury investigation and the hospital's transfer from city to state management. However, the change in management did little to aid the patients' plight as underfunding and overcrowding led to Byberry housing over 6,100 patients, seventy-five percent more than its maximum capacity, and woefully inadequate staffing, with only fourteen doctors and ninety nurses on staff and a mere sixteen percent of the standard requirement of attendants. Exposés by journalists Albert Maisel and Albert Deutsch again brought the horrid conditions in Philadelphia's State Mental Hospital to light in 1946. However, the pattern of overcrowding and neglect continued into the 1980s, when further negative press reports and government investigations resulted in Byberry shutting down its operations in June 1990. Most buildings remained standing until 2006, when the Westrum Development Company demolished Byberry to erect a senior citizen housing community.]

SI: Did you have the option to choose one close to where you had lived or did they just assign that to you at random?

WS: I don't quite [understand]; close to where I lived?

SI: Did you get to select where you went or did they just assign you?

WS: No assignment. I volunteered to go and asked to be sent there. The requirement, in terms of these volunteer things, [was], after the base camp, you could volunteer for assignments, to hospitals or whatever, ... but the only thing that you were not allowed to do [was] and that is you could not ... [ask] to be transferred to some place less than one hundred miles away from your own home. ... Of course, my home was in Upstate New York, so, I didn't have that kind of a problem, but there were fellows who lived in New York City. We had a lawyer from New York there. Well, that's ninety miles between Philadelphia and New York and they let him come, but, essentially, the rule was that you could not ... go into any place closer than one hundred miles to where your home is.

SI: Why was that?

WS: That's so that you couldn't feel at home, I guess. [laughter]

SI: There was this battle against the public view of the CPS people not contributing to the war. I suppose that is one way to say it.

WS: Okay. Well, going back to North Carolina, Buck Creek, the relationships, here we were, approximately ten miles out of the town of Marion, North Carolina, up in the hills, and the fellows, some of them, wanted to go to church on Sunday and we had trucks that would [take us]. We'd go into town in these trucks, to get our toothpaste or whatever we needed, on the two dollars and fifty cents a month, and the townspeople, maybe it's typical of a lot of other places than just the South, were not too happy and let them know, in no uncertain terms, that they were not even welcome to come to church there. However, they kept going and, eventually, they got accepted--not agreed with, of course, but got accepted, in terms of attending church--and anybody could go if they wanted to. ... I think, if I recall correctly, one of them or two of them got to the point of singing in the choir, that kind of thing. It was a Methodist church and there were other denominations in that city. It's big enough so [that] you'd have a lot of different churches, but I'd guess the relations improved over a period of time and they did. So, beyond my six months, I never did go into Marion, for church or anything. I just stayed in camp all day.

SI: Were there any stories of harassment or violence?

WS: No violence that I ever heard about, while I was there, and I doubt that anything happened after that, because it's that initial shocker that gets people excited, not after you've been there for a while. ... When I went to Byberry, the animosity was so bad, in terms of the "paid employees," as I call them--whereas we didn't get paid, essentially--the paid employees, the animosity was so bad that Dr. [Charles A.] Zeller, the superintendent of the hospital, had an armed guard over us for two weeks when we first went there. I was among the first sixteen that went and we were never aware of the fact that he had an armed guard outside [to] prevent any people [from] coming in and killing us or raiding us or fighting us, or whatever, but that turned up a little bit later. ... It was interesting that he had an armed guard for a bunch of guys who wouldn't fight in the first place. [laughter]

SI: I have just a few more questions about the camp in North Carolina. Were your movements or your freedoms restricted at all? Could you come and go as you more or less pleased?

WS: Well, there was no place to go. We were out, way out, in the country, in the mountains, and Marion was about ten miles away, and where could you go? We stayed in camp. We had a library, we had record players and all that sort of thing. ... It was so closed in, with the mountains and the hills, that there wasn't any room even to have a baseball game. I mean, it was so enclosed, with forests all around us, and, from the base camp, where we lived, it was up the mountain, higher mountains even from where we were, twisting and turning roads, and we were hauled to the project in these trucks, stake trucks, as they called them. You had "take them in, take them out" [panels] ... on the sides. So, relationships with the town were nil, comparatively speaking. The truck, I don't know how often, I think they went into town once a day or every

other day and they'd get supplies for the camp, food, all that kind of thing, and, if I wanted [or] needed something, they would get it for me. I never went into Marion once, the whole six months that I was there. So, I don't remember a lot of those little details of how they were operated, but anybody [who] wanted to go to town got a ride into town. ... As I remember, I think they did take a truck into town on a Saturday night. I did go to Asheville once, which was forty-five miles away, and went to the movies, ... but that happened every Saturday. If you wanted to go to Asheville, you could do so, yes.

SI: Was the CPS unit integrated?

WS: Well, let's see--in North Carolina, we didn't have any blacks there at all, none. ... To what extent it might have been integrated in other places, I have no idea. I do know that there was a great deal of reluctance--and how many black people were in CPS, I don't know, I only met one--I do know that, at Byberry, Dr. Zeller was very much against the idea of integration of the CPS unit. However, he was ... in a position that, if we had a person apply, a black person, he has to accept him, or else the unit would be withdrawn, so that he was put into the position [that] he had to take them if they came. Well, we did have one person, Kenneth (Knight?), his name was, I remember, nice looking young guy and very intelligent. ... I would tend to think, though I don't know, that among the black people as a whole, the percentage of COs is probably almost minute. I've never heard anybody speak of or refer to any Negroes in the CPS camps.

SI: Were most CPS personnel from the three "peace churches?"

WS: I have something here [that] I just set aside to show you, which I think is very interesting. There are 232 different religious denominations represented in CPS camps, 232. I didn't know there were that many in the world, but I've got it right here. ... I've never heard of these places or these groups, just look at that list.

SI: Yes.

WS: Fantastic, the names of those churches or religious bodies, and I never ran into any of those, ... any of the minority groups, and there's the number of people in each of those particular denominations.

SI: It looks like a lot of them were just one or two people.

WS: It's flabbergasting. Well, those were the ones in CPS. How big the organizations really are, I don't know, but I thought it was very interesting when I discovered that, the numbers of religious bodies, my goodness gracious, very tiny, some of them, I'm sure, but I thought the statistics amounts to pretty close to twelve thousand, then, the three thousand that went to prison.

SI: The largest seem to be Mennonites, Society of Friends and Church of the Brethren.

WS: Yes, that's correct. ... Of course, they're the historic peace churches. You know, George Washington, as desperate as he was in the Revolutionary War for men, he never asked the

Quakers to come to the Army. They would probably be more of a disadvantage in the Army. [laughter] I don't know how he felt, but it's interesting that he never asked us to come.

SI: Oh, and Jehovah's Witnesses, a large number of Jehovah's Witnesses.

WS: Yes. ... Well, most of those guys went to prison. A lot of them did--I say most of them, I just know a lot of them did.

SI: What were the first few days at Byberry like?

WS: Well, it was a shock, right off the bat, of course, seeing the conditions, getting used to the place. We had to walk some distance from the cottage--Cottage #1 is where we lived--what had been a worker-patient dormitory. It was a low building, "L"-shaped. ... Since you're working different shifts, we had the sleeping quarters in one [end of the] "L," a living room, shower and that sort of thing in the middle, and then, off to the other ... part of the "L," where we had our dressers, where you'd dress, and so on. Getting used to it, well, ... I never thought of it as being difficult, because I worked the night shift in the infirmary. I hadn't seen A Building, the incontinent ward, at that time. So, in the infirmary, it was just like working in a hospital, taking care of bed patients, as far as I was concerned, and not enough people to work in the infirmary, a shortage of personnel. The first two or three, four days, first week, that's all that I was aware of. You did a lot of work on your own, nobody else to help you, and so, I didn't see the worst until a little while later, of course.

SI: Had you had any previous experience in hospitals or medical settings?

WS: Yes. When I was at Madison College, when I went back there in '41, September, instead of working on the farm, as I had the previous year, I asked if I could work in the sanitarium, and I did. I was taking care of different kinds of patients, but, primarily, the delirium tremens patients. Delirium tremens is the worst, [most] advanced patients as far as alcoholism is concerned. They're about the most disgusting kind of patients. They can't feed themselves. The delirium tremens, they're very nervous, go to feed themselves and put ... up the spoon or fork and go up near the ear, instead of into the mouth. ...

SI: Because they shake a lot.

WS: Beg your pardon.

SI: You were acting out their movements. I am just describing it for the recording.

WS: Yes. Delirium tremens, that's advanced alcoholism. I'd never seen it before, of course, and those were some patients that I worked with there. I also worked with senile, older patients, feeding them, that kind of thing, at Madison College, but, coming to Byberry, we had everything there. Syphilis and TB and everything you can imagine, I guess, is what I found out later.

SI: Initially, it was only sixteen people.

WS: That's correct. Well, we were fifteen there. Dr. Zeller made a trip to Ohio to pick up people in the camp there and he got fifteen, okay for fifteen, and then, I got special treatment to get there. Special in the sense that I had, I wouldn't say "pull," that's not the word to use, but I had a person who was in the administration of AFSC [American Friends Service Committee] who was interested in me. ... I made the application--he got me in there. So, there were fifteen there and I was the sixteenth man. They had gone there, I think it was in July, and I was there in September, and then, over the period of the years, why, the group grew. He got permission to have it bigger. We had, I think, 125, 135 men before the war was over, working at Byberry.

SI: When you first arrived there and you were working in the infirmary, was it already very understaffed?

WS: Why, I would judge definitely so, because people [hospital workers] were being drafted in the peacetime draft, and then, of course, [from] December 7th on, here, I'm coming there in September, almost a whole year of people being drafted, and a lot of those guys were drafted. Yes, in A Building, I do know this--some of those buildings were having twelve and fifteen paid attendants on the day shift before the war and we were working with three, in an incontinent ward or in a disturbed ward. So, they had been drafted out of those places. Maybe they'd gone into defense work, because it'd pay more than state hospitals. I don't know where they went, but they were losing people all the time, prior to our coming, like every institution, I suppose, losing people, war effort, got lots of money in the defense plants.

SI: What was your initial impression of the attendants and the staff there?

WS: Working in the infirmary, I was by myself when I first went there, on the night shift, and I had no chance for an impression of personnel, of course. ... I had forty bed patients, no sheets, not enough sheets, I should say, to change them, people lying in their own feces and urine, backs raw, because they hadn't got changed, ... not in dry sheets, and so on, no powder, for instance, to help the sores on their back. I would have assumed that you'd had powders of some sort or other to help that situation. Nothing like that was there, and so, shortages of everything. I later got into an office. The nurse, head nurse, asked me to work in the office, which I did, requisitions and stuff, and so on. So, I saw what the shortages were and to what extent they were, but, in the beginning, just working on the night shift in the infirmary, I didn't have that opportunity. One of the things that happened in the infirmary, to me, was, I can't use the word "disgusting," because it's a human life, but, ... well, it makes you a little--I don't know what. I didn't like to do it, anyway, and that is packing a body after they die to be sent down to the doctor, to analyze and take him apart. What do you call those guys? ...

SI: Coroners?

WS: No, not a coroner, the guy who cuts the person up to do research. Oh, it doesn't matter.

SI: Forensic pathologist, the person that does the autopsy?

WS: Yes, yes, autopsy--that's the word I was looking for--send them down to have an autopsy performed. ... To touch a person that has died and stuff all the openings in the body with cotton

and all that sort of thing, ... I guess, seemed repulsive, at the time. ... I had to do that a couple of times, and then, you get all the openings stuffed, then, you wrap him in a sheet, and so on. [Mr. Sawyer shivers.] It's just kind of a funny feeling. [laughter]

SI: Was that the first time you had had that kind of proximity with human remains?

WS: Yes. That's the first time I'd ever done it, and haven't done it since, either; [laughter] all kinds of first-time experiences at Byberry. It was a notorious hospital. It was supposed to be the worst hospital ... in the country, as far as conditions, and so on, are concerned. ... Why don't we take a break and go to lunch? ... If you'd like to take a few minutes to read these four little paragraphs in here, it might help you in terms of the questions that you might want to ask me about the conditions, and so on. You want to do that?

SI: Whatever you want.

WS: Let's go to lunch.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SI: On the record, thank you very much for lunch. It was very nice. When we left off, you were talking about when you first came to Byberry and the conditions in the infirmary.

WS: Okay.

SI: As you said, it was understaffed. The way it has been described, it sounds almost medieval. Also, for the record, I will note that your story and excerpts from your letters appeared in the book titled *The Turning Point* by Alex Sareyan. [Editor's Note: *The Turning Point: How Persons of Conscience Brought about Major Change in the Care of America's Mentally Ill* by Alex Sareyan was published by Herald Press in 1994.]

WS: Sareyan.

SI: From his book, it sounds like, fairly quickly, the CPS volunteers had a big impact on how things were done in the facility.

WS: The first thing I should probably say, for your listeners, ... is what CPS stands for, Civilian Public Service, COs and camps under civilian direction, Civilian Public Service. Alex Sareyan was a CO also and he wrote that book. I don't know where he was, whether he was drafted, too, or what he did. As far as conditions are concerned--you want me to talk about that a little bit?

SI: Yes, sure.

WS: I've already described how we lived, Cottage #1, and I can use the A Building, the incontinent ward, with three hundred patients, because that is the most outstanding, along with B Building, which was the building used for the disturbed or violent patients, [as examples]. A Building, in normal times, had twelve to fifteen attendants on a day shift. When we took over

the building--and we took over a lot of the buildings on the male side--we had three people on the day shift, from seven until three, and then, two people, if we could get two people, in the afternoon and one or two at night, so that [we were] working under a terrible handicap of loss of personnel. ... When you find you have three hundred incontinent patients, in a room approximately forty-[feet]-by-seventy-[feet], I don't remember, but it's one big room, no benches, no chairs, nothing to sit on, patients who don't even have a shirt, and, yet, there'd be a patient running around with two or three pairs of pants, because he'd be swiping them off somebody else. Supplies of disinfectant, of soap, of clothes, of everything you can imagine, were just not there. They were going into the civilian population or into the Army. It just shows how, I think, the military, when it's active and we're involved in wars, how ... all the various parts of a community are forgotten, because the military has the first preference for everything. ... In A Building, the incontinent ward, if a guy had a belt on, he was dressed. We had yards for them to exercise in, and try to keep clothes on them while they go outside--no shirts, if they just have a pair of pants on, and probably no shoes, because most of them did not have shoes. In the incontinent ward, they have no control over their bodily functions. They could be sitting or standing, made no difference. There were toilets there, but they never got there. So, it's a constant job of running a squeegee in what we called the day room, where they were all day, to at least keep at least a semblance of being dry and not slippery. I can talk about a lot of things that really come up in my mind. They are a little bit disgusting. I think of Sidney (Greenburg?), who was a patient there, in the incontinent ward. Every day, he had a brand-new pair of "gloves," went up to his elbow. What he did, he'd just pick up feces and plaster his arms up to his elbows, as if he had a pair of long gloves that a person might wear to an opera, for example, but he did that every day, and that's one example. There was one guy there, Harry (Harlan?), who was born there. He was non-communicative, as far as speaking is concerned. I was told he was born there. Then, there was another man--he happened to be a worker-patient--he went for X-rays at one time and he had one spoon in his stomach. How they ever got there is completely unknown. Whether it was the whole spoon or just the bowl of the spoon, I don't know, but they found a spoon in his stomach. The place would have closed if there were no worker-patients to do all this manual work. Shaving day, for an example, was the bloodiest day of the week and patients shaved patients, and, of course, particular attention was paid to those who might, *might*, [have a visitor], because the majority did not have visitors, relatives. ... So, we tried to get them shaved and put a pair of pants on them, any size that they could get their legs into, no belts--they just hold their pants up--shirts for most of the people who had visitors, and it's such a sad thing to see, these relatives coming to see their relatives in this kind of an institution. Byberry, in the eyes of Philadelphians, was the end of the road, the last place, that once you got in there, you never got out. ... This was the general conception of what Byberry was, as a place and a hospital, if you want to call it a hospital. I think, if I recall correctly, they had something like seventy doctors there at one time. We had three doctors for three thousand patients on the male side, and they'd make their rounds. Their rounds meant this, that if there was a patient that needed some medicine, the doctor saw that patient. Many patients there never saw a doctor for year in and year out, and they didn't bother. A nurse would see a patient as a result of handing out a few pills, to a very, very few patients that got any medicine, and would be taking care of bruises and cuts, from fights or whatever caused it, whatever they needed. ... Those were the only patients that even saw a nurse. So, the vast majority never even saw a nurse, year in and year out. When I worked in the infirmary--and this is a most spectacular person, that I shall never forget, Alton Benjamin (Guesford?)--he was in the disturbed ward, sometimes, and he

would get violent, but the thing about Alton Benjamin (Guesford?), when he was in his bad, high moods, these are tough stories to tell, the kind of dirty stories, but, ... in the infirmary, at the top of his lungs, he would be shouting, "I'm Alton Benjamin (Guesford?), truck driver. Bring me four cases of butter," plus a non-printable diatribe, and that's what he would shout, continually, in the infirmary. He had syphilis on the brain. His wife didn't believe it when she was told. In the disturbed ward, and, also, in the infirmary, on occasion, when a person was getting a little on the high side, they're put in cuffs and straps, with padlocks. Their arms were padlocked to the sides of the bed, their feet had cuffs and straps and they were padlocked to the foot of the bed, and they had to have a little bit of movement, of course, in the hands, to feed themselves. ... Alton Benjamin (Guesford?), when the nurse would go by, he would reach for the feces in the bed and toss it at her as she walked by the bed, getting her uniform, of course, all messy, and so on. That was one of his favorite tricks, but was like this when he was on the high side. ... We had him as a worker-patient when he was "normal" in that kind of a mood, he was the most gentle person you could ask for to be working with bed patients, very gentle, very quiet, very considerate, and treated patients that were bedridden like you would think a nurse would normally do in a normal institution. When he was high, he was really something, his feces, as I say, throwing it at the nurse if she went by and yelling at the top of his lungs on a Sunday, when some few people had a relative to come. On the other hand, I worked in the infirmary when Joe (Federruci?) came in. Now, he was a veteran. The veterans' hospitals were so full that Byberry had to catch some of the overflow. Joe (Federruci?), as a professional, civilian, worked for Wannamaker's and Gimbels in their window displays. So, he had a lot of artistic ability and he came in there and he was very depressed, discharged from the Army for depression. ... Joe (Federruci?) talked to me and we became friends--not close friends, but we liked to talk with each other, companionship, and so on--and I wanted to help him get over his depression. ... I don't know that I did, but I'd talked to him a great deal, and a very quiet, a very short man, artistic, as I said, and sane enough that he knew what he was doing. He never went off on a flight of fantasy or anything, just plain depressed, and being a native of Philadelphia and with the reputation that Byberry had as being the ends of the Earth, that once you're in there, you're there to stay, only made him more depressed, I'm sure. Doctors never saw these patients, and so, when he came in there, he must have felt that, "This is the end," and I can understand that, but, anyway, I don't know what happened to him afterwards, because I worked in different wards and, eventually, got out, but he's always one of the memorable patients that I can remember so well.

SI: Were you given any special training for dealing with veterans coming in or were you instructed to treat them differently?

WS: No, we were not. When we first went there, we had a little training as to what we're facing in terms of patients, but very little training as far as application of what we saw in getting there. I mean, we were just--it was really just custodial care. So, we would go around with the nurse when she came to a building to give out a few pills. You locked yourself in, of course. The keys were always in a person's possession, but, no, when the veterans started coming in, there's no additional training, only what little bit we got when we first arrived, nothing whatsoever. ... I even forgot about that training, though, in looking in my diary, apparently, we had some kind of information passed out to us, but I really don't recall that part of it. Then, we had, for those [who required it] to bring them out of their depression, we had electric shock treatments, that very few patients got. Now, electric shock works this way. The patient is there on the bed or counter. A

doctor is at his head with these two electrodes to apply to the temples of the patient. On the sides, there were two COs, one holding the shoulders down, the other one holding a left or a right leg down, whatever it might be, and the same way on the opposite side of the patient, and then, another man holding the feet, because, when you get an electric shock, you bounce and jump and you can jump off the table, so that that's the way electric shock was provided. Patients did not like it. They did not look forward to it, though I'm sure they helped, in some cases, people feeling better and they'd go into a deep sleep afterwards. ... I can't say anything much about the results, because I don't recall. I didn't always see the patients afterwards, but they dreaded taking them, but they were recommended and suggested by doctors for some very few patients.

SI: Did you get a sense of how the doctors, the attendants and other staff viewed their jobs and their attitudes towards the patients?

WS: Well, the doctors were few. As I said, we had three to take care of three thousand male patients and they would be there in the morning to give them a shot for flu, or whatever it might happen to be, the need at the time. Then, you didn't see them until the next day. There was usually somebody [who] came around in the morning and that was about it. I really don't know what happened to these doctors or where they were the rest of the day--maybe they were student doctors, I really don't know--but, in any case, they were not in evidence. I'm sure they were on call, if something happened, that they needed them, but you never saw them the rest of the day. The nurses were all young nurses, the ones we had. I think they were conscientious in their job. The attendants were very much less reliable, because so many had been drafted out of mental institutions and [attracted away by war-related] businesses, and so on, and many of them were professional drunks. They would be at Byberry for a few months, get a good drunk on, move on to the hospital out at Norristown, which is another mental institution, just across, beyond Philadelphia a ways. ... To what extent they traveled, I don't know, but, then, they'd be coming back after two or three or four months and we'd see them again. Very few of them were very stable and they're only [there] a short length of time, but they were about the lowest of the low as far as working in a mental institution is concerned. ... Well, on the male side, we were practically running all of the buildings on the male side--the COs were. Only one man can I recall--his name was (Yorkovitz?). He worked in C Building, where we had some worker-patients, and epileptics, and he was a long-term person. He was a little higher caliber than the run of the mill attendants. Now, again, custodial care, there's nothing that anybody could do with the numbers that we had. In his building, his particular building had a wooden floor over the cement and a lot of those boards had been ripped up and taken, used for weapons by patients, for hitting other patients. The other buildings all had cement floors with no wood, wooden flooring on top. That was the only building that had that. In that building, they had some benches, terribly overcrowded. It was probably the most crowded, almost four hundred patients in the same place that other buildings were holding three hundred patients, and they were very crowded, very few benches or chairs--no chairs, all benches--to sit on, screening on the windows, loose. We had an awful lot of escapes, people going home. They'd go to Philadelphia or other parts. Police were coming out almost daily with patients that they'd picked up somewhere roaming the streets or at home, when a relative called and said, "Here he is, out of Byberry. Come and get him." Those situations occurred, I'm sure, many times, but the police had a regular trip, almost every day, [laughter] returning escaped patients.

SI: In some of the excerpts I read, it seems like the attendants could also be abusive towards the patients.

WS: Yes. That was one of the things that we did see change. Again, I don't say this in a bragging way at all, but we were more gentle, we were more quiet, we were more considerate and we did not use force, so that, eventually, I think--I know--that patients began to see that they were not going to be beaten or hit for anything, whereby, prior to our coming, that kind of discipline was very normal. Rubber hoses, broomsticks, this sort of thing, you could find right in the hospital, in these buildings, so that that trust and respect, if you want to call it that. We began to be accepted by the patients, that they could trust us not to beat them up and at least we did respect who they were, could talk to them. ... I have two interesting experiences in Philadelphia with a patient, George (Keenan?)--George, something like (Keenan?), I've forgotten for the moment his last name--but, anyway, he had been in the disturbed ward for quite some time and he got parole. He was a handsome man as far as his build is concerned. He's built like a boxer, heavy, in good condition, good muscle condition and not fat, but good and solid, very strong. He was studying to be a priest and he got paroled and one of the men at Byberry, one of the COs, after he got paroled, helped him find a job. ... He got a job in Gimbels downtown, the biggest store that Gimbels had in Philadelphia, and he got this job. He was a catatonic patient. A catatonic patient is one who you'd put his arms, hold his arms, out straight and they'll stay there until you take them down. That's a catatonic. He does all kinds of things, put his arm in a position and he'll keep it, keep it there, but, anyway, he had this job in the tie department in Gimbels. ... One day, Ross Roby went down to see him and here he was, standing in the aisle, arms outstretched, draped with ties on each arm in the middle of an aisle. Well, of course, he got fired. Then, I had a personal experience with him. My brother was home on furlough and he came to see my dad and my dad took us to a restaurant. Linton's was a big chain in those days and we went there for, as I recall, it might have been an early supper or a late lunch, and [it] turned out George had a job--again, out on furlough--had a job as a busboy in this restaurant. ... When you sat down in those days, the waitress already had the knife, fork, napkins and a glass and all that sort of thing set out for four at this table. Well, we walked in and young George recognized me and, of course, I recognized him immediately and he got so excited that he didn't know what he was doing. He cleared off the table completely, the silverware, glasses and everything. The waitress came back [laughter] and she was nonplussed to see that her table was unset and whereas she had just set it up for potential diners, but I suppose he lost his job as a result of that, maybe ... by complaints from this waitress, I don't know, but he was back at Byberry at a later time. He was in the disturbed ward most of the time, but efforts like this were made at developing trust. ... Hopefully, they're looking for help and they got that from what limited opportunities we had to help any of these patients, but those were two interesting experiences for George--George Deegan, that was his name, D-E-E-G-A-N--and, as I say, physically, a great specimen and studying to be a priest--it was a shame--and a catatonic patient.

SI: In the excerpts that I read, it seems like you were trying to put pacifism and non-violence into action and you may have used that.

WS: Oh, very definitely.

SI: Yes, you may have used that, which is something I read about a lot of other COs doing in other hospitals.

WS: Oh, absolutely. We're carrying out our beliefs. We don't believe in killing. ... It does not say that we're against physical force. The question often gets asked of COs, ... not now so much, but in the early days, "What would you do if somebody came in to rape your wife?" Well, my answer is, "There's going to be force used, of course, to restrain him, as opposed to killing him," so that that is what happened in the mental institutions. If necessary, breaking up fights, we had to use force, no choice, and this happened. Some of the guys had serious accidents in F Hydro Building, where they performed, in hammocks, hydrotherapy, very limited number. One guy got his jaw broken, another guy had a big cut on his arm--all kinds of things like this happened. Tools would be--well, give you a good example, one guy had a saw blade up his anus. Now, he could have ruptured himself or killed himself, but these things did happen, and I don't know how these things got in the hospital, whether some of these paid attendants had worked one patient up against another--that sort of thing went on. Maybe some of these instruments were brought in by attendants, paid attendants, to help one of their favorite patients have some control. I really don't know, but these things did occur and weapons, limited size, a little saw blade or a spoon chiseled off on the end, things like this, I wouldn't say they're the main thing every day, but you heard and experienced them, because some of the guys did get injured--so, force as force had to be used to restrain and control, as opposed to beating a person up for whatever reason.

SI: It sounded like you did a lot of shift switching and switching of duties quite often.

WS: Yes. A number of the fellows went to the University of Pennsylvania or Temple, taking courses, and a lot of guys finished their courses and got their degrees that way when they worked the night shift. Then, they'd do their classes during the day. I only did it once. I took French when I was working, ... a French and a history course, at the University of Pennsylvania, when I was working the night shift, but, then, I got shifted around, so that I never did finish that. A friend of mine, who was interested in me, had put up the sixty dollars for me to do this and he wanted me to have something like that, an experience. So, it just did not work out, but at least I did try, but a lot of fellows got a good education, got their degrees and that kind of thing. ... If you're shifting around, it's a matter of, I guess, where the need was greatest. If you're down to one or two men, or not one but two men, in the incontinent ward, for instance, they need three as a bare, bare minimum, [you] get shifted to that ward, so that it was not always a matter of getting into one ward and staying. Bob (Scott?), whose widow I married, and I've been married to her twenty-six years now, he was a fellow out of Minnesota and he was in charge of A Building. ... When he went there, he'd never asked for a transfer, he'd never asked for a change or anything. So, he was the charge man there, on the day shift, in incontinent ward, from 1942 until the end of the war, and I certainly commend him for being able to stand it all that time. You know, this hospital was built at the turn of the 1900s and, as I say, designed for three thousand patients, men and women, and we had six thousand. ... I don't know when any of the interiors of any of these buildings were last painted, but there was no paint on the walls and a very depressing place to be, but Bob (Scott?), I have to admire him. He's a very close friend of mine and he died of a heart attack in 1975. My first wife died of cancer, 1980, and his widow, who, of course, I knew way back then, and I got married and we're still married. [laughter] ... A Building and B Building is

where we were mostly concentrated for what personnel we had. At one time, and I was not aware of that until I--at least I didn't remember it--until I got back to reading my diary, my letters home, it said, at one time, they were so desperate on the female side of the hospital, three thousand females, that they were thinking of asking COs, men, to come and work in the female wards. It never happened, but they were considering that because they were so short of personnel. American Friends Service Committee, early on, with their outreach programs, I guess talking to college students, females, set up a women's unit at Byberry, women from all kinds of places who were going to work camps and were talked to by the American Friends Service Committee, "How about a summer in a mental institution?" So, USO was an institution for service people, and so, we had a "USO" for COs by these women, college gals coming to Byberry to spend a summer. Some of them stayed on even beyond the summer. There are a few marriages [that] came out of that. ... That helped a little bit, but they still needed more people. The women's situation was much worse than the men, so I was told. When you get to the point of considering having men taking care of female mental patients, that's getting pretty low in terms of personnel and getting pretty desperate in terms of the times.

SI: Can we take this opportunity to read one of the excerpts that you outlined from your letters, which touches on some of the subjects we just talked about?

WS: Okay. ...

SI: This is from a letter dated March 22, 1944. This is a letter to "Dear Folks." What does that mean?

WS: Oh, well, those are my two aunts, back on the farm. They're my family--they're the only family that I really had.

SI: The excerpt that you marked begins, "Things here continue to go to pieces. The ceiling of the day room in the violent ward came down on Monday, large pieces of plaster dropped, leaving a gaping hole about three feet square. From downstairs, one can look up through the beams on the second floor right up to the roof. The roof leaks and, of course, can now reach the first floor without stopping off at the second floor. The water pours in. I'm sure that providence is with the patients. Plaster in A Building has come off to a much greater degree. The water in the bathroom comes through the roof in the shower. In C Building, the epileptic building, the floor is so bad that patients can pull the boards out of the floor. When it rains, the water that comes in from leaks in the roof washes two floors, first, the day room, and then, it leaks down to the basement, and so, does double duty. The inertia of this place is terrible. We fellows sometimes get the feeling of, 'What is the use?' Nobody cares here. The big shots don't want to know the conditions of the buildings or the patients and you can't get supplies. It is an uphill fight against something that you just can't put your finger on. The steward of the hospital is using all the carpenters that the hospital employs to remodel his home. The painters will be there next and the plumbers. Meanwhile, the patients wait around in day rooms lacking furniture, in bare feet, wading through pools of water. As I said in one previous letter, I think, 'No wonder they can't keep or even get a staff. No wonder that three girls cracked up from the unit and had to leave.' One of the girls is in a hospital downtown for a complete rest. A fourth one left not long ago. The fellows have it very easy compared to the girls. The situation was once, on the female side,

that one attendant had to care for two buildings. That meant that a patient had to be given keys in order to watch 350 patients. I know because I was talking to the patient that had to do it. She said that she was worn out and she got nothing but yelled at all day from the nurse, who never seemed satisfied with her work. That was the thanks she got, no remuneration whatsoever. I was talking to this patient at a dance. She is quite rational. I never heard her slip yet. I do not know what her psychosis is. I don't know what can be done. I think that the best that could be done would be an investigation, not by the state, because the state runs it, but by a committee set up in Washington, a Congressional committee or something." That gives us an idea of the conditions of the buildings and the impact it had on the staff. At one point, there were state inspections, were there not?

WS: ... As I recall, there was only one inspection all the time that we were there and it was a farce, because they would move--I think I referred to it somewhere in my diary--moving sheets from one building that they were going to look at first, ripping them off the beds and hustling them over to the other building, so that, when they went there, it would look as if we all had enough sheets. They didn't have anywhere near enough sheets just to cover the beds and, you know, while you're reading that, it reminded me of something else in A Building, another story. ... One of the fellows, (C. K. Brown?), a very conscientious, a very gentle person by nature, was in A Building and some of these patients in the incontinent ward, would have this caked feces all over them. Again, we couldn't do anything with an individual very much and Charlie, one day, stripped himself down. When we found a long-handled brush would not work to get this caked feces off this patient, he got undressed and went into the shower with this guy to really give him a close washing--I mean, again, an example of desperation, but they did have long-handled brushes. So, they'd get a guy in a shower--we didn't have to get in with him--brush him down to get this filth off of their bodies, but it was caked too hard on this particular patient, that Charlie did that. So, I mean, three hundred in this room, you didn't find them. They're sitting back in the corner--everybody's sitting in front of them. People got lost in these instances, but that was another funny--well, not funny, another depressing experience. I got you off the track.
[laughter]

SI: No, it was a good story. It sounds like the staff was pretty corrupt. Was that true of everybody or were there conscientious people?

WS: Well, the woman in Harrisburg, was a woman in charge of the social services division of the state, came for an inspection one time and we'd already had a letter writing campaign to *The Philadelphia Record*, which was a liberal paper at that time, which was eventually sold, went out of business. ... We started a campaign to try to make the citizens of Philadelphia aware of the terrible situation of the hospital and we started a letter writing campaign without identifying ourselves as working there or as COs, writing letters saying, "Thus and thus so, it looks like this," almost as if we were visitors there or relatives visiting. ... This Secretary of Social Welfare, as part of this one time that we had an inspection, that I can recall, ... she came and made a remark to one of the guys in the disturbed ward, ... there was a puddle of water on the floor and, looking at this, she says, "It seems that you guys have more time to write letters than you do to clean up the place." That was her words to the COs in the disturbed ward, so that it kind of indicates that they're more concerned about bad publicity. It's a horrible impression to give, but that's the kind of impression that you get--terrible, terrible.

SI: Was Dr. Zeller in charge the entire time?

WS: Yes, he was ... there the whole time we were there, yes. ... He did leave to go to other places toward the end of our time there. I don't know where it was he went.

SI: What did you think of him?

WS: Well, we never saw him. We were introduced when we first went there. I don't know whether all the guys that came after me were introduced to him or not, because he gave us ... a talk about the place, but I don't think--he couldn't have taken time to see or meet all these guys, because they were coming in one, five, ten at a time. So, eventually, I think we ended up with about 125, 135 men there and they worked in all departments of the hospital. It's really something.

SI: You became a charge attendant, eventually.

WS: No, not officially. Once, I was charge attendant, but only for one or two times, but I didn't look for that job. I moved around quite a bit. I worked in the farm, took a work crew out and Mr. Ebert, E-B-E-R-T, was the head of the farm. As I say, we had something like five, seven hundred acres, something like that. Byberry's at [the] northern end, just inside Philadelphia's city line, at that time. [Editor's Note: Philadelphia's State Hospital for Mental Diseases (Byberry) was located on Roosevelt Boulevard in Northeast Philadelphia's Somerton section.] Ebert hated the COs. He wouldn't even talk to me to tell me where to go or what to do with this crew of eight or ten patients to work on the farm. He hated us to such an extent that if he had something to tell me, that he wanted me to go to this field or that field, he told his subordinates to tell me what to do and where to go, and that's the way he was. He just did not like to have any kind of communication or contact with us whatsoever. It's fascinating to me, having been in real estate, for forty-five [years], business in Moorestown ... and was looking at a house with four apartments and it turned out the lady's name was Ebert and she was the daughter of this guy who was head of the farm in Byberry. I didn't tell them that [I was a CO]. I just told her that I worked there, I didn't tell her what capacity was I in, but Ebert was an unusual enough name that I asked her if she had a relative that ever worked at Byberry during the war and it was her father. [laughter] A lot of funny connections through life and that's an interesting one, but, in terms of taking crews out to work on the farm, we'd dig, you know, five thousand bushels of potatoes and things of that sort, in great quantity. ... Muddy days or any kind of days, these guys had to go out. Of course, I had a raincoat, or something, and these guys'd get soaking wet in the rain and they'd go back into their buildings, no change of clothing, and it was so [sad]. The shortage of everything was very pronounced.

SI: Was it only certain patients that could go out on the work details?

WS: Yes, of course. First of all, they're able to work; number two, they want to work. Going out to work, of course, was a great thing, I think, giving these poor guys a change of scenery, instead of sitting in these great, big halls. ... As I say, the place would have closed up if they hadn't been there to do the work--not only in the fields, but in the wards themselves. Everybody

depended upon working patients and all the COs depended upon their help ... that some of these patients could give and it's just a patient-run hospital, if you want to call it that. No, it really would have closed, I mean, my goodness, it never could operate without them. On the farm, sometimes, oh, I had one fellow escape. I don't know how he did, but, out there working [on] the farm, my back must have been turned, but he left, [laughter] because I had one fewer man than I should have when I was taking them back to the buildings after a day in the fields.

SI: Were there any kind of repercussions when a patient would escape?

WS: Oh, no. It was such a common thing. I wouldn't say they expected it, but they just knew that people are going to escape, right out of the building, not to mention being out on a farm and going into the woods. They could do it pretty easily, but I only had it happen once. ... We had one young kid, Bobby (Slater?), who was a violent young kid, eighteen years old, or maybe he's a little bit younger, and we had him in cuffs and straps most of the time, because he would pick fights ... all the time. He was very aggressive, ... but he escaped often, when he's in the day room, as we called the place where the people were herded ... during the day, and he'd escape out of there. I don't know how he did it, but he was always escaping, almost like an escape artist. [laughter]

SI: However, you were not blamed for letting them escape.

WS: No, no. Nobody got blamed for it. All the buildings were locked. We used a key to get in and, as soon as you get in, you lock it again, so that, I mean, the conditions were such that it was a common occurrence, common, very common, and not just the incontinent ward or the disturbed ward, but all the buildings. I do not know anything about the number of escaped patients on the women's side. I've never heard anything about that whatsoever, but I assume there were some of those, also.

SI: Did you have any contact with the women's section or the women's unit?

WS: The gals' unit that came there to work for summers, and so on, you mean? Oh, sure, you bet your boots. It was great for us to have women dates, companions, because we could talk with them. They were coming there from the AFSC and would be in agreement with a CO position, or not necessarily, but most of them were understanding of it--not necessarily that they were pacifists themselves. As I said, there were three or four marriages [that] came out of that. A couple of guys married nurses there. Well, if they married them and it's a CO, they'd have to be at least sympathetic or understanding of the position, and this happened a few times, but, no, it was great. The Army had the USO, United Services Organizations, for the veterans in all the cities across the country, and so, we had our own little "USO" with all these gals that came to work there in the summer. As I said, some of them stayed, worked for a year or two, but it was very nice to find people--we men wanted a little female companionship and dates. [laughter]

SI: In your free time, could you go into Philadelphia or do what you wanted?

WS: To go to Philadelphia, in those days, it cost ... two tokens for fifteen cents, but it was almost an hour from Byberry to downtown Philadelphia, half an hour from the hospital to

Frankford by bus. ... At Frankford, the dead end for the elevated and the subway train, we'd get on the train, go into Philadelphia, almost an hour's ride, not quite, to get there.

SI: Was that usually what you would do when you were off?

WS: ... Not necessarily. Usually, if we wanted to go, we went, or stayed at the hospital. We had a wonderful library. We had a very big collection of records, classical music, and so, we had the record players, and so, you might do that. We also had a good Ping-Pong table and lots of good matches there. So, you know, it's a place, Philadelphia is a place, to go if you want to go. So, you'd go to the movies or whatever, once in a while. We did make, as I said, two dollars and fifty cents a month when we were first drafted. I think, I don't remember whether it was in 1943, it might have been in the early part of 1944, we got a raise to fifteen dollars a month, which was a very welcome gift, so-to-speak, but we got that kind of pay. I think it was in later of 1943 or probably early '44, got a raise, big raise. Fifteen bucks was a lot of money, we thought.
[laughter]

SI: I was also surprised that you did not get any kind of health care.

WS: Any kind of what?

SI: Health care, there was no insurance or anything.

WS: Oh, sure. One guy developed TB and he had a room at Byberry. As far as health is concerned, we were young or in pretty good shape. We got a haircut there. ... Two of the fellows were barbers, they started doing that for patients as well as for us. I can only think of that one, the fellow [who] had TB, but anything that developed, they'd take care of us right there. The jaundice unit, we went to the university, because that's where the experiments were being conducted.

SI: I read where you expressed concern over getting too hurt in a fight, that you would not be able to get the treatment you would need if you got hit in the jaw.

WS: Oh, I got hit in the jaw once.

SI: Would they treat you at the hospital for that?

WS: Well, I suppose they did. I don't recall having or needing any medical attention at that time. It was just a good smack in the jaw and a bloody nose, that sort of thing. I never was interned there for anything whatsoever. One fellow had a knife slashed in his forearm, in the hydro, F Hydro. They had a hydro department in the disturbed ward, also, but these weapons developed out of nowhere, somehow, sometime, ... but I never experienced anything like that, that I needed a doctor personally.

SI: You mentioned, later on, that there was this letter writing campaign aimed at getting the citizens of Philadelphia aware of what was happening at the hospital. At any time before that,

during these inspections, for example, did anybody try to inform the inspectors of what was really going on? Was there any effort like that?

WS: Well, there was only one inspection for the whole four years, or three-and-a-half years, I was there. I do not know whether they were supposed to have regular inspections every other year or whatever their plans were, I don't know. We only saw them once in the years that I was there, which didn't amount to a thing as far as an inspection is concerned. It's like a lot of things. ... If anybody knows that the management is going to come through and inspect your department, why, things get spruced up before the guys arrive, and it's the same thing here, that transferring sheets from one ward [to] another as fast as you could, so that you gave the appearance that you had lots of sheets and people were taking care of it. When I ... became secretary to the head nurse--she asked me because I knew how to type, asked me to work with her and in her office--and ... I did this for, I guess, almost a year, toward the end of my draft status, and ordering supplies, disinfectants, soap, clothing of all kinds, shoe laces, ... even the cuffs and straps. They had been repaired and repaired and repaired, so that ... they no longer served a purpose, a use. ... I have statistics in my files of the amounts of disinfectant for a whole year that were ordered and how much we actually got. Just taking figures out of the air at the moment, if I had ordered three hundred pounds or bottles of disinfectant for a year, ... I'd get less than two hundred, or even less than a hundred. Those kinds of statistics, I compiled, I think for 1943, if I recall. I'd have to read my diary to find out again, but, in ordering ... for three thousand patients, ordering nine hundred pairs of pants and I got sixty in the course of a year, this is the way it was, the desperation for supplies and needs. Everything is going to the military.

SI: Was there any kind of actual treatment going on with the patients or was it just custodial care?

WS: Custodial care, as I mentioned. The only thing that they got--needed medicine, to tone down their hyperactivity, when the nurse came around in the morning, the electric shock--that's about it. I wasn't aware of much of anything else. Oh, of course, as I say, they got the shots for the flu and that sort of thing. If they had an epidemic of flu that winter, why, shots were given to a lot--a lot of patients did not get it, but the worker patients were considered first, of course, because they kept the place going. [laughter]

SI: In October of 1943, you became involved with the jaundice project. Why did you decide to do that?

WS: Well, at the time, Dr. [John R.] Neefe, who was an Army doctor, it was not public, in the papers, but I learned from him, later on, that the reason for the jaundice idea being considered at all was because Mark Clark, General Mark Clark, in the invasion of Europe, going up the boot of Italy, got held up. As far as the newspapers are concerned, held up because of the enemy's concentration or the weather or whatever it might have been, in the papers--it was not actually those things. It was actually that the troops had broken out with yellow jaundice. That's what held Mark Clark up for the invasion of Italy, and so, I joined the group, not with the idea of helping Mark Clark at all--he, of course, benefits--but my idea of joining the jaundice unit was a service to humanity, that if we could find a cure or a prevention for getting yellow jaundice, whatever happened to me in the yellow jaundice unit would be [of] benefit in terms of the

research needed to find out what they needed to know, and so, I joined. [Editor's Note: During the Second World War, the US Armed Forces suffered serious outbreaks of both infectious hepatitis (now classified as Hepatitis A) and serum hepatitis (now classified as Hepatitis B), often misclassified as yellow jaundice. The major serum hepatitis outbreak was linked to the use of a tainted yellow fever vaccine in the Spring of 1942 and, therefore, limited, but infectious hepatitis continued to plague US forces serving in the Mediterranean, Middle East, Europe and the Pacific until the end of the war, resulting in approximately two hundred thousand infectious hepatitis cases recorded by the US Army. Although the mortality rate was low, the illness often required twenty-five to fifty days of hospitalization or recuperation time. Infection rates often increased as troops were concentrated for upcoming invasions or deployments. Particularly high infection rates were noted in the Mediterranean after the conclusion of the Sicily Campaign as the US Fifth Army under General Mark Clark, fighting in Italy, attributed its highest morbidity rates to infectious hepatitis, with thirty-seven out of every thousand troops suffering from the disease. It is also estimated that the invasion of Normandy was delayed one month due to the effects of the disease on the invasion force. In response, the Medical Department of the US Army organized the Hepatitis Study Group in July 1944, led by Dr. John R. Paul, Chairman, and which included Dr. Joseph Stokes, Jr., and Captain John R. Neeffe, who worked through Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and the School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania. Other units carried out research at Yale University and the University of Michigan. The Philadelphia unit used human volunteers in their experiments from New Jersey State Prison in Trenton and the conscientious objectors of CPS Unit 140-02 in Philadelphia.] I was there for a year, and [at] University of Pennsylvania, and got samples of blood [drawn] twice a week. ... Looking at the equipment that people have today, they can get four or five samples of blood for various kinds of tests out of one sticking of a needle, because they have valves to turn off and on as they draw blood, but, in those days, you got stuck two or three times, because they didn't have these valves that you can turn off and stick another tube in and turn off, you know how it works, but they didn't have that then. ... By the end of a year, I was so needle shy that I dropped out. Dr. Neeffe thought that I had a touch of jaundice around Thanksgiving time that year. I never got yellow, I never got sick, but he thought I had a touch of it. ... I don't know what happened later, but, up to that point, ... I had the most amount of yellow jaundice virus injected in me, a hundred CCs of the virus, ... but never got the disease. The reason, beyond Mark Clark, that they came to the COs is because mice, rabbits, rats, guinea pigs seem to have a natural immunity to yellow jaundice. So, they needed to find some other way of doing research, and so, they came to the COs, a good concentration of men who were willing to volunteer for this. ... So, since those animals which they do experiments on had this immunity we served a function. Before it was over, the yellow jaundice, we worked on our wards, and then, went to yellow jaundice one or two days a week and the yellow jaundice unit, apparently, was so important, in terms of research and what they were finding out, that they separated the yellow jaundice volunteers out and they went to live at the University of Pennsylvania and they were there full-time and the rest of us were still at Byberry. So, I was out at the time that they went and set up the jaundice unit separately. I think they had something [like] over a hundred men at the university and they also had, I think, if I remember correctly, another jaundice unit they established up in Boston. I'm not a hundred percent sure of that, but it seems to me that, as I recall, there was another one set up, and what they discovered and found out, I have no idea, never followed up on it, but I'm sure they got something of benefit out of it.

SI: How did the doctors explain the reasons behind the injections?

WS: Well, yes, that they were going to do needle work, blood samples constantly, and, if we got sick, we went to the hospital at the University of Pennsylvania and the doctors there took care of us. ... Beyond that, there's not much to tell, that we were doing research on yellow jaundice, "You might get sick and probably will," and that they would be watching us all the time for symptoms. ... Different people would get very sick, some not very sick. I understood that one person died from that, but I'm not positive on that, either, but it seems to me that rumor had it that one guy died, but I don't know. There wasn't much information they could give us, other than that, "You're going to probably be sick. You'll turn yellow," and, since they didn't [have] much information about it, but they just knew that you get sick from yellow jaundice and they know that people got yellow from yellow jaundice, but there was nothing else that they could tell us.

SI: Did the doctors tell you to keep the project quiet?

WS: Oh, yes. Neefe said that this was supposed to be hush-hush stuff and we weren't supposed to be talking to the general public about it, and why would I talk to the general public about it in the first place? no reason whatsoever. So, I guess the military, being as they are, they want a lot of things hush-hush. [laughter]

SI: Do you mind if we take a quick break?

[TAPE PAUSED]

WS: I was going to talk about a lot of other things [that] went on, besides just mental hospitals.

SI: Okay.

WS: ... Are you ready to go? Well, I mean, I'm just telling you that now, so that somewhere in there, why, I'll talk about other projects besides hospitals, alternative service.

SI: That you were involved in.

WS: As COs, you're drafted. You went into a base camp--reforestation, land reclamation, all that sort of thing--and getting into hospitals was called an alternative service and you volunteered for those kinds of things. ... They had a unit for hookworm in Florida, they had another bunch of guys volunteering for saltwater experiments, because ships sunk, sailors [were] out in the ocean and salt water's what they had, to study how much salt water a person could stand or how much the body could take of drinking salt water, and then, an ammonia experiment, hookworm, jaundice--oh, and then, they also had a group of guys, I think there were forty or so, I've forgotten the number, out in Minnesota, at the Mayo Clinic, doing studies on starvation. ... Maybe you've heard about these, I don't know, but, anyway, these guys volunteered. I volunteered for that, then, I backed out at the last minute, starvation research to determine what is the best way to go about reclaiming the lives of people who were starved. ... I think they did this for three months, studies of regular nutrition and three months living on cabbages and

potatoes, which the refugees and people ... after World War I and II lived on in Europe, and then, they got down to skin and bones. There was an article in *Life Magazine* about it as a matter-of-fact, and then, three months of coming back to normalcy, which is a very interesting experiment. Again, I don't know, but they wanted to find out, tried to find out, what's best for reclaiming the lives of the starving in Europe, and a lot of the guys that went into that had opportunities after the war to go overseas. I volunteered for that when I was in the jaundice unit, but I backed out because I didn't know all the details of it, but I backed out because they said you can't even chew a stick of gum, because the little bit of sugar on it would upset the research. ... So, not knowing all the details of it, I later found out that I could have done that, but it had to be part of the experiments if they did it, and the guys in the starvation unit got down--really, they looked like the guys just coming out of Auschwitz, all skin and bones. ... They were not allowed to go off the campus or go out on the street unless they had somebody going with them, because that temptation would be so great, to buy a stick of gum or a candy bar or something like that, and you had somebody with you to be sure that you did not violate it, because it would screw up the research that they were doing. If I had known all that at the same time, I probably would have gone ahead into that starvation unit, but I figured, "If I can't even chew a stick of gum, I would upset their calculations and their research." So, I withdrew. I should have gone in it. If I'd known all those details in the beginning, I would have.

SI: Later on in your life, you continued to volunteer for medical experiments.

WS: Yes, I did. Right here in Philadelphia, I worked [at the] University of Pennsylvania, in terms of research of mental abilities, tests, heart beats, blood pressure. There were two or three different things that I volunteered for. ... Did I mention the one that I did at Princeton for the research of material to be used on diapers for incontinent patients? I did that one, and it's interesting, at least--[laughter] I got dismissed. I got a letter, I should have kept it, from one of the doctors at the University of Pennsylvania after he saw the article about me in *The National Enquirer*, because I was quoted in there as doing this kind of [thing], of being a volunteer for this kind of research. I got a letter from him saying, "Your services are no longer needed," ... just because of that article, on the front page of *The Enquirer*. I guess the University didn't want that kind of publicity. So, I haven't done that since, but I've done other things. [laughter]

SI: Did that all start with the jaundice project or had you done that before the war?

WS: No, jaundice is the first thing that I did as a volunteer for medical research. Doctor--who is the guy who was in Reagan's Administration, was a very famous doctor, Bork? That's not the right name.

SI: Do you mean the Surgeon General?

WS: No, it's a doctor, not a general, headed the Department of Health, famous.

SI: C. Everett Coop?

WS: Yes, Coop.

SI: Yes, he was the Surgeon General. [Editor's Note: Vice Admiral C. Everett Koop served as Surgeon General of the United States from 1982 to 1989.]

WS: Yes, yes. He would never have allowed humans to be used for guinea pigs in yellow jaundice. He said, "It's too dangerous," if he had anything to say about it, and, of course, he didn't at the time, but he is quoted as saying that, ... but we did it--altruistic, I hope, attitudes, to benefit mankind. We're kind of dumb, I guess, but we did it. [laughter]

SI: Is that your motivation for continuing to volunteer?

WS: I think that's probably the motivation for everybody that did that sort of thing, helping out mankind for the long run. ... Some of these guys, when they set the separate unit up in Philadelphia, at the university, they were in it for two years, some of them, and I was only in it for a year--too needle shy to continue. [laughter]

SI: Were the COs all sincere conscientious objectors or was there anyone trying to avoid the draft? Would they have been weeded out?

WS: I don't think anybody would do this to evade the draft. There might have been some very few, but ... it's hard for me to imagine that anybody would do that to evade the draft. Escaping to Canada would be probably better for most people, if they were trying to evade the draft, but I can't deny that there might be a very, very, extremely few, because of what you had to go through. Yes, I just can't imagine it. I think, in my own case, I'm not educated, but even the educated guys, some with master's and PhDs, and so on, I think maybe we're overly sensitive. It's a need. As a philosophy, as an acceptable philosophy, we don't want to get into fighting and entanglements internationally, and, beyond that, I think most of us were socially aware and sensitive to the condition of so many people that are so much worse off than we were--the poor, the neglected, the broken up families, all these sorts of things--made us sensitive, maybe overly sensitive, I don't know, but social responsibility enters in there. I cannot say that the majority of us, by any stretch of the imagination, were Socialists *per se*, politically. However, I will say the majority of us were very sensitive to the social condition, if you want to use that phrase. Most of us have been, ... of those that I have known, I've known quite a lot, are interested in the social welfare, all the things that relate to people's lives, good or bad, and I think ... the very fact that you're a CO to begin with indicates a certain amount of social awareness, to conditions, to politics, to social problems. All that sort of thing is intertwined, I think, for most of us. Again, not bragging that we're better than anybody else, it's not the idea at all. [laughter] It's not to say that other people aren't also sensitive, but maybe we're unusually so, as a group.

SI: Did you do the same type of work outside the military, such as your work with the settlement house in Philadelphia?

WS: Yes, oh, yes. I did that at night, in South Philadelphia. I heard Bob (Scott?), Florence's husband, introduced me to it, because he was working there, and these kinds of things spread by word of mouth, and so, I did that for a while. I went to a camp up at Ottsville, Pennsylvania. I took a furlough. We had a furlough, same as the service military people did. That's what it was called, that we had so many days and I took one of my furloughs to work in a camp for

delinquents, Philadelphia delinquents, and spent a week up there as a counselor and that was an interesting experience. Some of these kids, first time away from home, they'd get on the phone at night and cry to their mothers on the phone. They were lonely and all this sort of thing, away from home, but, here, they're having a camp experience, ... which should have been a happy experience for them, and a lot of little incidental things. ... I worked in prisons for seven years one week per month, end up here in Bordentown, seven years helping and conducting workshops to try to lower the incidence of violence in the prisons and helping people to understand that one of the first steps in preventing violence is respect for your fellow prisoners, ... but we did all kinds of interesting things to try and get that across, that your behavior and your respect for others are the basis for lessening the violence in prison--no lecturing, nothing of the kind. It's all workshops, all participatory things, ... directing these guys in these various exercises. For seven years, I did that. Then, my hearing began to go and evaluations, later, on the workshop, or, during some exercises, I wasn't sure--we evaluate, with the prisoners, "What do you think of this and why?" and so on, of a particular exercise--and I could not be sure, sometimes, whether they were making a statement or asking a question, which would be very embarrassing. ... So, that hearing problem got to be a point where I thought I'd better get out of it, because it just didn't work very well for me, after seven years. That meant one weekend a month, five PM on a Friday night, all day Saturday and all day Sunday, once a month, and it was very interesting, got to develop some very close friendships with some of these guys. ... We'd have, usually, around, no, we preferred not to have more than, twenty in any one workshop. They were doing them up here at Fort Dix--I was over here in Bordentown, at that prison. ... Some of these guys had violated their parole and that--recidivism is very high among prisoners--and Fort Dix, you know, well-educated men, I worked there a couple of times. I started out work over in Pennsylvania, at the federal prison, with thirty feet high walls, and guards and guns and all that sort of thing. I went there for three different times before I got things started over here, and that's an entirely different situation, with no guns around over here, at the correctional institute in Bordentown [Albert C. Wagner Youth Correctional Facility]. You didn't see any guards with guns, no walls, nothing like that, so, a little more comfortable feeling there than it is in the federal prison, with a thirty-foot wall all around.

SI: What do you remember about your experience in working in the settlement house in South Philadelphia?

WS: Well, I don't remember anything in particular, other than trying to get these kids to stop their fighting and be friends and play games and cooperate in games and Ping-Pong tables and not cheating and all those kinds of things that you do with kids. These kids were nine to fifteen, as I recall, and that was the same up at Ottsville, at the camp where they were for a week. Nothing spectacular particularly stands out in my mind. I was just there for a week. You don't get a chance, for that very small amount of time, to see much or talk much.

SI: In the excerpt I read before, you used the term "cracking up" in reference to the women, meaning that they broke down. Did anything like that happen on the men's side? Were there any men that could not handle it?

WS: I don't think so. I don't recall any man that had a mental breakdown among the COs. [Of] course, they could get out and transfer out, if they chose to do so, but, once they were in Byberry,

they stayed. ... I don't know of a single man that transferred out of there. Well, we had opportunities to [get an] education and all these sorts of things, ... but I don't remember anybody asking for a transfer out, but the women had a tough job, tough.

SI: Was it just because there were so few of them?

WS: So few, yes.

SI: Do you remember the name of the one African-American CO that you mentioned?

WS: Kenneth (Knight?).

SI: Was there any bias towards him?

WS: Oh, no. I think, again, not bragging, but I think that COs, being sensitive to society and social ills, integration, I'm sure that almost any CO would be very liberal-minded as far as electing Barack Obama, for example. [Editor's Note: President Barack Obama was, at the time of the interview, US Senator from Illinois, campaigning for the Democratic nomination for President.] That's a blanket statement, which is always unfair to people, but I think they were unusually sensitive to these sorts of things and are more progressive in our thinking as far as bringing the races together--likewise, religion, much more tolerant than, maybe, than the general public. Maybe I'm reading that wrong, completely wrong, but I think that we tend to be more tolerant, liberal, starting with our position as COs. We're a minority and we recognize that, and probably always will be.

SI: Perhaps more from the staff, or even the patients.

WS: I don't quite understand.

SI: Although the COs were very tolerant, were there any racist actions by the staff or patients?

WS: We didn't suffer any, because only this one guy was there. He came in toward the end. I don't know what happened to him, because we got to be a sizable unit there, working three different shifts, and some guys, you never saw, or very seldom saw, but what happened with him, ... Ken (Knight?), in terms of coming in there, his experiences on the ward, I have no idea.

SI: Okay.

WS: At this time in particular--it was a long time ago--I don't remember. He might have had some problems, but I really don't recall any, because we were kind of just a bunch of odd guys, off by ourselves in the hospital, and I don't know.

SI: We talked about how, in North Carolina, the public was not very accepting of the COs at first.

WS: No.

SI: Were there examples of that in Philadelphia?

WS: Yes. Byberry is at the very last stop on the bus line. So, we young men, if we'd been in Philadelphia for the day, we're coming back to Byberry to work a night shift or just coming home, were very much in evidence for anybody else on the bus. Anybody else on the bus, most of them were people coming to work at Byberry, and you'd hear snide remarks by people, "Those yellow bellies." They knew who we were. We were the only young people there, and it's the last stop for the bus and you'd hear remarks in terms of conversation from the seat in front of you, two people, employees, talking about, "Those bastards," and, "Those yellow bellies," and that sort of thing, presumably talking to themselves, but making it evident enough to be sure that we could hear one seat behind them. ... They'd step on your heels as you went off the bus, ... step on your shoes, maybe a shoe would come off, this sort of thing, but it was very--what should I say? It wasn't very common, but it happened often enough that we were aware and we knew they didn't like us, but we had to [deal with it]. We were there to work and do a job and we just kept on doing what we're supposed to do, and you hear those things. My dad and his wife gave me a lecture when I first transferred to Byberry. They lived [on] the other side of Philadelphia, and I'd go out there on my day off and he called me everything in the book and thought I was a coward and all this and that, ... and his wife, likewise, but I don't mean to say that it's not important, I don't mean to say that I shrugged it off, but you have to listen and accept that. His opinions are thus and so, mine are completely counter to his. My youngest brother, volunteering for the Marines, December the 8th, was probably more tolerant of me than anybody in the family. It's just a surmise on my part. I don't know how he really felt--we never had any deep discussions. I'm the only Quaker out of the whole family. My mother worked in the defense industry, in Detroit, Michigan, and she never said so, in so many words, to me, but that's [the] way she felt, I should be in the Army. My aunts were very tolerant. They knew how I felt. Well, they got all my letters. I don't know if they agreed or disagreed particularly. They came from experience; they were both teachers in the public schools in Gary, Indiana, for a while after World War I. During World War I, they were physiotherapists and they worked at Fort McPherson, Georgia, they worked in Walter Reed Hospital in Washington and part of the Army setup ... after World War I, and then, as I say, went into teaching, but they knew how I felt on a personal basis, because I was right there, whereas my dad, you know, I'd see him once a week or once a month or whatever, but my aunts knew how I was feeling long before the war came along. I'm sure they must have known, because of conversation, from Sunday school or from young people's conferences and all that sort of thing, and then, when I joined the Quakers, in 1937, I'm sure they knew how I felt, if and when a war came along. ... Tolerant or otherwise--we never discussed it. They knew how I felt, I guess, but they saved all my stuff. [laughter]

SI: For the record, you have an extensive letter collection that your aunts saved, which starts when you went to Madison College and runs through ...

WS: '47.

SI: One thing I often find in letter collections is that there always seems to be some type of self-editing, in which people leave things out. Did you censor your letters at all? Were there things that you did not want to bother them with?

WS: Yes. No, I don't think I did that. ... In rereading that, in preparing a little bit for this, I found a couple of references about asking them to save my letters. I guess I'd forgotten all about that, because they did save my letters, ... but, in writing my letters, I would just think, "I hope they keep this," I guess went through my mind. I assume that it did, but I wasn't overly conscious of them being saved. As a matter-of-fact, when I came home--I went back to Poplar Ridge after the war, lived there for four years--when I came back home and found these all in three loose leaf files, I was very surprised that they were there. So, even though I had asked them to, I'd forgotten about it, so that it was a complete surprise and all these letters were there, and saved, even though I indicated that I asked them to save them early on.

SI: You did not ...

WS: I didn't write for the sake of saving, I just ...

SI: Are there things that you would not put in there because you did not want them to know about it?

WS: No, no. I was kind of an open book. ... As I said, I'm not an intellectual. I was just recording things that I saw, that's all, and forgetting that they were being saved. [laughter]

SI: You also worked at other hospitals during your time there.

WS: Yes. Of course, we weren't making any money. I went to Friends Hospital in Philadelphia. It's the oldest psychiatric hospital in the United States. It's out on Roosevelt Boulevard, a main thoroughfare, has lots of acreage, has a beautiful azalea garden. ... It was set up, originally, as a place in the country for people to rest and relax who were having mental problems and to take care of them in a quiet, friendly atmosphere, and so, they have all this acreage and trees and flowers, and so on, still. ... I needed some money and was anticipating getting married someday, I went to work there on the night shift when I was working a day shift at Byberry, very clean, very few patients. It's a small hospital. I don't know how many they had at the time and all I know is, I went to work there, worked the night shift and I worked in the alcoholic ward, where you had people [with] alcohol problems, and then, I'd leave at six or seven o'clock in the morning, time to come back to Byberry. As far as sleeping is concerned, working in the alcoholic ward at night, you had a chance to doze, and so, I got some sleep, of course, and not sound asleep, like you'd get in a bed, but some rest and relaxation. The nurses knew who I was, working at Byberry, knowing I was a CO and being a Quaker hospital in the first place, gave us an opportunity to work on a ward and make some money on the side, which I did. I don't remember how long I did that, maybe six months, something like that. I don't know.

SI: There were these shortages that you talked about at Byberry. Did you find that was the case with these other facilities that you went to?

WS: I didn't get involved with that, so, I don't know.

SI: You did not notice anything that was not in supply.

WS: No, I didn't, because I was working in the night shift. Everybody was asleep at night and I didn't have to change beds or do anything. I just had to be there if they're up out of bed in the middle of the night, need to go to the bathroom or something like that, I was there. Other than that, I knew nothing about it. I didn't look into it at all. I just went there to do a job and leave, that's it. Then, I went, for a period of time, as you're talking about social responsibility, another thing I did while I was at Byberry, the union, labor union, was trying to get into the Budd Company. Budd Company made railroad cars and they were trying to unionize. So, I had a chance to make six dollars an hour, fantastic money, but maybe two hours in the morning. I went to the Budd Company passing out literature at the gate as the shifts were changing, night people coming off and day people coming on, passing out literature, which is the easiest money I ever made in my life, but, again, one way to make some money on the side. They did get unionized, I don't know when, because I wasn't around here after the war, but that was one little thing I did on the side. [laughter]

SI: Did the management ever try to chase you off the premises?

WS: Oh, no, no. We weren't in the plant--we were outside on the street.

SI: Did they send people out to try to make you leave?

WS: You're not allowed to get inside the plant and I just passed out [leaflets], and, [of] course, like they always do passing out literature, just gets thrown down on the street. Some people take it and I suppose they read it somewhere along the line, but just someplace to make money, that's all. People handing out leaflets all the time, they'd pick them up, and then, throw them away, usually. I'm on [the] labor side. [laughter]

SI: How did you meet your first wife?

WS: Well, that's an interesting story. I was interested in her sister, younger ... sister. I never had a date with her younger sister, but I liked her. She's very attractive. At the Whittier Hotel in Philadelphia during the war, it was a Quaker hotel run by Quakers, owned by Quakers, down across the street from the YMCA, two blocks from City Hall, and we had what they called Young Friends dances. [Editor's Note: The Philadelphia Young Friends Association, founded in 1888, built the facility that became the Whittier Hotel in the 1910s and changed its name to the Whittier Association in the 1950s. The Young Friends sought to foster Quaker fellowship and activity and used the Whittier Hotel as a center for their social activities until they began leasing the building to other entities in the mid-1950s.] ... Young men and women around Philadelphia--there's a lot of Quakers and Quaker meeting houses around, and the outskirts--and [we would] come once a month to the Whittier Hotel for the dance. Well, that's a great opportunity to meet some girls. I went, as other guys from Byberry did, not very many, but, anyway, it was a good mix and her sister ran it, she was the head of the Young Friends Movement in Philadelphia. She came down to Byberry to visit--she went out to visit a number of CPS camps, also. So, I went once a month and I met her and the ... Thanksgiving of '44, I met her sister, when she was way out at Westtown School. She did not come to these Young Friends dances, but it's through her younger sister that I met her. She brought her sister Ruth from Westtown on Wednesday night to

Byberry, because we always had meetings on Wednesday night, speakers or discussion group or something of that sort. ... I told you Norman Thomas came and spoke, met with us one time, and so, we had some very interesting people there and interesting ministers and other people, but, anyway, she brought her older sister, Ruth, and I met her. ... I said to my best friend, who was a CO from Syracuse, I said to him--I just saw [her] and said hello, that's just a very little conversation--I said, "That's the girl I'm going to marry." Well, it turned out that is the girl that I married. Her family used the plain language, "Thee," and, "Thy," which I loved at seventeen years of age, when I joined the Quakers ... in 1937. After all the literature, and so on, that I read, I was enamored with the simplicity of living and of life practices of the Quakers, and, "Thee," and, "Thy," instead of, "You," and so on, really fascinated me and I said to myself, at seventeen, that I hoped that someday, I will meet a nice, young Quaker lady who came from that kind of a background, a conservative background--conservative only in so far as the old ways of addressing people, "Thee," and, "Thy," and all that kind of stuff. ... This is what (Marian?), the younger sister, and her older sister, Ruth, that I married, came from, that kind of a family, and I was just thrilled, because I could fall into using, "Thee," and, "Thy," without any trouble whatsoever. ... Anyway, I met her the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. I never saw her again until March, I think it was-- it's all in the books--and it was interesting that she met a Quaker from Langhorne, PA, who was an Army doctor. Now, Ruth was a teacher at Westtown. She was going to go to Columbia to get advanced degrees and maybe go into Columbia Nursing School. She was accepted and, at that same time that I met her, this guy from Langhorne, who was an Army doctor and a Quaker from Langhorne Meeting, I saw her one week, he'd see her the next week. We both met her at the same time. Well, here I am, no money, no education, having a date or trying to court this gal who already has advanced degree from college, going into nursing next. So, I was panicky. ... On our dates, we went out up to Wissahickon Park and read poetry and [Kahlil] Gibran was a very widely read man at that time. He wrote *The Prophet* (1923) and [his work was] discussed a great deal. So, we went out to the park and read *The Prophet* and did things of that sort. Our first date was at the symphony in Philadelphia. With no money, we had some orange juice afterwards--that's all I could afford--and so, she was an hour from Philly going west, I was an hour from Philly going north, so, we met in Philly. Beginning in March '45, every other week, we got together and, every other week, she got together with the doctor. I was panicky, because, here, she's going to a nursing school and dating a doctor--the kind of two things go together--and we met together the same time in March. We both proposed to her the same time in June and she did select me. We got married in October of '45. I had three or four dates only and he, likewise, had about the same number, and it was a very happy marriage, three kids and just wonderful to have a nice [marriage], ... being an idealist as I was, and I still am, I'm nuts, I guess, but it satisfied me in every way possible. So, we got married. I went to William Penn College for one year after that, out in Oskaloosa, Iowa, just to get some education. I never expected to finish, but we went out there and, while we were out there, I'm still in the peace movement. We had a truck and we traveled all over Iowa. There's a lot of small schools scattered all over the state and I and another guy organized a march to be held in Des Moines against peacetime conscription that particular year that Congress was considering this. So, we organized a march against peacetime conscription to be a parade in Des Moines, with a meeting in the evening at the public library for discussion and a speaker. ... We got that organized and we had about 110 or so people from all these colleges, such a small group. We had police escorts and all that stuff. We stretched out ... twenty feet apart, single file, so [that] it looked like a big deal and marching down from somewhere--I'd forgotten where--down to the

center of the City of Des Moines, police escort. Then, we had our picture [taken]. I've got, in the other room, a picture of our group with a group photograph at the end of our march, and then, preparing for the evening's discussion in the library. So, I was into the peace movement right after the war, actively, and that's the main thing we did out there. We came home after my one year there and settled back in Poplar Ridge. I went to work in a hardware store serving farmers.

SI: Was that the first march you participated in?

WS: Yes.

SI: Okay.

WS: And we had two kids. Our daughters were born there. Then, from there, we took off from different places over all these years and, well, she died of cancer in 1980. Then, Bob (Scott's?) widow and I got together and we've known each other for fifty years and been married twenty-five, twenty-six now, this year.

SI: After you worked in the hardware store in Poplar Ridge, you then moved to Delaware, Ohio.

WS: Yes, yes. The hardware store was run by the Simkin Family and their name is somewhat famous in Quaker circles. Chet Simkin, who'd hired me, he promised me a job after the war. He was a pacifist himself. He was never drafted because ... he's a carrier of malaria.

SI: Malaria?

WS: Yes, a carrier, and he promised me a job anytime. If I came back here, he'd give me a job. So, we went back here for a start, knowing that I had a job. It was okay. It was very low pay and it was a family operation, Chester's uncle was a missionary in China. His brother was well-known in labor disputes as a--what do you call it, bringing two sides together in the labor movement in the US?

SI: Mediator.

WS: Mediator, yes, that's the word, and then, also, he worked among the miners of West Virginia, very, very poor, during the Depression and all that, and he worked there ... as a mediator, and so, he was famous. I was in Poplar Ridge with his brother, Chester, there for four years, and then, ... I never got any raises, paid thirty-five dollars a week, which wasn't much of an improvement over fifteen dollars a month. So, we did that for four years, and then, I decided, "Gosh, in the long run, I'd better get somewhere I can make some money." We bought a house from my aunt, who was given a house by these two old maiden ladies from Nantucket, and they willed it to my Aunt Jane Searing and we bought it from her, sold it back to her after four years, and went to Ohio. In Ohio, I worked at the Cooperative Recreation Service in Delaware, Ohio, [for] a man who was a pacifist himself, that I didn't know about, published books for the 4-H and the Boy Scouts and for all kinds of organizations and churches. ... I was supposedly hired to come and sell homemade games, games from all over the world, from American Indians and all over the world. (Pamawanga?) was a game from Africa--there's a lot of different ones--and we

made them there in his shop and I presumably was going to sell these things. Well, I never got a chance to sell a single thing. He had me doing other things. So, it was misrepresented, as far as I was concerned. We only stayed there a little over a year, and then, from there on, frustrated as the devil, I went to the University of Ohio Wesleyan and took two days of tests to see what I was capable of doing. ... I was still frustrated and had to get out of there. ... Oh, I started to work part-time in hardware again, at night there, to make some extra money and, when I took these two days of tests, the test came out that social work was about five percent as far as my abilities are concerned, ninety-five percent showed I should be in sales. So, I left there and went into sales, selling door-to-door. The [J. R.] Watkins Products is an old, old company. In 1868, it was started, selling door-to-door, primarily to farmers, things for animals, medicines ... and all that kind of thing, and they'd expanded over the years into household things, and so, I went to work for them. I was there for eight years, self-employed, knocking on doors, door-to-door, just like a Fuller Brush man would do. I liked it and the man that hired me, [it] turned out, was a graduate of Earlham College, a Quaker school in Richmond, Indiana, and it also turned out that his great, great-grandfather had contributed the land down in Delaware, ... I can't think of the place right now, to the Quakers in that town. ... The name escapes me at the moment. He contributed the land to be used for building a Quaker meeting house, but, anyway, this guy from Earlham College was head of the distributorship for Columbus and the area and he sold door-to-door from the time he got out of college. He pawned his watch when he got out of college to buy equipment and material to sell. He went out and sold it the first day and got his watch back, but that's one of those crazy things that you hear about and he got out of college and did that for all those years, selling door-to-door, then, had his own distributorship while I was there. ... Then, they decided to put me in training. I got into training to go into management and I went from there to Wheeling, West Virginia, to run a distributorship in supply for Watkins salespeople in the area. I was in Wheeling, West Virginia, for a year. Then, they asked me--and I was not very successful there, I might add--then, they asked me to come to Kansas City, Missouri. We went out there. I was assistant manager for the distributorship. We had about two hundred sales people there, and then, I'd forgotten how long we were there, a year or two--so many moves, I forgot about the time element. Then, they asked me to come back East. We moved to Moorestown. I was in charge of the distributorship in Philadelphia there for about a year, and then, they transferred me to Memphis, Tennessee. In Memphis, there was a factory in Memphis--and in Winona, Minnesota, those two places--and, in Memphis, I had charge of sales for Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas. My job was to recruit and bring people into the business, to sell door-to-door. I won every prize they put up for improvement in sales, got all kinds of stuff, suits of clothing, silver services, a big overstuffed chair, all that kind of baloney, and so, I was relatively successful as assistant manager there and training people. Then, they transferred me to where I'd go next, Lexington, Kentucky, and I was charged with sales for the eastern half of the state, down to the Hatfield-McCoy country. If you draw a line from Cincinnati straight south to Lexington, down to, well, a straight line, anyway, ... down towards the Tennessee border, straight line from Cincinnati, I had the whole eastern half of the state. ... I traveled there, had sales, won lots of things, and then, the company had a shakeup. New people were brought in and they fired [me], the only time in my life I've been fired. I and four others, district managers, were fired in the shakeup and, as a result, I was out of a job. Two days later, I had a job selling Beltone Hearing Aids, right there in Lexington. ... They had me traveling several counties, same covered in terms of the Watkins business, but I didn't go so far, and conducted clinics, go to hotels and stay there for a day or two and run ads in advance for hearing aid testing and all that

kind of thing. ... Then, after that, my wife and I, since Kentucky was the second from the bottom as far as education is concerned, ... we decided we'd come back to Moorestown. She was from there originally and we had lived there while I worked in Philadelphia. We decided we'd come back and, make it permanent, which I did--which we did--and so, I came back here and started to sell real estate advertising for a newspaper, the *Burlington County Times*. It was a new paper at the time and did that for a year, but I didn't like it. ... Real estate advertising, I was contacting all the brokers. I had four offers from four different brokers that I was soliciting ads for the paper. Four different brokers said to me, "If you ever decide to leave that job, come and see me, I'll take you on." So, I ended up going to a broker that had not offered me a job and, for forty-five years, I was in real estate and I just retired last year. [laughter] That's the story of my life.

SI: Were you involved in social action activity in all these different areas that you lived?

WS: Yes. I joined the NAACP and CORE, Committee for Racial Equality [Congress of Racial Equality], and demonstrated in Lexington when they're trying to integrate lunch counters in the five-and-tens. I did that and ... I got myself, purposely, a black dentist when I lived in Wheeling, West Virginia, just ... as a witness that I'm not afraid to have some black fingers in my mouth. I didn't tell him that, [laughter] but that's what I did, and, oh, I don't remember what I did in Kansas City. In Burlington, when we came back here, I belonged to the Burlington County Human Relations Council, when they were doing testing on housing, to integrate housing. A black man would go to an office--work on a team, as a team--the black guy would go to buy a house, "Oh, I'm sorry, sir, but that house was just sold yesterday," and then, a day or so later, a white guy of the team would go in, "The house is available," and that's how all integration really began, by testing them. These guys got into trouble some. When I started the real estate business, it was my determination that I would sell a house anywhere to anybody, if they can afford what I'm showing them. I didn't show them something they could not afford, what their appetites, that kind of thing. That's a terrible thing that they do, and I integrated, started [the] integration of a few places around here, in some of the fancy areas. My most telling incident was a Vietnam widow who had her ten thousand dollars, since her husband was killed. She had two kids. ... You know, real estate brokers are really responsible, in my opinion, for creating ghettos, because, once the color line has been broken, then, the brokers will funnel people into that area, once it's been broken, and [they were] creating more ghettos and more isolation for blacks, but I vowed to myself that that will never happen with me. ... I worked to integrate, not purposely, but to find a place where a person could afford to live, what they wanted and what they could afford, and I had some brokers mad at me. I had one guy tell me, he said, "Don't ever try and co-opt [my listings]. Don't ever try showing them my houses again." That was one man, and another man I had up before the board, the state board, because he tried that same thing. I was showing one of his houses to a black man, a teacher at Friends School, and I got done showing it and I'd forgotten--this guy was a lawyer, a University of Pennsylvania graduate, ran a real estate office. ... He knows what the law is, that you do not discuss interracial relations or housing with people, telling them that, "This is a black area," or, "Not a good area, because there's a black family around the corner." That kind of thing is taboo as far as the law is concerned and I showed this house over in Riverside to this black teacher and he called me to say that the house is off the market, after I'd shown it. Well, that's a violation right there. He should not have taken the listing in the first place, as far as the law is concerned, and I had

him investigated by the state board. What happened, I don't know. I just know that he had to answer to the state because I wrote a letter. Then, the only other interesting one that I had, I had a teacher up here in Mount Holly, which is the county seat, a black teacher, was in Africa on the Peace Corps and taught French and he lived in Mount Holly. He had lots of money, because he was overseas for two years, and the high school had written to him and said, at the end of his two years, to come back here, "We want you to teach here again." So, he came back to do that. Well, he tested different brokers. They wouldn't help him to find a house. A black man would go to an office and, ... though he's ready to buy, that salesperson in that office would never call him back or follow up. So, he has to float from office to office to office to find somebody who really will help his needs. So, he came into our office and I had him and I tried hard. I found him a house in the best section of Mount Holly, the most expensive section of Mount Holly ... he could afford, and he had his bank account at the Burlington County Trust Company all the time that he was gone. So, he accumulated ten thousand dollars while he was overseas in that account, and whatever else he had, I don't know, but I got the house. We made the offer on the house and a sales agreement was drawn. However, Burlington County Trust Company, in processing his application for a mortgage, dillied and dallied. A guy who had ten thousand dollars to plunk down, in those days, for a house for sixty thousand dollars, or whatever it was, was a very good prospect and would qualify on a mortgage without question, and they dillied and dallied and I went to the bank after a period of time, long past when he should have been approved. ... I said to the manager, I said, "I want a mortgage on this person within a week or we're taking the money out of the bank." I had the mortgage, but they were dallying because they would be financing a black man in the best section of Mount Holly and it would show on their ... history, or whatever it is, public relations, that they helped integrate. So, those are some of the things that I had done and I have no regrets of any kind, all of those things that helped contribute to, hopefully, lessening the antagonism against blacks. I just had a wonderful life, that's all. [laughter] I think I have. I haven't contributed very much, but I've had interesting [experiences], for me they were interesting experiences.

SI: When you were in Lexington, integrating the lunch counters, can you describe those actions?

WS: Yes, ... as a member of the NAACP, I carried a sandwich board. You know what a sandwich board is?

SI: Yes.

WS: Okay, some people don't; walking back and forth, in front of this five-and-ten, and people spitting at you while you did this, young people sitting on the sidewalk or against the building, I could remember, spitting at you and calling you all kinds of names, but you keep on going. It's one of the hardest jobs I ever did, to stand and to walk, really, and have these people spitting at you and calling you different names, was a very hard thing as far as self-discipline is concerned, not to react. So, [you] just keep walking and say nothing, and it's a discipline to do that. It's hard, or it was then, [as] a young man, ... but I've done a lot of that since then.

SI: Were you ever arrested for it?

WS: No, never had any confrontation with the police.

SI: How did the white locals treat you, outside of the actions you described?

WS: No, problem, ... an experience in Kansas City--we rented, we did not own--but, in one ... southern [area of] Kansas City, Missouri, there were an awful lot of signs popping up all over in a certain section. These signs were homemade signs and out in front of houses that said, "This house is not for sale," and I was not aware of it, but, apparently, there must have been a black family [who] moved in there somewhere and, when that happens and in the process of integration, all these real estate guys are terrible. [They] would go out and say, "Joe Blow around the corner, black man--you'd better sell your house now and get top price." They'd do all that kind of thing, and so, seeing all these signs were very nice, that, "This house is not for sale," ... to discourage real estate people from going out and using the scare tactic to get those houses listed for sale. If they had listed for sale, then, that area would become a ghetto. So, real estate people, in my opinion, are responsible for a lot of--well, are responsible for some--ghettos being created. I might be way off base on that, but I think that's true, because [of] the scare tactics that were used.

SI: Were you involved in the peace movement during Vietnam?

WS: Not so much so then. I was interested, of course, and I really don't remember, to tell you the truth. I tried to be involved in the peace movement in one way or another. I was probably too busy raising a family, so [that] I could make money. ... What else should I say? active in the peace movement. It's always been one of the important things to me, but there is that time when--when was Vietnam? When was that, '60s?

SI: Yes, from the early 1960s through the early 1970s.

WS: Yes. Well, in the early '60s, we'd come back here from where we were, from ... Lexington, and getting started in the real estate business and I was working from nine in the morning until eleven at night, and so, I had no time. ... I was working six-and-a-half days a week, trying to make a living, getting started in Mount Holly, when I had the experiences that I just related. So, I had no time for the Peace and Social Order Committee and those sorts of things in the Meeting, because I had Sunday morning off, essentially. That's all I had, and so, I lived in Moorestown and it's eight miles from there to Mount Holly and the office there was open until nine and ten o'clock at night and I had my supper when I got home, ten o'clock or thereabouts. So, I was really not involved in much of anything at that time.

SI: Is there anything else you would like to talk about?

WS: I had gone quite a way there, I think.

SI: Are you still involved in the peace movement?

WS: Well, ... after six years in Mount Holly, I transferred to Moorestown and the broker there was an old-fashioned Baptist. He did not have the office open on Sundays and we closed at six o'clock at night. So, I had a lot more time to get into the committee work of ... our meeting,

Quaker meeting, and so, I got into the Peace and Social Order Committee. I was on there for thirty years and I just got off that in recent years. Demonstrations would go on and various things in the peace movement, [went to] Washington a number of times for women's rights and the peace demonstrations, one against [US Defense Secretary Donald] Rumsfeld, against [President Richard] Nixon, and this sort of thing. I did not get to the Poor Peoples march in New York. I don't remember why I didn't, but I didn't, but I've been to Washington, to everything that's happened down there, all the marches there, ... women's rights and the black men's rights and various peace things and the march against Nixon and march against Rumsfeld, march against [President George W.] Bush. I'd go down there and ... stay with my son, he goes out with me, and his son. So, the three of us are out there, the three generations, which is a satisfaction to me. ...

SI: Being involved in the peace movement since 1937, and all of these ancillary equal rights movements, do you think things have improved?

WS: Well, a thought just came to me, and I'll come back to that.

SI: Sure.

WS: Even though ... [I was inactive] during the Vietnam War demonstrations, and so on, I've always been a member and contributing member of the WRL, the War Resisters League, the FOR, Fellowship for Reconciliation, the NAACP and these various peace organizations and integration, racial relations groups. I've always been a contributing member to them, even though I wasn't out there on the hustings, marching. Now, I'm sorry, repeat your question.

SI: What is your view on the development of the peace movement during your involvement?

WS: I don't know, really. Right now, currently, of course, a lot of young people are doing what they're doing in terms of the Iraq War. I would like to think, and I think it might be true at least to a limited extent, that through the exposure of the peace movement through demonstrations, and so on, that there are more people coming into the fold, so-to-speak. I might be way off base, but I would like to think that there's been enough influence, through publicity, through the demonstrations, through literature that people pick up here and there, [that] it has affected their thinking along these lines, at least thinking about the issues. Unfortunately, lots of Quakers in the past have not taken that position. To me, it's one of the main testimonies that we passed to the world in Quakerism--the peace testimony. I just hope it's rubbed off. I hope that, in the overall, there are more people thinking about the issue of peace. You know, my brother was in the Marines and one of the first things he learned in the Marines [was] that, in hand-to-hand combat, you blind your opponent by sticking your two knuckles into their eyes. Now, to me, it's horrendous to put a person's eyes out and for the rest of their life it's dark, and that is so horrible that I couldn't even consider being in the military. ... Of course, there are things equally bad or worse, that happened to people. The whole idea of snuffing out a life is so obnoxious to me that, I don't know, I'm sure I'd be in prison. I would be in the brig if I was in the Navy or the Army. ... The brig for the Navy--what's it for the Army? the stockade. I would be there all the time, because I could never stand some sergeant standing up, like you see in the movies sometimes, this drill sergeant, right up just face to face, nose to nose, almost, I could never take that. I'm just

not that disposition. I know I'd be in the stockade all the time and that kind of training, I think it's certainly prevalent, ... but that would not be for me. I really hope that, there's a lot of people who had been touched or influenced or at least [are] thinking about, "There is another way, if you feel it strong enough, that we might be able to bring about change." There is, in Washington, the Quakers Friends Committee on National Legislation. We have a full-time personnel, we're the only religious body that has full-time--what is it you're doing when you're trying to convince Congressmen?

SI: Lobby?

WS: Lobbying. We're the only religious body to have full-time lobbying in Washington. The Friends Committee on National Legislation, FCNL, has an office--it's a green building, by the way--right across the street from the Senate office building, and so, we have a strong presence there and it's been there for many, many years. ... They entertain the Senators and the Representatives in our building and talk to them in their offices, of course, but it stands well the fact that we are that close and can Quakers know what's going on. So, it's an educational thing as well. Another idea just flashed across my mind--what the devil was it? Did you know the story about the three Quakers that went to Germany to prevent World War II? They were in the Reichstag and they were supposedly hoping to go to meet Hitler, three weighty Quakers that were--the term weight does not mean fat, it means they have a lot of spiritual gifts behind them, in thought and deep thinking, and so on--one of them from right here in Haddonfield. I don't know where the other two were from originally, and they went to talk to Hitler and they did not meet him. They met some other functionary and they were in the Reichstag building and they think, after they got out of there, that there must have been listening devices in the room, because, after meeting a short period of time, the officials excused themselves and went out and they think they did that purposely, hoping that these listening devices might pick up what these guys were discussing among themselves. However, they just had a silent meeting there. They never said a peep, so that if there were listening devices there, they didn't get any information, so that I think that's an interesting story. Well, I don't know. That's about all I can say. Our influence, for Quakers--we're few in number, we're not a big denomination, there's only about five hundred thousand in the world--we've had, always, good publicity. We have a good history for contributing to society, integrity, honesty, all that stuff. What else can I say? [laughter] I hope we're humble in our achievements. I guess we are; I don't know.

SI: If you would like to add anything, go ahead. I thought I would read more of the excerpts.

WS: Yes, go ahead.

SI: Perhaps ask a few more questions about Byberry.

WS: Sure.

SI: This is from a letter of May 23rd.

WS: Would you prefer that I read it or do you want to read it? There's a lot of errors and misspelling, and so on.

SI: Do you want to read it?

WS: I don't care. If you want me to, I will. I might be able to read it easier than you, but that's [okay]. ...

SI: I can read it fine.

WS: Go ahead.

SI: May 23, 1944, this excerpt, "From January of this year to the end of June, eleven of the men from here have been or are getting married. Thursday, the inspection occurred. Of course, it was a farce. Mr. Richards, the personnel man, came over and made the men put up scaffolding in A Building, so that the ceiling could be cleaned. Men had to work overtime to get it done. Shoes were obtained, so that each patient had a pair--the first ones they had seen in months. I guess clothes are saved for occasions, as near as I can figure out. Doctor Peacock, the male side clinical director went into A Building, the first time he had been there for months, to see that everything was hunky-dory. There was one patient in the day room who had a piece of chalk, drawing square roots on the cement floor. Peacock got all upset. He told one of our men to make the patient stop dirtying the floors like that. That patient always does that. Our fellow said to Peacock to leave him alone, because it was the only fun that the patient got out of life. Peacock says, "All right then, if you want to clean it up." Our man retorted, "We have to clean up things worse than that in this building." For the inspection, the patients had shirts on, the first ones in several weeks. The riotous part of it is that Mr. Richards made E Building lend 350 bedspreads to A Building. A Building never uses spreads, but they wanted the building to look nice. Every bed had a spread and, immediately upon the exodus of the inspectors, the spreads were torn off the beds, folded and returned to E Building before they got soiled. If that is not a riot, I do not know what is. The only time that anybody gets stirred up about A Building around here is when an inspection is pending. The group of inspectors were made up of hospital superintendents in Pennsylvania and Dr. (Sandy?), who I believe is head of the mental hygiene department for mental hospitals, something like that anyhow. The patients in A Building have not had spoons for months. They have been requisitioned for and I know that they have some on hand, because they have gotten spoons from other buildings. Mr. Richards once said that A Building didn't need them because the patients always lost them, threw them down toilets or drains. Whether they had some in the building to show off at the time of the inspection or not, I don't know. The patients grab the spaghetti in their hands and jam it down their gullets. It is a mess and a real sight to see. If the relatives of the patients knew that they got no spoons, there would be a furor." I have a question. You said that only a few patients had family that would visit them.

WS: Very few, very few people. Some people had been there for years, never saw anybody--doctor, nurse or relatives.

SI: Did they have any other kind of contact with family, receive letters, send letters, telephone calls?

WS: In A Building, you didn't get much of that. I mean, the people in A Building, their minds are so far gone--if you just stand or sit in your own mess, gives you an indication that the mind does not function very well. So, I would make a general statement that ninety-eight percent--I'm only talking about the men's side--of the inmates never saw or heard from a relative, ninety-eight percent. I know that the visitors were very, very few in relationship to the number of patients in that particular building. This is a very general statement, but I think it's probably pretty accurate, actually, unfortunately. ... For some of those that had visitors come, it'd be almost as if they had Alzheimer's, because they just sat there, no communication as far as verbal communication is concerned. This is not to say they're all quiet, but I mean just sit there like lumps on a log, bumps on a log. So, I think that'd be pretty accurate--ninety-eight percent would never see anybody. Remember that the feeling of the general public about Byberry, because it's notorious in terms of conditions, for years, it's been notorious, [is] that it's the dead end. ... You never get out of there once you're in. So, the number of patients that went on parole were extremely few and, vice versa, the relatives coming [in], extremely few--a horrible place. No telephones available to any patient at any time.

SI: There was little opportunity for word to get out about the conditions there or for people to care.

WS: People'd come to visit, and that's why we started that letter writing campaign, and I don't know how [it started], over the so many years, ... because we were only there a short time, you know, three years, three years-and-a-half for me. It was already notorious long before we got there. Why and how it got out to have that kind of reputation, I don't know. It was for a long time--inspections, I suppose, newspaper stories and this sort of thing, maybe reporters visiting and going in there disguised? I'm not imagining things, but this kind of thing could have happened in the past, but it was certainly well-known as a horrible place and the very end of the line for the people that went there and, as I say, you'd never get out once you're in. So, it had that reputation.

SI: What impact did the letter writing campaign have?

WS: I don't know that I could even begin to measure that, because we did quite a bit of it, and unsigned letters. You signed it, "Interested in Byberry," all kinds of things like that, or you signed your own name and people didn't know who you were, that you worked there, that you're a CO or anything else. So, what impact it had, I really don't know. No change happened, no changes occurred while we were there, but it was later torn down, or it's in the process, now, of being torn down on the female side. The men's side has been torn down many years ago and there's a development that's grown up around there and there's some businesses and offices and that sort of thing. The women's side, when I was over there with this guy from California, three years ago, the buildings were there. It was all grown up, hedges and trees all over the place, and they had signs up, "No trespassing," but I went there just the same. I had this guy from California, wanted some pictures and that sort of thing--hadn't been on there five minutes when the police were there asking what I'm doing. I said, "I'm just looking around. I worked here fifty years ago and just looking to see what happened to the place." He said, "Well, I guess we'll take you down to the station." I said, "Okay, let's go," ... but he never carried through. [laughter] He thought he was going to intimidate me and I said, "I'm ready," but that all stopped right there. ...

So, the fellow from ... California got the pictures that he wanted and we left, but it has been torn down. At one point, the city was talking about developing it for senior citizen housing, but there was nothing there worth preserving. Gosh all the buildings were so old, hadn't been painted in forty years or thereabouts, I don't know, nothing worthwhile.

SI: When they would have these inspections, would they talk to you at all, or any of the COs? Would the staff hide the COs from the inspectors?

WS: Oh, no, the state knew we were there, oh, definitely.

SI: I meant would they have you somewhere else, where you would not have the opportunity to say anything?

WS: They couldn't do that. If they did, there'd be nobody in the building, so that we were there, just carried on, like every day. They couldn't hide us. They couldn't ask us to leave or go back to our living quarters--who'd unlock the door, let them in? No, we were very much in evidence and very well-known as far as the state is concerned. They were getting a lot of help pretty cheaply, fifteen dollars a month, and I don't know what the paid attendants got in those days, probably, well, of course, room and board, they probably got seventy-five dollars a month. I really don't know.

SI: Going back to when veterans started coming into the hospital, were many of these post-traumatic stress cases?

WS: I suppose a regular run of problems that service people have, they're having experience [with] out of Iraq. So, how many veterans we had, I have no idea. I just remember Joe (Federruci?) in particular and there were a few others that I know of. ... When a person who was in a mental situation in Philadelphia [was institutionalized], they were initially introduced to Philadelphia General Hospital, out on West Market Street, west part of the city, and then, evaluated there, I suppose, and then, shipped to Byberry or wherever else, I don't know, but they did not come into, generally speaking, ... directly into Byberry, I don't believe.

SI: The conditions were the same at that time--they would not have clothes and the facilities were poor--where the veterans were.

WS: They were not isolated from others. They were mixed in in the general population. You wouldn't know one veteran from another, whether he was or wasn't. We never saw any records. They were admitted to the hospital and wherever those records were, I don't know, but it's just a person, word of mouth, that this guy was a veteran. ... There weren't that many of them there that come in, actually. ... The veterans' hospitals, they were overcrowded and they didn't, I assume did not, overcrowd to the extent of Byberry. Byberry would put anybody in there, until the walls burst, I guess. I don't know.

SI: Going back to the effort to reform things, this was the place where *The Attendant* got started, the newsletter. [Editor's Note: During World War II, four CO attendants at Byberry began publishing *The Attendant* (later renamed *The Psychiatric Aide*), a newsletter that instructed

attendants in how to treat patients and raised awareness of the plight of patients in mental institutions around the nation. These four COs also started a public awareness campaign that dovetailed with the articles published by Albert Maisel and Albert Deutsch in 1946. The campaign resulted in the creation of the National Mental Health Foundation (NMHF), sponsored by a slate of public figures, including Eleanor Roosevelt and retired Supreme Court Justice Owen J. Roberts. The NMHF sought to improve treatment of the mentally ill and remove the social stigmas surrounding having a mental disease and seeking treatment. In 1950, the NMHF merged with the National Committee for Mental Hygiene and the American Psychiatric Foundation to form the National Association for Mental Health, now the National Mental Health Association.]

WS: Oh, yes, yes. ... Yes, that's correct, and here's a sample of it right here. You can take it home with you if you want to. I've got several copies. ... Yes, that's a good question. That was started, I think, around ... the latter part of 1944 or '45, somewhere in there, [by] four guys, who were good men, one of them, incidentally, was Leonard Edelstein, he was a former FBI man, and Hal Barton and Philip Steer, and who the devil was the fourth one? oh, Willard Hetzel, was a lawyer. ... Leonard Edelstein was also a lawyer, from Syracuse, and he worked for the FBI. As a matter-of-fact, it was interesting, he told me that ... one of his jobs, one time, was to investigate a CO, to see, I suppose, whether he's really a faker or really sincere, and so on, but, anyway, he turns out to be a CO himself and those four guys. Leonard contacted Eleanor Roosevelt and had a meeting with [her]. I don't know who else went with him, Harold Barton, maybe, or Willard Hetzel, but, anyway, those are the four guys that started *The Attendant* and they went to see Eleanor Roosevelt, to try and see if they could have a separate unit for these guys to get started to do something like that, and they did get it. So, they spent all their time gathering information, making contacts, for doctors and others to write articles for that magazine. It started out with the idea, originally, of information for training, for people coming into this kind of work, because we didn't have any training. My goodness gracious, nobody was getting any training, really, and that was the idea behind that magazine and that came out regularly. I don't know how long it lasted, because I was gone and I got out before a lot of guys, because I was pulled in pretty early. They went on the basis of points for the length of service that you'd been in, as far as discharge is concerned. So, I can't answer about that.

SI: In one of the excerpts in *Turning Point*, you wrote about people you knew being persecuted when they came back home, in terms of job discrimination, being run out of towns. Did you either face any of that or fear any of that?

WS: No, because I was going back where I was raised as a boy, on a farm, Quaker community, I mean, Quaker Church--not everybody was Quakers. So, I had no experience of any kind, no feelings or attitudes or anything.

SI: However, did that make you think twice about going other places?

WS: No, no, ... just whatever happened in my career, transfers here and there and yonder, I went. It was no problem. They didn't know all my background--maybe they would've run me out of town if they did [laughter]--but, I mean, it wasn't something that I was flaunting in front of people or anything like that. Anybody asked me, I'd tell them. "Where were you in the war?"

"Well, I was a CO in the war--and I don't mean commanding officer," that's my usual line, [laughter] and they got the message.

SI: I will continue the passage from before, "The other day, for A Building, I requisitioned to have a pipe repaired that had been broken off completely just below the spigot. It was not done and, today, the whole sink has been pulled out and off the wall by the patients. So, now, both pipes are broken. The inertia of this place really wears one down more than anything else. One of the men in A Building told me just this morning that he has been losing weight and he hopes that he has a case of active TB [tuberculosis] as a result from his X-ray picture, so that he can get away from this place and get a complete rest. He has only been here since Christmas. Nobody is concerned about anything until something major, of major importance, occurs around here. Yesterday, one of the patients who works on an outside crew got nearly roasted alive. He was working near a steam pit. I am told he got in it where a hot water pipe had broken and had not been fixed and, of course, boiling hot water was coming out and steam was rising off the water. The Negro patient was brought to the infirmary and his legs were under a tent, so that I couldn't see them, but I did see his arms. The skin was off and he looked like a white man where he had been burned. He is an imbecile, some sight."

WS: But, I was going to say something--I don't know what it was now. [laughter]

SI: The patient pool was integrated.

WS: Blacks and whites, you mean? Oh, all the buildings were mixed, yes.

SI: Was there any different treatment of black and white patients?

WS: Wasn't any treatment for anybody. [laughter]

SI: Were they abused, maybe, more by attendants or anything like that?

WS: No, I don't think so. ... See, the first group of us went there in 1942 and, within a year, or thereabouts, we were running the place. ... Even though there were a few paid attendants left, they were leaving, and so, we were running the place and we did what we wanted, or did what we could do. ... So, we had no problems of that sort when we were taking over, just COs on the disturbed ward and only COs in the incontinent ward and the other wards, the F Building, Hydro, and the--where do the guys go who have fits. ...

SI: Epilepsy?

WS: Epileptics, that was run by the COs, too. The TB ward was off by itself. It was very small, but we did not run that. There were nurses there all the time, ... around the clock. The other nurses were only there in the morning, in any of those other buildings, to bandage or to give a little bit of medicine or something like that. Nurses were in terribly short supply. I don't know how many they had in normal times, before the war, but we had two nurses on Service #2, where I worked, and they'd do their business in the morning, I don't know, writing paperwork the rest of the day, as far as I know. [laughter]

SI: Here is another passage.

WS: Is it all right if I interrupt you, because something came up that last time and it skipped my mind when you kept on going? [laughter] Okay, I'll interrupt you when I think of something--go ahead.

SI: I thought you were going to say something.

WS: No, ... I will interrupt you if something occurs to me.

SI: Please do. This is an excerpt from June 12, 1944, "The other day in A Building, you should have seen the bugs. They have crawled under the seats of the chairs and into the cracks where the joints go together, millions of them, bugs of all kinds between the door and the door jamb. It is most revolting. Cockroaches you never saw so big in your life permeate the whole hospital. We have a lot in the cottage also. One of the men got kicked in the eye by a patient on Saturday and had his glasses broken, some cuts around his eye, but the eye is all right." What were you saying?

WS: No, I have a picture of a cockroach here. [laughter] I had it here. The originals are out at Swarthmore. They copied pictures of everything I had, no big deal, and they gave me copies, so that I had records, and I got pictures of the jaundice unit here, also. There's Dr. Neefe. Neil Hartman was a CO, right there--he just lives down the track here. Byberry Meeting is a short walking distance across Route 1 and here's the meeting house and we had an annual picnic. The meeting house put on a picnic for all of us once a year, and the families. Here is the building that we lived in, called Cottage #1, that I described earlier, an L-shaped building. We had, as I said, a good library, and so on. We had a chorus. We sang, had a lot of fun doing that.

SI: You went with the chorus to an alien detention camp.

WS: Yes. I'd forgotten all about that when I looked at [my records]. Here's A Building, no chairs, no benches, no anything to sit on.

SI: Yes. Most of the men are naked.

WS: All the time. Yes, our chorus, and I don't remember, at this time [in the photograph], where the devil it was, it was somewhere in the general geographic area of Camden, and they had interned both Italians and Germans who had come in on a ship. ... The ship was confiscated and these guys were interned in the prison and we heard about it and we went there to put on a concert for them, went and sang and mixed with them, had refreshments, all that kind of stuff. We only did it once, had all the lock-in and inspections and all that sort of thing, of course, when you're dealing in a situation like that. I'd forgotten all about that until I re-read it in there. I've forgotten a lot of stuff. I've got to take that and read it all over again. I was just glancing through it and that's how I happened to pick some of those things for you to look at, if you want to.

SI: Here is another from August 21, 1944, "Almost had a murder here in the violent ward on Saturday. One of the patient's cuffs and straps are practically a non-entity on the building and the few straps that they do have are no good. Patients are cutting each other out of the straps and with what, no one knows. The slow moving requisitions are not getting through in quick enough time. Patients are running wild and it is bedlam. Window screens are being torn off the windows at a great rate. Plumbing is going bad with the toilets and urinals constantly flushing and flowing over in the same ward. It takes everywhere from two days to a week to get stuff repaired. A climax is fast approaching in regard to the administration of B Building. Our men are getting worn out mentally." There was an impact on the men, even though there were not breakdowns, like on the women's side.

WS: Yes, that's true. I would say that, generally, our morale was pretty good, well, again, because being in Philadelphia, the outside activities, ... for educational courses the guys wanted to take, social things, in terms of mixing, the dances that we had. So, we circulated in the general Philadelphia community to the extent that we wanted to. So, we led fairly normal lives as it relates to Philadelphia. It was no question but that the work was very depressing, to see absolutely no benefit to the patients, strictly and only custodial care, and so, we accepted that and lived as normal lives as anybody else.

SI: You mentioned here that there was an increase in smoking among the COs. Was there an increase in drinking or anything else?

WS: There could have been. I don't remember that. Drinking, we didn't drink there. I mean, they might have gone off to bars and parties, I don't know, but there was a number of guys that smoked, a good many. Most of us did not. Those that did, ... under pressure, you see an increase.

SI: Do you remember where you were when the war ended?

WS: I was at Byberry and I don't really remember the dates the war in Europe ended. What, it was in May or June, something like that? and then, August or something for the war in Asia, but I was just working there. After, I needed to get some money, so, I stayed on there for a couple of months after the war and got up to be a paid attendant, and then, I went to Europe in relief work, the cattle boat. I took eight hundred horses to Danzig, Poland, [later renamed Gdansk], to help get the farms started again. While there, I ran into the Danish Red Cross. They were the only relief agency there at the time. Let's see, the war ended, I went over there in March, I guess, of '46, March or April, and I hooked up with the Danish Red Cross, running the soup kitchen. They were, as I say, the only relief agency there at the time, a team of guys, men and women. I think there were six or seven of them there and we were ladling out soup to the inhabitants and they would bring little cans, pails, sauce pans, any kind of a container that they could find to bring to the back of this truck, and we ladled out soup to them. Danzig, of course, had a lot of destruction. I really saw first-hand what it was all about and I'll never forget one boy; incidentally, the manure, we called it "the manure tour." ... That was the way we described our experience, "the manure tour." Manure was kept on the ship. When we docked, the stevedores unloaded it and took it out to the farms, of course, but, one day, on the street in Danzig--people are desperate for money--this kid, he must have been eight years old, maybe, and trying to make

some money, he said, "Sleep *mein* sister, *ein* cigarette?" So, if I gave him one cigarette--not a pack, one cigarette--I could sleep with his sister. He was trying to sell her services, and so, that leaves an impression upon you, certainly. That's one of the things that happened there, but I worked with the Danish Red Cross for three days or four days in Danzig. One evening, we went to see Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days*, English story, the movie was in Russian, with Polish subtitles, and we did that together and they spoke English. I had a nice time doing that. It was a nice association.

SI: Which organization had organized the cattle?

WS: Oh, the Brethren Service Committee. Oh, you don't know anything about that, okay. The Brethren Service Committee started shipping all kinds of animals overseas, [to] Europe and Asia. The United Nations, UN, UNRRA, United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Organization, was started by the federal government, ... in terms of relief work, and the Brethren Service Committee started this animal business. [Editor's Note: The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration was started by the US Government under President Roosevelt in 1943 to provide aid to war victims and became part of the United Nations in 1945, which supervised its operations until 1948.] They're still doing it, by the way. I went to Vietnam and Cambodia with them. Neil Hartman, down here, and I went to see how the thing is operating and this is the conception and I think it's very interesting, non-governmental. If I give you a sow, a gift, you're a farmer, you sign a contract that you will give away the first litter to another person who needs it for their farm--likewise, if I give you a heifer--and it's called the Heifer Project, because that's the way it started, because of milk, and so on, for nourishment for the refugees. If I give you a heifer, your promise is that you'll give the first calf to somebody that doesn't have any. So, that's the way it worked and it's still doing the same thing today. UNRRA, of course, is no longer operating, but the Heifer Project is still going on and, while they used to ship all these animals from this country around the world, it's so expensive now. ... When I say ship, [I mean] by boat, and doing it now by airplane, to reduce the costs, what they're doing now, if they have Vietnam or Cambodia or wherever, they try to go to the other countries, neighboring as close as possible, and get the oxen or the sheep or whatever it might be and transfer them into the country that they're trying to help. There's no government monkey business, no government connection in any way whatsoever. The Brethren Service Committee is just down here at New Windsor, Maryland--it's not very far from here--and they had a reunion of what we call "seagoing cowboys" or "the manure tour," and they had their headquarters there that they work out of for shipping. Their main headquarters for administration is in, I think it's out in Indiana, I think, but it's a very worthwhile project. ... The Brethren were very generous and the Mennonites were very generous in raising animals specifically for this kind of work and ... it's strictly done by contributions. If you contributed, and I'm just using figures out of the air, if you contributed ten dollars, they would apply that toward shipping a flock of geese to some country. If you gave fifty dollars, that's good for a heifer. If you gave a hundred dollars, it's good for a bull, oxen, to pull the plows, and so on. So, they do all of these animals, you can imagine, all over the world, for helping these refugees in these countries in need, for starving people, and so on, non-profit. ... I get their literature all the time and contribute to it all the time, too.

SI: Was the trip to Danzig the only one that you participated in?

WS: Is it what?

SI: At the time, was the trip to Danzig the only one you went on?

WS: Yes, I only took one trip with them. They shipped goats to Greece, goats to Japan. My friend Neil Hartman took three trips. I only took the one because I had a summer job. I was married and I had a summer job right down the street here, Camp Dark Waters, which is adjacent here to Medford Leas as assistant camp director. ... I did that for the Summer of '46, but the Heifer Project is known all over the country and is a very worthwhile thing. I have a heifer shirt in my closet, but that was one more thing I got involved with, social interest, you know.

SI: You were only in Poland for a few days.

WS: I was in Poland for a week, because they had to unload the manure, and I got a job that paid me 250 dollars on the way back, because the wiper got drunk and he never appeared at the ship when it was time to leave. The Captain asked me if I'd like to take the wiper's job, which is wiping up oil off the floors down in the engine room, so that a person doesn't slip and fall into the machinery. ... So, I got paid 250 dollars for that, just going back. The trip itself, as a "seagoing cowboy," we got 250 dollars for the whole thing. So, I made five hundred dollars. They paid us 250 dollars to go, but they shipped, at that time, into Greece, into Poland and to Japan. The need was everywhere, obviously.

SI: Did you have any encounters with Russians in Poland?

WS: Yes, the Russians occupied Poland and one for passive resistance, or declaring non-violent resistance, shall we say--on a trolley car, there are very few of them, I got on a trolley car. ... A Russian soldier, they were occupying Poland, Danzig, and a Russian soldier got on the trolley car. When he got on, everybody in the trolley car gave him their back, just turned away from him, and that's a very difficult thing in terms of morale. The Germans, in occupying Norway and Sweden, got the same kind of treatment. ... A German soldier walking down the street on your side, the citizenry crossed over to the other side and Germany had the greatest--I haven't read this in the paper, word of mouth things grow, maybe, and they probably do--but they said that the German Army had the greatest morale problem in the Scandinavian countries, because that was the kind of treatment the German soldiers got. The civilians, occupied, would have nothing to do with them. What all they did or didn't do, I don't know, but they had passive resistance to that German army of occupation in Scandinavia. All these little things, you pick up and hear and, once in a while, you read a little something in the paper, some little squib that doesn't get in the main part of the paper. It's one of those little side things that you see once in a while and you pick these things up every once in a while. It makes it interesting. So, it's not just the headlines that makes the news, a lot more behind the headlines of a story. I have, in terms of my involvement--here's a picture not long ago, 11/4/05, there's Neil Hartman and myself and another guy from Friends School, right in Moorestown, locally. What else have I got there? I don't know who sent me that. Then, I got a lot of newspaper clippings and articles here, that I'm not bragging about all this, this is just happenstance. ...

SI: This is from the ...

WS: *Camden Courier*.

SI: *Camden Courier*, "Protestors Seek Peace, Not War. Warren Sawyer of Medford takes part in the sundown ceremony for peace outside the Lockheed-Martin Aegis Naval Combat Engineering Base in Moorestown on Friday."

WS: I have done a lot of picketing in front of RCA over the years, at the entrances to RCA. For many years, I've been doing that. That's all, don't do it now.

SI: This was for the anniversary of the atomic bombing at Nagasaki.

WS: Yes. ... Here's another article--just glance them over or throw them away, whatever you want to do--and then, ... I got a feature article here, my work in the prison up here. I don't know what the date of this is--1994. Now, at our school, we have a Quaker school in Moorestown and run by them. It's a good school. It's tougher to get into. Every senior goes on to college somewhere, they have that kind of a percentage. ... Here is another one. Do you want to read it? I'll wait.

SI: I read it.

WS: Here is another one.

[TAPE PAUSED]

WS: And then, this is way back, you see the looks of this paper, 1946.

SI: We are looking at ...

WS: That's *Life Magazine*.

SI: A reprint of an article from *Life Magazine* that was originally published on May 6, 1946.

WS: Correct.

SI: "Our Mental Hospitals...A National Disgrace" by Albert Q. Maisel, and a lot of these photos are from ... [Editor's Note: The 1946 pamphlet "Our Mental Hospitals...A National Disgrace" reprinted Albert Q. Maisel's May 6, 1946 *Life Magazine* article "Bedlam 1946: Most US Mental Hospitals Are a Shame and a Disgrace."]

WS: They're not all Byberry. Some of them are Cleveland Hospital, but the whole thing originated in Byberry.

SI: Yes. Here, you can see all the naked patients, the wet floors and bare walls.

WS: Yes, no utensils, no spoons, no forks. Here's a guy eating. They ate soup with their hands. They picked their bowl up to their mouth. Now, this is Byberry and this is Byberry. I guess this is Cleveland, I don't know, or maybe it's the female side, I don't know, but this piece has been used and taken out so many times, it's getting pretty much ragged. Now, here's what I was talking about, little hard to see. Now, there, I was talking to you about beds how they're so close together that you had to go in sideways and there's A Building and here's E Building. Now, these guys here, there's just a very few benches that they could sit on and this is a wooden floor ... and cement under that and they'd yank up the boards in the floor and hit each other. You can see it right here. Here's the cement underneath these boards. ... One project started out in West Chester, outside of Philadelphia, there's a family out there who are connected with Westtown School and we had a Byberry weekend. ... They were pacifists and wanted to be nice to us and, one weekend a month, they entertained as many guys who wanted to go out there from Byberry. ... One of our projects was, since the patients had nothing to do, absolutely nothing, we thought, "Well, why don't we make some checkerboards," and we'd take broom handles and saw them off and make checkers out of the broom handles, make some of them black and red. We got these checkerboards made. ... I've got one of them in here. We must have made a dozen of them, so that those patients, worker-patients, particularly, have something to do when they're not working in the hospital in the evenings and, by golly, they wouldn't let us take them there and give them to the patients, because they said that the patients would use them as weapons to beat each other over the head. Now, they were made of wood, not plastic, because they didn't have it then and I can understand it, but to be given to patients under supervision, of course. ... They wouldn't allow us to give them [to them] but, I mean, it's just very difficult to imagine being in a place like that, and then, ... as a worker-patient even, a person who's trusted, who can go out on the grounds, nothing to do except work all your life in an institution that you're part of. ... Even in a little bit of free time, there's nothing to do except sit; not that they were mentally challenged necessarily, but they certainly knew how to play cards, and some of them did. I went to some dances, patients' dances. Some people were very rational at times. Anybody's rational part of the time--even today, out here, I'm rational sometimes [laughter]--but it's just so very difficult to imagine what it was like to be working in a place like that. A Building, this incontinent ward, had years and years of saturation of feces absorbed into the paint in the walls. On a muggy summer day in Philadelphia, it gets pretty hot and you could smell A Building a half a mile away, literally. You get off the bus coming from downtown Philadelphia--and it's a half a mile, almost, over to A Building--and the breezes are right and you could smell it all the way to where you got off the bus. It's just so incredible, you cannot really describe the feeling and the vision of such an institution. That's my story, essentially. [laughter]

SI: Is there anything else you would like to add about the hospital or any other part of your life?

WS: Well, I've talked an awful lot. I'm getting hoarse. I really don't know anything else, Shaun. Rehashing anything, I don't think that serves your particular needs, unless you have something that you want me to expand on further.

SI: We have done a lot today. We will conclude for today. Thank you very much for your time.

WS: Glad to do it, glad to get the word out, if we can.

SI: Yes, absolutely, that is what we are trying to do.

WS: If it's helpful for some of your people, for doing research on hospitals or whatever conditions or patients, getting their PhDs, and so on, I might have said something helpful, and then, of course, we still have the whole collection over at Swarthmore, at the Peace Center over there; glad to do it. [Editor's Note: Many of Mr. Sawyer's papers have been donated to the Civilian Public Service Personal Papers Collection at the Swarthmore College Peace Collection.]

SI: Thank you very much.

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

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 2/15/13

Reviewed by Warren Sawyer 3/15/13