RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANNE MOREAU THOMAS

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

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

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Jessica Ondusko: This begins an interview with Anne Moreau Thomas on Friday, May 2, 2008, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Jessica Ondusko …

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: … and Sandra Stewart Holyoak. Thank you again, Ms. Thomas, for coming in and talking with us. If you do not mind, to begin the interview, could you tell us where and when you were born?

Anne Thomas: I was born in Flemington; well, I was actually born at Mercer Hospital in Trenton. My family lived in Flemington. That was the nearest hospital in those days, and I was born on May 23, 1930.

SH: Your birthday is coming up. [laughter] To begin, we would like to talk a little bit about your father and his background. Can you tell us the stories that you remember?

AT: My father was born in Freehold, New Jersey. His family had a potato farm there. He graduated from Freehold High School in 1916, wanted to go to Rutgers to study agriculture, but he was not admitted. Although he was president of his class and a scholarship winner, he was not admitted because they required four years of foreign language; to study agriculture? [laughter] He only had three years, because that's all Freehold High School taught, and so, he went to Middlebury College in Vermont, to make up his language credits, and expected to transfer back, but never did. He graduated from Middlebury in 1920. In 1922, he and his uncle bought some weekly newspapers in Flemington, and he eventually bought out his uncle, was editor and publisher of the *Hunterdon County Democrat*, the *Delaware Valley News*, some other publications, until his death in … 1963.

SH: What a wonderful switch, from agriculture to newspaper publishing. Did he switch his major when he went to Middlebury?

AT: … No, he majored in English. I know that. …

SH: That is a great story. [laughter]

JO: You wrote on your pre-interview survey that your father also served in World War I.

AT: Well, that was an agricultural corps, at Middlebury College, and so, they all had uniforms and marched up and down, probably carrying broomsticks or something, yes. [laughter]

SH: Were any members of his family in Middlebury? Do you know why he picked Middlebury?

AT: I suppose because of the language bit. Middlebury College has always been noted for foreign language study, and I suppose, … perhaps, his high school French teacher recommended it.

SH: Were there other siblings in his family?

AT: He had four older brothers.

SH: He was the baby of the family.

AT: [Yes].

SH: Did the older brothers serve in World War I?

AT: I don't know that. I really don't.

SH: If you would please, then, talk a little bit about your mother.

AT: All right. My mother was born in Kansas. Her father was a teacher. He, I remember telling me once, would, as a young man, … teach school for one year to earn enough money to go to college for one year, and so, it took him a long time, but he finally got a degree. He was a teacher, eventually, a superintendent of schools. They moved from Kansas to Lewiston, Idaho, where he was superintendent. That town is near the Nez Perce Indians' reservation, and he was much beloved there, because he insisted that the Indian children also go to the public schools. He eventually was offered a job in Washington, DC, with the [future President Herbert] Hoover Food Administration, and so, the family moved East. … My mother wouldn't tell her friends that she was going to have to live in New Jersey, though. It goes back that far. Well, anyone who had ever been East had probably ridden a train from New York to Philadelphia, through the Meadowlands, and so on, and thought that New Jersey was one big smell, and so, she wouldn't tell her friends she was going to live in Montclair, New Jersey; told them she was going to live in New York City. [laughter] Anyway, she graduated from University of Maryland, in home economics, and she said University of Maryland, in those days, was a "cow college," but she applied for teaching jobs and one of them was in Flemington. So, she got on a train in New York and really didn't know where she was going, got off the train, was met by the president of the school board, with a horse and wagon, [laughter] took the job, met my father sleigh riding one day. … He cut his head and she bandaged it, so, that was that.

SH: It takes us back to how rural and agricultural-based so much of the East Coast was.

AT: Oh, yes. …

SH: I understand there were quite large pig farms along the Meadowlands, long before the landfill had started, but people would bring garbage for the swine herds. Did your mother continue to teach?

AT: She taught for two years, I believe, and they were married in 1926, built a house, across the street from where I live now. So, I haven't gotten far in life, [laughter] and she had four daughters. I was the second, probably the most obstreperous, difficult child. I often wonder what they would think if they knew a few things I've done and [that] they might be proud of. [laughter]

SH: As a parent, I am sure there are things that you do not want to know, either. [laughter] Talk a little bit, then, if you would, about your growing up. What are some of your earliest memories of Flemington? Were you downtown? Were you on the outskirts?

AT: We were two blocks from Main Street, still am, although Main Street has changed considerably, because most of the business is on the outskirts now. I remember, as a child, farmers coming in, in their horse and wagon, on Saturday night, to do their "store-ing." There, they would come in to buy their necessities, probably to bring their eggs and chickens, and so on, to sell. … Flemington is the county seat of Hunterdon County, so, there was a lot going on in town.

JO: Where did you go to grammar school?

AT: I went to the local elementary school, which was all the way across town from where I lived, but, of course, we walked. … There weren't any school busses for Flemington grammar schools then. … I was very lucky, because, in those days, of course, women who wanted to work really had three options. They could be a secretary, a nurse or a teacher, and only a teacher if they were lucky enough to be able to go to normal school or college, so that we had women [teaching] who would now probably be … CEOs of major corporations, and so on. They were very intelligent, very dedicated women.

SH: What about your grandparents? Did your maternal grandparents continue to live in Montclair?

AT: No, no. My grandmother died in the flu epidemic … following World War I, after they moved to New Jersey, and my grandfather, … eventually, was manager of the American Bankers Association in New York City, had an office in the Empire State Building, and I remember going in there to visit him. He and my aunt moved to Flemington, as did both of my mother's sisters. So, the whole family ended up in Flemington, eventually.

SH: That is interesting, that they would make that move from Kansas. That has to be a great story, what brought them East, because you talked about your father going …

AT: … My grandfather.

SH: Excuse me, your grandfather, going to Lewiston, Idaho, and then, coming to New Jersey. He brought some of his family. Were they intrigued?

AT: … Yes, he brought his wife and three daughters.

SH: I meant his family; did they also come?

AT: No, no, they have stayed in Smith Center, Kansas.

SH: How did your grandfather go from being an educator to the banking industry?

AT: He was a remarkable man. He was a wonderful raconteur, a great public speaker. I don't know. I think he just had opportunities and took them. Another thing, you asked me about my growing up years, another thing I might mention is, of course, the Lindbergh baby kidnapping trial; … you were going to ask about that. [laughter] [Editor's Note: The trial of Bruno Hauptmann, accused (and subsequently found guilty) of kidnapping and murdering famed aviator Charles A. Lindberg's son, took place amid unprecedented media coverage and public interest at the Hunterdon County Courthouse in Flemington, New Jersey, in January and February of 1935.]

SH: Yes, we were.

AT: Yes, I can remember. I think I was in kindergarten the year of the trial, maybe first grade, and I can remember pushing my way through the crowds to get to elementary school. Can you imagine a parent allowing a child to do that these days?

SH: It is said that the atmosphere there was almost like mob rule, with all the press. It was the first really big trial and the facilities in Flemington, of course, were very rural and simple.

AT: Everyone took in the people who came, took boarders, took people to help, but I can remember sitting in the living room at night, when Gabriel Heatter, [a radio newsman], came on the radio, and, of course, he was broadcasting from two blocks away, and my parents saying, "Shh, shh, it's Gabriel Heatter," [laughter] but it was a very busy time, of course, for my father, … who had one reporter in his office, and they took turns sitting at the press desk in the courtroom, and our newspapers, much later, of course, have reprinted all those issues of the *Hunterdon County Democrat*.

SH: Did he really?

AT: He didn't. It was done after his death.

SH: Were the notes and the material that they took during the trial preserved as well?

AT: Oh, yes, oh, yes.

SH: Are they in Flemington? Where are they being housed?

AT: I think, some of them; my son-in-law, who is executive editor of the newspapers now, has given [them] to the local historical society. … I think he may still have some of them.

SH: Wonderful, tell him to preserve them well.

AT: Oh, he's very much historically minded.

SH: And your paternal grandparents?

AT: They had both died before I was born, so, I did not know them. They lived in Freehold. They lived in … what was then known as the Hankinson Mansion, which is now owned by the Monmouth County Historical Society. … It was the house that … the British general, [Sir Henry] Clinton, took as his headquarters during the American Revolution, and the family owned that house for many years and, eventually, it was given to the historical society. … One of my father's brothers and his wife lived in that house. …

SH: You, as a child, got to go see this house.

AT: Oh, yes, yes. It was a lovely house. … My uncle was an artist, a painter, portrait painter. His wife was from … the Applegate Family, … an old Monmouth County family, and they had lovely antiques and that was a beautiful house.

SH: Were there any little secret niches that were favorites for you?

AT: No, I don't think so, no.

SH: Because some children have talked about their family living in a historical home and they had a special place.

AT: Well, there was one thing that always fascinated me. In the fireplace in the master bedroom, upstairs, above the fireplace, evidently during the Revolutionary War, one of General Clinton's naval attaches painted a battle scene, a naval battle scene, … in a panel over the fireplace. … In caring for the house, my uncle, who, as I said, was a painter, discovered this beneath coats of paint and he very laboriously exposed it, and it's still there. So, that was a favorite.

SH: Again, we would ask you to recall any other childhood memories that you have of Hunterdon County or Monmouth County.

AT: Nothing comes to mind right now that I think of as important.

SH: Did you get to go into New York or to travel?

AT: Oh, yes. The Lehigh Valley Railroad, which came down from Canada and Buffalo and Easton, Pennsylvania, stopped in Flemington, and then, South Plainfield and Newark, and they were wonderful trains. I think there was even air-conditioning before World War II. I can remember having breakfast in the dining car with my grandfather, going into the city.

SH: Were your sisters as adventuresome as you? Did they go on these same sort of excursions as well?

AT: Oh, always, yes. Of course, my mother lived in New York City before she was married, with her family. … After my grandmother died, my grandfather moved the family into New York City.

SH: I see. They left Montclair.

AT: Yes. So, she lived in the city and, after she was married, … of course, Flemington was a very small town. My mother said you couldn't even buy a diaper in Flemington, and so, she went into the city on the train quite often and often took us with her. We would go to Best & Company, … which was children's clothing, and so on, and be outfitted, but she would go into the city for doctor appointments and dentist appointments, and so on.

SH: Was there a certain time of year that you remember? Did you go into the city at Christmas?

AT: Oh, yes, yes, to see the lights. …

SH: Was there a favorite place to meet for lunch?

AT: Schraft's, but my grandfather would take us to the theater. … It was really a wonderful childhood.

SH: It sounds as though it truly was. From what I have read about Flemington, although it was very agrarian-based, did it not have a symphony and an orchestra of some kind?

AT: There was a town band. There was an opera house on Bloomfield Avenue, which was never used in my lifetime, … became a storage place. We were talking about the Lindbergh trial. I remember walking down Bloomfield Avenue one day and seeing Mrs. Hauptmann rocking the baby carriage on the front porch of the house where she boarded during the trial.

SH: What was your sense at that point? As a young child, how did you react?

AT: I don't think I really understood it. I was five or six years old. I think it was beyond me, except I knew that something very important was happening. Something very difficult was being done.

SH: What were some of your favorite subjects in school?

AT: English, history, the …

JO: Liberal arts.

AT: Liberal arts, yes, yes.

JO: What would you do for fun as a child in a small town? Do you remember any of the activities that you did?

AT: Riding my bicycle all over town. When I was very small, the little boy who lived across the street and I each had little sidewalk two-wheelers. I think the wheels on these bicycles were probably ten or twelve inches. They were just tiny. … We lived near an area, just across the street, that had been developed before the war, where streets had been put in. They were not

paved, but there was curbing and there were sidewalks, and so, … that was our playground. So, really, through even high school, there were a couple of houses down in that area by that time, but, you know, we played baseball there. We had lots of fun.

SH: Did your mother and father expect their daughters to be very "proper?" What do you remember of your upbringing in that regard?

AT: I don't know. I think we were always encouraged to be independent, to a degree, to make up our own minds about things. Of course, there weren't cell phones then, there wasn't instant communication. It was the [case that] I knew everyone for blocks around. I knew what color the living room wall was painted, where the cookie jar was. [laughter] I knew that, you know, people were looking out for us. My sisters and I knew that, if we did anything wrong, our parents would know about it before we got home. We also were threatened with, you know, "If you do something really bad, it's going to be on the front page of the newspaper next week." [laughter]

SH: I was going to ask about that. [laughter]

AT: But, I think we were given a lot of latitude.

SH: Obviously, you must have had telephones in your home and they were pretty modern, as compared to some of the outlying areas there.

AT: Yes. We had a two-party line with a house across the street; in fact, the house I live in now. Our telephone number was 19OJ. The *Hunterdon County Democrat*'s telephone number was 51; imagine that now.

SH: Did you go to the newspaper office? Was that part of your sphere?

AT: Oh, yes. In fact, I think the first money I earned was probably a nickel for an ice cream cone for washing the sinks in the back shop, which were, of course, covered with printer's ink and all sorts of debris. … If I stopped at my father's office on the way home and said, "Daddy, may I have a popsicle?" he would say, "After you wash the sinks," but, eventually, when I was older, I think probably high school age, I did proofreading. … In the summertime, I would work in the office, doing proofreading, and then, going out in the back shop and taking the slugs from the Linotype, the correction slugs from the Linotype machine, and putting them in the chases. [Editor's Note: "Slugs" are a distinct feature of the Linotype, a device allowing for the setting of entire lines at once rather than individual typesetting.]

SH: Did your father have a lot of help?

AT: Oh, yes.

SH: How big was his staff?

AT: I think there probably were two, maybe three, people in the front office, at the counter, doing bookkeeping and sending out bills, and so on. … I'm talking about when I was high school age. There were probably three or four in the newsroom, and I don't know how many in the back shop, but there were still Linotypes back there. … There were no modern technological pieces of equipment.

SH: I just remember the heat, the smell and the noise. I am sure you must remember as well.

AT: Absolutely.

SH: I was told that there was always a danger of fire, because the floors were made of wood.

AT: Well, my father had built the building in 1922, '23, my father and his uncle, and so, it was fairly new and I think fairly modern, by comparison with other small-town, weekly newspapers. We had a job shop and did printing of envelopes and posters and so on. I still have some of the metal cuts from which posters were printed. There's one, oh, it's probably twelve-by-sixteen [inches], of a racing horse that we framed and kept.

SH: It is a work of art, I am sure. Some of those things were incredible.

AT: They really were, but, eventually, when I was a little older, in high school, … probably during the war years, I was allowed to do "The Flemington Locals." … Every little town had a woman who would do the social notes for that town, and I would be allowed to edit them. … This was a job that was not always appreciated by those women, because they were paid by the inch and I would have to take out, for example, "Mr. and Mrs. John Jones and their lovely daughter, so-and-so, and his brother-in-law and sister-in-law…" You know, I'd have to take out all that extra wordage. [laughter]

SH: You learned concise wording at an early age.

AT: Well, I learned to proofread, and I still, I'm afraid, often do, when I read, I do more proofreading than absorbing of content.

JO: Did you enjoy working for the paper?

AT: Oh, yes, oh, yes. It was fun. We felt important. [laughter]

SH: Did you always assume that you would go to college? Was that something that, as a woman, you knew you would do?

AT: Yes. I was editor of … the Flemington High School literary magazine, and then, of my high school yearbook. I always knew I wanted to go to Middlebury College, because my father had, and I was lucky enough to do that.

SH: Did your sisters as well? Did they have the same ambition?

AT: My older sister … went to Middlebury for one year. She was engaged at that time, and so, she left after that to take secretarial courses, so [that] she could do the World War II "putting hubby through PhD" program. [laughter] My two younger sisters also graduated from Middlebury College.

SH: It sounds like it is in the family.

AT: It was, it was, and still is, because all my children went there also.

SH: I had read that on your pre-interview survey.

JO: Within the town itself, do you think that other families were as supportive of their daughters as your family was, to go to college and to pursue their interests in that way?

AT: That's a hard question to answer, because I was what was called a "Depression baby," 1929, 1930. All the kids I went to high school with, or grammar school with, I'll start with that, … most classes at Flemington Elementary School were twenty-five to thirty children. Our group came along and there were twice that number, and so, when I went through elementary school, there was 2A and 2B, and 3A and 3[B], you know, two classes. … They were varied. There were children whose families were immigrants, who had come from Hungary, for example, to work in the local foundry. There were not the farm kids, because they went to one-room schools. So, the people who lived in town varied. … During my early years in school, I remember my mother telling me to never, ever, mention it if I saw a little girl wearing my clothing that she had given to the school nurse, because we were more fortunate than a lot of my friends. I remember, one friend, who I went to Sunday school with, I remember looking out of … the window of our house one day and seeing that it was her father who was dumping coal down our coal chute for our furnace, you know. So, I grew up with an awareness that I was probably more fortunate than a good many of the kids I went to school with.

SH: What were the other effects of the Depression that you heard about or became aware of?

AT: … I really don't think I knew that there was a Depression until much later. It was just hard times and that people had a difficult time of it.

SH: Why do you think that the classroom sizes suddenly grew? What precipitated that?

AT: I don't know. [laughter]

SH: Was there a new industry that opened in Flemington?

AT: No, no. … Well, I remember one person saying, once, "The men were out of jobs, so, they went home and had babies." [laughter] I don't know.

SH: What were the industries in Flemington?

AT: The Foran Foundry, a rubber mill, Flemington Cut Glass, Stangl Pottery; there was a vinegar works. … As I said, it was the county seat, and so, there were attorneys, and so on. The farmers, … later in the '30s, brought their animals and their crops into town to be auctioned. It was an auction market.

SH: Was there a glassworks?

AT: Yes, there was the Stangl Pottery, that made Art Deco pottery. Before that, it was the Fulper Pottery, that made decorative vases and other items. I still have … a little parrot from Fulper Pottery that is a nightlight, that I'm very pleased to still have.

SH: I would not have thought they would have made a nightlight.

AT: Well, it was [the] Art Deco era, in the 1920s, … but the Stangl Pottery took over from Fulper, and there was the Flemington Cut Glass Company. There was the Iorio Glass Company. So, there were jobs.

SH: You talked about your father building a home in a new development or a new section.

AT: Yes, yes.

SH: Were there sections of Flemington that your mother and father cautioned that maybe you should not go into, as a young woman?

AT: We were all over town, all of the time. [laughter]

SH: Where would a class trip take someone back then?

AT: We didn't have class trips.

SH: No. That was a new phenomenon then.

AT: No, they had had them, I think, earlier, but, during the years I was in school, we didn't have class trips.

JO: You had mentioned that you and your friend were at Sunday school. I wanted to ask you about the role of religion in the town or in your family; was there a prominent denomination within the town?

AT: We were Presbyterians. There was a Baptist church, a very active Baptist church, a very active Methodist church, … a small Episcopal church. There was a very small Jewish synagogue and a Catholic church.

JO: That sounds pretty diverse, for a small town.

AT: Yes, it was, it was. My father was chair of the board of trustees, or whatever it was called in those days, of our church, and we went to church, we went to Sunday school, every Sunday. [laughter]

SH: You talked about your mother cautioning you not to acknowledge where she had been able to help some of the less fortunate people. Did your father serve on any boards in the town?

AT: Oh, my, yes, and I inherited some of them.

SH: Can you talk about those, please?

AT: Well, he was on the Red Cross board. … He was chair of the school board; during the war, of course, many, many activities. My mother had taught home economics, before marriage. She made a lot of our clothing. They were busy people.

SH: Was your mother involved in the women's circle at church?

AT: A bit. She belonged to the Flemington Women's Club, which was very active.

SH: Who was the disciplinarian in your family?

AT: I remember being spanked by my mother, with a slat from my own doll bed. [laughter]

SH: We will not ask why. [laughter]

AT: I don't remember, thank goodness.

SH: We talked about you being very aware of the fact that you wanted to go on to school and to Middlebury. What did you chose to major in?

AT: Home economics. … I went to college in the Fall of 1947, along with, I think, ninety-three other women and four-hundred-and-some men. We had a good time, [laughter] but, of course, the men, a great many of them, were veterans. They were on the GI Bill, including the man I married, but, up until that time, Middlebury College had a very small home economics department, mainly, I think, for Vermont scholarship winners, who probably would marry dairy farmers and live in Vermont all their lives. When my class arrived, there were probably twenty of us, … out of the ninety-three, who wanted to major in home economics, and they didn't know what to do with us. They had to rush out and hire extra faculty, because … there was such an interest in home and family after the war. The men had been away. They had been dreaming of what they wanted to do, how they wanted to live, what they wanted for their eventual children after the war, and so, there was great interest in all sorts of home ec. Our program was extremely academic. There was more science than I wanted. I managed, and so, that was the reason for it.

SH: Was home economics a required subject in high school?

AT: Oh, yes, oh, yes. When I was in seventh and eighth grade, we took cooking and sewing. I think Miss Duane, my sewing teacher, probably had a very hard time when I once substitute taught for her, later in my life. I had put the sleeves in my blouse backward in her class.

SH: She was worried. [laughter]

AT: But, I loved sewing.

SH: What other subjects do you remember in high school that were required? Did any of them have anything to do with the war and the war effort?

AT: … History was required for, I think, three years, and one of those, in our junior-senior year, was called PAD, "Problems of American Democracy." I remember, in eighth grade, and, of course, the war had started by that time, I remember, in our history class, there was a great deal of current events. My father kept, for many years, my notebook, that I was required to keep, of what was going on in the world.

SH: Do you think you had an inside edge on current events because your father was the owner of the paper?

AT: No, because our newspaper was, basically, local news. …

SH: There was no ticker.

AT: No, no, none of that, no. We didn't publish world news, although, of course, there was the news of local servicemen. You know, there were little flags hanging in windows, in many homes, with multiple stars, and, eventually, one or two with gold stars, which meant that the son had perished in the war. A few years ago, a high school friend and I did a program like this, except it was televised, for the *Democrat's*, our newspaper's, … Wednesday evening television program, [*Hunterdon News Talk*]. It was about the time of the fiftieth anniversary of D-Day, and he and I reminisced about what it was like growing in Flemington during the war.

SH: I hope you saved that as well.

AT: And I have that, and will be glad to share it. Unfortunately, … I don't have it [with me]; I looked for it to bring today, but it's at my house at Cape Cod. I'll supply it one of these days.

SH: We should make copies and get it in a newer format as well.

AT: But, what I was going to say was that, for that, … we were sitting at a round table and we were given back issues of the *Democrat* [from] during the war, and one of them had a front page article about a local fellow, who we all knew, who was a prisoner of war in Germany.

SH: The stories did revolve around the community.

AT: Oh, yes.

JO: Do you remember where you were when Pearl Harbor happened?

AT: Absolutely I do. Does anyone forget such a thing? I was in my room on a Sunday afternoon, doing my homework, and I was not supposed to have my radio on when I was doing my homework, but I did, [laughter] and the news came through that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. … So, I rushed downstairs and told my father, rushed out the back door and ran down through my father's garden to the home of a classmate who I knew had a brother who was stationed at Hickam Field, at Pearl Harbor, to tell them to turn on their radio, and I didn't stay, of course. I came back up through the garden and met our next-door neighbor, Charlie Fouts, and told him, and he said, "Well, come on in Annie Ro," as he called me. "Come on in and we'll listen to it on the radio." I spent every Sunday night with Charlie and his wife, May, after that, listening to the radio with them. … Eventually, when Charlie was drafted, I went next-door and lived with his wife, during the war years, early war years, maybe for a year, until she moved.

SH: Was he able to come home safely?

AT: Yes, he did.

SH: Did she go to live with family?

AT: Her mother came from Oregon and they rented an apartment.

SH: Do you know why she left her home?

AT: They did not own it. They were renting there, and other [factors], I guess. I think, eventually, the owners moved into it.

SH: Would you have been, if my math is correct, in the seventh or eighth grade at this time?

AT: Seventh grade. I think I was eleven when Pearl Harbor happened.

SH: The friend that you ran to tell about the attack on Pearl Harbor, was her brother all right?

AT: Yes, yes, he survived.

SH: Did you write to the servicemen in the community? I know there were some community projects like that.

AT: I wrote to Charlie Fouts. He was stationed in Indiana, and I wrote to my favorite cousin, Jimmy Moreau, who was a bomber pilot. He was killed over Italy, unfortunately.

SH: How does a young woman react to that? How soon did you know?

AT: … I think I was in high school. I remember weeping over a letter that was returned to me, … that I had written to him.

SH: You were only in seventh grade. I am assuming that your sister was maybe two years older.

AT: [Yes].

SH: You would have seen brothers of your friends, I would assume, going off to the Army. Were there other instances like that that you remember, the news coming back or your father talking about it?

AT: I remember sitting … in the dining room for Sunday dinner, one day, when my father was called to the phone, and he came back and told us that a flyer, who I didn't know, but … his parents were friends of my parents, had been killed. There were times like that, and it was very difficult.

SH: Were there efforts to help the war?

AT: Oh, my, yes.

AH: What do you remember?

AT: Oh, I even made a list of them. [laughter] I remember going with my aunt to make bandages, to roll bandages, with the Red Cross, when I was probably in about the eighth grade. I had to wear a white dress, we had to wear gloves, we had rulers and we folded bandages.

SH: Where did you do this?

AT: … At the Red Cross headquarters.

SH: In Flemington?

AT: In Flemington. … It was in the top … floor of the Hall of Records.

SH: Really?

AT: [Yes]. I remember collecting scrap as a Girl Scout, scrap metal. There was a large enclosure, I think made of snow fencing, in front of the courthouse, where people could throw old pots and pans, and so on. … I can remember going up and down the streets and knocking on doors and saying, "Do you have any scrap metal?" dragging a wagon along and putting it there. We saved empty metal toothpaste tubes, and took them to Axelrod's or Green's Drug Store. We had war bond drives in school. We bought war stamps and stuck them in little books. Let's see, what else do I have here? My father was a plane spotter. There was a little shack up behind the rubber mill in Flemington. I didn't mention that. [laughter] Up behind the rubber mill, there was a little, I think, old chicken coop, with a pot-bellied stove in it, and my father took the midnight to four AM, Saturday night, tour of duty there, and I went with him quite often. We would take thermoses of cocoa. I think, … later on, I did it during the daytime and we had little cards with the silhouettes of airplanes and, if we saw a plane going over, we had to try to identify it, but, of

course, at night, we didn't have to do that. If we heard a plane, we had to call in to a central office and report that a plane had gone over and give our codenames.

SH: Did this happen often?

AT: Oh, it was twenty-four hours, I believe. …

SH: Did you hear planes often when you would be there, because there had to be training missions as well?

AT: Oh, yes. In fact, I remember going back to school right after Pearl Harbor and being out on the playground, a day or two after Pearl Harbor, and seeing a formation of planes going over, and I'd never seen that before. I'd seen the noon clipper go over. You know, my friend, Jackie, and I used to lie on the grass in the backyard when we were little kids. I mean, it was a big thing to see an airplane, but I had never seen a formation of planes going over until that day.

SH: Was there any fear, after Pearl Harbor, that the enemy would actually get to Flemington or to New York?

AT: Well, there were news stories all the time about submarines sighted off the coast of New Jersey, and so, I can't say there was fear that the Germans were going to march into Flemington, but there was certainly apprehension about the war. Things I remember, for example, the gas rationing, the tire rationing; the street lights in Flemington were partially painted over. The headlights on the cars were partially painted over. I think the speed limit was thirty-five [miles per hour]; imagine that today. [laughter] My father was the … neighborhood warden for blackouts.

SH: You had blackouts as well.

AT: We had blackouts, yes. My mother taught nutrition for the Red Cross, to women, because, of course, there was food rationing and other rationing, shoes, clothing. Styles were just ended; there were no new styles. Everything stayed exactly the same. You wore your same clothing. You weren't allowed to do too much, but food rationing, I think, brought the war home to a lot of women, in particular, who had to change their meal plans, sugar in particular, baking. Canned goods were rationed.

SH: Did you have a Victory garden? [Editor's Note: "Victory gardens" were grown by citizens to both ease the strain of the war on the domestic food supply and enable citizens to contribute to the war effort by growing and maintaining such gardens.]

AT: Did we. [laughter] My father, of course, having grown up on a farm, always had a big garden, but it got larger. I remember, we had a wooden wagon and, when we had too much produce, we would load it in the wagon. My sister painted, "Janny's Gasless Express," on the side of it, and we would take it around the neighborhood and offer produce to neighbors. … Also, my father bought an old chicken house and, out in our back lot, we had chickens. … That was fun. [laughter] My sister, my … next youngest sister, was really the chicken farmer, but she

was considered too little to drag the wagon every Saturday morning to Amos Thatcher's or Rufus Mathews' feed mill to pick up chicken feed. So, I had to do it, [laughter] but we had banty roosters … that were pets and it was kind of fun.

SH: Did you gather the eggs?

AT: Oh, yes.

SH: Being in a rural community, did you have milk delivery?

AT: We had milk delivery from all three dairies, because they all advertised [with the paper].

SH: I never thought of that. [laughter] Did they offer anything but milk?

AT: Yes, yes, cream, when it was [available], but, of course, cream was not available during the war, either. We had a freezer, because … one of my father's brothers, in Monmouth County, raised Black Angus cattle and we could have it butchered. We could have a cow butchered. We had a freezer. So, we were luckier than a lot of people. My sister's in-laws also had cows and would bring us cream, and I remember my mother out on the back steps, on Sunday morning, with the ice cream churn. [laughter]

SH: What were some of the festivities that you remember? Obviously, the war had impacted a lot of things. Were there things that were cancelled? Most rural communities would have, say, the May Pole on May Day. Were there things like that that you remember?

AT: No.

SH: The Fourth of July.

AT: … The other day, I was looking at a new VHS. I've had my father's sixteen-millimeter movies, that he started taking when I was born, put on VHS, and I was looking at the Memorial Day parade in about 1937, and seeing World War I veterans marching, and many of them, quite a number of them, in the parade. During the war, of course, there wasn't as much of that kind of thing.

SH: Were you aware of things that were curtailed because of the war? Did you feel as though you missed out a little bit on that, or did they persevere?

AT: A movie theater was started, just before the war, in Flemington, the Hunterdon Theater. It was, I believe, the last entertainment-type building allowed to be completed, and the reason was, the architectural plans called for a large, … a very, very tall, curved ceiling, and a local architect, who had built many a barn, was able to design wooden supports for the ceiling, instead of the metal ones that originally had been proposed. So, they let that continue to be built. My father was the Hunterdon County war bond chair. … At the local armory, I remember war bond rallies being put on there, but, when the theater was finished, they brought in two little starlets from

Hollywood. I have a picture of my father sitting, and looking rather sheepish, on a little, tiny sofa between them, to open this theater with a big bond rally.

SH: Do you remember the names of the starlets?

AT: No, no. I've looked at them a time or two and wondered what happened to them.

SH: Can you describe what a war bond drive was like?

AT: … It was just encouraging everyone to buy anything from a ten-cent stamp to a twenty-five-dollar war bond. … I think the war bonds were eighteen dollars and seventy-five cents, and you were assured that you would get twenty-five dollars back in ten years, and I did, too. [laughter] In fact, my husband and I bought our house with war bonds that my father, my grandfather and I had bought, and that his mother, who took a war job at Camp Kilmer, had bought for each of their children. So, we had enough money to put a down payment on a house.

SH: What would the war bond drives be like? Was there a program? Was there music? How were the invitations sent? How would something like that be set up?

AT: I don't know too much about that, except that, in the schools, we were encouraged to bring in our dimes to buy war stamps. That was my real memory of it.

SH: With your father being the war bond chair, do you remember him organizing any events?

AT: Yes, various events, … including the movie theater. …

SH: Were your vacations curtailed at all? Had you been, on regular basis, say, going to the shore? You mentioned that you have a home in Cape Cod. Was that something that you did or did not do?

AT: We never took [vacations]. In the summertime, we sometimes went to the Jersey Shore, but, during the war, we did not. Of course, gas rationing curtailed that. … My older sister and I went to a YMCA camp for two weeks in the summers. It was up in Morris County, and that was a vacation. I remember our car having a flat tire on the way home from Camp Morris, once, [laughter] and, you know, that was a disaster, because tires were not very much available. … I think my father had a "B" ration coupon, which was a little more generous, because he had, you know, responsibilities in the community and in the county.

JO: Your father was also a Selective Service board member, is that correct?

AT: Yes, I believe so.

JO: Did he relate any of his experiences in working with them?

AT: No, I don't remember that at all.

SH: Being an agrarian community, were there many young men who were exempt?

AT: Yes.

SH: Was that a difficult call that your father ever talked about?

AT: No, no. There was no conversation at our house about that.

SH: We have to ask. [laughter]

AT: No, I think he was very aware of his responsibility.

SH: I just wondered if, perhaps, he got a call from someone saying, "Don't take my son."

AT: Well, I'm sure so. I'm sure that happened. …

SH: You had talked about the banners that hung in the windows. Was this something that almost every household had? Was this something that you, as a young girl, would ride along on your bike and notice?

AT: Oh, absolutely. I remember, particularly, the Serridges' house, on Bonnell Street, had five stars, five sons in service.

SH: At this time, in relation to your grandfather in New York, were things different in there than they were, say, in rural Flemington? Was there any discussion there, or had your grandfather already moved?

AT: No, he was still commuting into the city in the war years. I can't tell you; I don't know.

SH: Was he still on the banking board?

AT: Yes.

SH: You said your sister was engaged to someone who was in the military.

AT: Almost. [laughter] No, she was. She knew that she and Jack would be married, and that as soon as he got out of the Navy, he would be going to college, and he did. He went to Babson College and studied business, and she worked for Roger Babson, in his office.

SH: Was he a local boy from Flemington?

AT: His father, like a good many people in the city, in the late '30s, and even in the early '40s, who were executives in various capacities, a good many people moved to Hunterdon County, bought farms, bought lovely, old houses and restored them, and so on. My brother-in-law's father was one. He was vice-president of National Dairies, Kraft Foods, and they had cows, they had a farm, as I said before. Jack went to Flemington High School, I think, for one year, and

then, went away, went to prep school, and my sister had started dating him then and dated him all the way through. … I don't think she ever had a date with anybody else in her whole life, until much later. …

SH: How strict were your parents with their daughters dating? How have things changed?

AT: As I said, we were encouraged to be independent, to make up our own minds. … They were, … I wouldn't say strict, I think they probably were careful, but I could date whoever I wished, and I did.

SH: Do you remember any of your male friends who did not join the military?

AT: Yes, yes. I remember, when we were juniors in high school, many of the boys took an exam for, I think it was the V-12 Navy Corps, and we were all astonished that, really, only one of them was accepted, because he was kind of a dreamer, ended up helping to design rockets that went to the Moon, but he went into the Navy, and, of course, some of the others did, too, but it was after we were college age.

SH: You had spoken about going to college. Before we proceed to your college experience, do you have any other questions?

JO: Yes. In high school, were you involved in any clubs, sports, anything of that nature?

AT: Yes; not so much in sports. I'm not your high school athlete. [laughter] I hated field hockey. It was the kind of thing that anybody who didn't like you would try to hit you in the ankles with a stick. [laughter] I did play lacrosse in college, but I was not the star by any means. I was just the back-up. No, my interests were more, as I said, I was high school yearbook editor, and, of course, there were the wartime activities, the bond drives, the Girl Scout activities.

SH: You stayed involved with the Girl Scouts through high school.

AT: Through part of high school.

SH: I would be interested to see some of the yearbooks that came out during this period. Did yours have any military or wartime overtones?

AT: This was 1947, my high school graduation year, so, the war was over. … Our high school class was the largest one … Flemington High School had ever graduated. In fact, we had to have the graduation ceremonies in the Presbyterian church, because the auditorium wasn't large enough for 150 graduates and their families. Many of them, there were probably thirty or forty or more, [were] veterans, finishing their high school education, in my class.

SH: Can you expand upon that?

AT: It was kind of fun. [laughter] They had licenses. We could [drive with them].

SH: You had talked about, in grade school, how classes were divided into, say, 2-A and 2-B.

AT: Right, right. Again, it was a larger class.

SH: We have also heard of men coming back who knew they were not ready for college, or a college basically said to them, "You do not have the math," or the English or the technical skills. Do you know how this worked in your high school, bringing the veterans back to high school?

AT: I don't know how it worked, but they came. [laughter] … I think it was; what [will] I say? It was extremely interesting, because a lot of them, of course, being more mature and having had experiences that none of … the rest of us had, added, particularly in history classes and in math classes, and so on, science classes, a little different perspective than we would have had had we all been exactly of the same age.

SH: They literally were in the same class as you.

AT: Oh, yes, oh, yes, and we also had teachers who had come back. I remember, in, … I think my junior year, when I took biology, I had four teachers, because the first one was a substitute [and] the second one was a woman who was just taking in whatever. The one I remember had been an Air Force pilot, came back, and, of course, we all were madly in love with him. [laughter]

SH: Of course.

AT: Of course, sixteen years old and having this handsome, young pilot coming back and teaching us was [nice].

SH: Were these local men?

AT: Most of them.

SH: Do you think that they had joined …

AT: They'd probably been drafted.

SH: Had they been in high school previously?

AT: Oh, do you mean the students or the teachers?

SH: No, I am talking about the students.

AT: The students. Oh, yes, they were local, they were local. …

SH: They were local students and, perhaps, had gotten excited and joined before they finished their degrees.

AT: Or been drafted. My husband had been.

SH: Right out of high school?

AT: Yes. … He had lost a year of school … in the early grades. … His family had moved, and … his mother had taken her children to Florida for a year, because she was not well, and he had gone to, I think, first grade there, and, when he came back, the New Jersey schools wouldn't accept Florida's first grade. So, he had to repeat it, which put him in his younger sister's class, which … didn't go over very well. [laughter] …

SH: That is interesting, that there were different circumstances.

AT: Yes. … He would have been drafted toward the end of his junior year in Highland Park High School and [he] joined the Air Force, so as not to be drafted into the military. So, he had to come back and, really, finished a year-and-a-half.

SH: I had heard that there were many young men who were going to be drafted, or did not want to be drafted, and so, had left in their junior or senior year to join.

AT: Right, to join.

SH: So that they could have a chance at picking which branch of the service they would enter.

AT: Right.

SH: Did you know if the veterans who came back had plans for college?

AT: I don't really know. I know that some of them did go on, and I'm sure the GI Bill was the only reason they could, in many cases.

SH: I had wondered if anyone had come back and talked with you.

AT: Oh, yes, yes. I remember one fellow in particular who wanted to go on to school, and did.

JO: Speaking of the returning soldiers, do you remember V-E Day or V-J Day celebrations?

AT: Again, how could you forget those times? I remember V-E Day. I think I was a sophomore in high school, maybe a junior, I don't know, but we were excused from school early, early afternoon, and we went down the street to my friend Margaretta Hausman's house. … Her mother gave us food and … her older brother was there, very relieved because he wouldn't be drafted. [laughter] He was a class ahead of us, and we had a wonderful time. V-J Day, I remember, my best friend came and spent the night with me at my house, and, of course, there was a big parade on Main Street, and she and I rode on a fire truck. [laughter]

SH: The next day, you had a parade in Flemington.

AT: Oh, it was that night.

SH: That night.

AT: Yes, the night of V-J Day.

SH: You just instantaneously began a parade.

AT: It was a parade.

SH: What about D-Day? How was that news disseminated, June 6, 1944? Was it the headlines, the radio? How soon were you aware of it?

AT: Radio, of course, yes.

SH: Was there great hope or fear?

AT: Apprehension, I think. Everybody either had someone in the family or knew someone who was going to be affected by that, and so, it was just a case of one ear to the radio.

SH: You had talked about the notebook that you kept for current events. How was Winston Churchill viewed?

AT: Oh, as a wonderful hero, the person who really encouraged Americans to get involved.

SH: And Stalin?

AT: When I was doing that notebook, I can't really remember an attitude towards Stalin. I think, again, it was a case of, "We don't really know."

SH: How does a young woman writing this notebook view the two enemies, the Germans and the Japanese? What was the difference, or was there a difference?

AT: Well, it was just horror at both.

SH: Were either the Germans or the Japanese feared more so than the other?

AT: Well, of course, at first, it was Hitler, because we were involved with the [Europeans]. I mean, this is before Pearl Harbor. Afterward, it was just both. I remember, I was babysitting for a neighbor when her brother was at Guadalcanal and, you know, it was just complete horror at what was going on in the world.

SH: This is a question that we even ask our veterans, how they perceived the two enemies and who was most feared. The press obviously had a lot of cartoons and caricatures of the Japanese.

AT: Of course, we weren't aware of what Hitler was doing with the Jews and the concentration camps so much, but we were very aware of what the Japanese were doing in the islands and the Bataan [Death] March and all those things.

SH: When were you first aware of what had been taking place in Europe, with the Holocaust and the concentration camps? Do you remember?

AT: Not really, no, just reading newspapers and a gradual awareness of the horrors that had [taken place].

SH: Did that come out after the war had ended?

AT: Yes.

SH: Were you aware of that before?

AT: No, I don't think I was. … Of course, I was in high school and college and not, probably, … reading as much.

SH: That is an aspect which we are curious about, because, now, we have instantaneous news feeds at all times.

AT: … Yes. No, I think we [did not know]. I guess maybe it was better, in a sense, that we weren't constantly aware of … what was going on.

SH: Your parents did not try to protect you from any of the news that was coming out.

AT: Oh, no, oh, no. You know, I have something else that I should tell you about. The sister-in-law who I said lived in France for many years before, … when we were talking earlier, after the war, when she was working at the American Embassy, [she] was asked by a film company to do a job. She was given a six-month term of leave by the American Embassy.

SH: This is in France.

AT: … She was in France then. She was in Paris.

SH: The American Embassy in France.

AT: Yes, I'm sorry. … We talked about this before we had the microphones on. … A film was made called *Kilroy's Return*. Remember about Kilroy? There were signs all over the world after the war, "Kilroy was here." [Editor's Note: Ms. Thomas is referring to a cartoon character named Kilroy and the accompanying slogan, "Kilroy was here," which American service personnel drew wherever they were stationed during World War II.] A film was being made called *Kilroy's Return*, and this was about a GI coming home after the war, marrying and wanting to take his new wife back to Europe to see the scenes that he had [seen], the places he had been during the war. My sister-in-law was his wife, "Betty." … It was a film short that was

shown in theaters all over the country. … Of course, Europe was in complete [ruins]. The destruction was dreadful. This was in about 1947, '48, when this film was made. I can't give you the exact date, but I do have the film and I have it on VHS.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: We are back on. Please, continue.

AT: All right. You asked me earlier about New York City. My mother's friend was a social worker in New York City and she would invite me to come in, on the train, and she would meet me in Penn Station, for a weekend. … I remember that, very often, because I would get into the city before dinnertime, we would go to a newsreel theater and see RKO-Pathe News. Another thing that pops into my mind; I remember, when local boys were being drafted, Flemington would have a send-off for them at the local [train station], at the "dinky" [a small train that leads to the main line] station, the Lehigh Valley "Dinky" Station, right in town, and the whole town would turn out, early in the morning. The Red Cross would be there, giving them little ditty bags with playing cards and cigarettes and razor blades and heaven knows what in them, chewing gum, and off they would go to Fort Dix. There was once a parade; RKO-Pathe News, which is what brought this to mind, came to Flemington and there was a parade down Main Street, with Major Herr on his horse, who'd been a major in World War I, leading the parade, and Anne Moreau carrying a sign right behind him, stepping over … [laughter]

SH: What did the sign say?

AT: Just something about, "Flemington is proud of you," or I don't really know, but they took films of this, and that was a short in movie theaters during the war.

SH: Since the train line ran from Buffalo down through, and then, over to New York, were there any times that there were layovers for any soldiers?

AT: Oh, yes, yes, I'm sure so.

SH: Did you ever see that?

AT: … No, because the main line ran through Flemington Junction. The little "dinky" took passengers back and forth, a couple of miles. So, I didn't actually see them. I can remember, during the war years, though, a friend's mother took her daughter and me to Middlebury. You know, we were college looking. I suppose maybe we were freshmen or sophomores in high school and I can remember that we sat on our suitcases in the vestibules of the train most of the way up, because there were so many servicemen on the trains.

SH: I had wondered, since your mother was involved with the Red Cross, if they ever went out and met any of the trains coming through.

AT: No, they didn't. … Most of the servicemen's trains were special and they didn't stop in towns.

SH: What about the World War II posters? Do you remember those?

AT: Oh, my, yes. In front of the post office, there was, you know, "Uncle Sam wants you," oh, yes. [laughter]

SH: Speaking of Uncle Sam wanting you, before we began taping, you had talked about your sister-in-law who had been going to school at NJC. Could you talk a little bit about her?

AT: Well, she was, I think, maybe a sophomore or junior and she said that all the boys had gone to war and most of the good professors were gone and doing war work or in service, and so, she joined the WAVES [the US Navy's Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service], to her parents', I think, horror, at least surprise, [laughter] and had a wonderful experience. She taught Link flight trainers in Texas, came back and had that wonderful thing, the GI Bill, and she used it to study French at Middlebury College, and then, she took some secretarial courses in England and ended up working in the American Embassy in Paris.

SH: She got to see the world after all. [laughter]

AT: She did, she did.

SH: For the record, could you tell me her name?

AT: Her name was Sarah Elizabeth Thomas. She was called Betty.

SH: What would have been her graduation year, had she stayed in?

AT: 1945, I believe.

SH: Thank you. What year did she graduate, do you remember, after the war, 1947 or 1948?

AT: I think in '47, and I think that was the summer she spent at Middlebury. It could have been '48; I'm sorry, I'm not exact.

SH: We had talked about V-J Day and V-E Day; what about the death of Franklin Roosevelt?

AT: Well, I remember where I was when that news came through. We were sitting in the living room. My father was there and a cousin, … he was a lieutenant colonel in the Army, in the Ordnance Corps, was there with us. I have to go back and say that … I was not allowed to mention Franklin D. Roosevelt's name when I was growing up. My grandfather was a "Bull Moose" Republican. [laughter]

JO: That is interesting.

SH: I suspected that, because he had worked for Hoover in DC.

AT: And so, we were not Franklin Delano Roosevelt fans. In fact, I can remember, … when Wendell Willkie, [the Republican Party nominee], ran for President in 1939, my sister and I making big posters, "We Want Willkie," [laughter] but, anyway, of course, we were saddened. … You know, he was the only President we had known. I remember also, though, wearing a pin, "We don't want Eleanor, either." You can edit this out, all right, yes. [laughter]

SH: I love it. As you said, your family was Republican, but, as a young girl growing up, did you see any of the New Deal programs in Flemington, the WPA [Works Progress Administration] or the Civilian Conservation Corps?

AT: I knew they existed and … I knew that the WPA was doing projects in Hunterdon County, but I did not actually witness any of it. I knew that they were building the new stadium at Rutgers.

SH: About Rutgers, since it was the State University and Flemington, geographically, is not that far away, was Rutgers something that you were aware of as a young girl?

AT: Oh, yes, very much, very much so. My father was a member of the New Jersey State School Board and he was here at Rutgers quite often, for various events. The New Jersey Press Association had their start here and he was president of that one year. … He was in the advisory group for the Rutgers Press. He was very much involved with the then New Jersey School of Agriculture [now Rutgers School of Environmental and Biological Sciences on the George H. Cook Campus], because of Hunterdon County's agricultural [base].

SH: Rutgers was something that had a presence.

AT: Oh, yes, and several of my high school classmates became Rutgers students.

SH: Did they? It was a viable alternative for students who wanted to continue on with school.

AT: I remember … going to a commencement, I think I was in high school then, in the stadium.

SH: The new stadium. [laughter]

AT: Yes. My father was there, I think, supporting someone he had recommended for an honorary degree.

SH: To go back to Middlebury, talk about being a young woman and going off to college for the first time. Did you go alone? Did your parents go with you?

AT: Oh, my parents drove me to Middlebury. I remember two things. I remember getting there and my father taking me to the bookstore and being horrified, because I didn't have my own dictionary. We had a great, big dictionary in the library at home that I always used, and I am still using that dictionary today [laughter] that he bought me that day, but I remember another thing very clearly. We were driving to Middlebury and my father, who had gone back to a reunion of his class the summer before, telling me that there were going to be three young men in my class

at Middlebury. Two of them were sons of … one of his college roommates, Dr. Stewart Ross, and they were going to be in my class, and the other one was an Air Force veteran, the son of his other roommate, Henry Thomas, and I remember thinking to myself, "I'll make my own friends, thank you." … I married Henry Thomas' son, Seely, [Henry Seely Thomas, Jr.]. My cousin, John Moreau, was in my class at Middlebury, roomed with one of the Ross boys and Seely roomed with the other one. [laughter] So, so much for my …

SH: Making your own friends.

AT: But, of course, … our early [days], particularly our freshman year, there were married veterans there. The women students who were married were not allowed to live in dormitories, heavens, no.

SH: Really?

AT: They might corrupt the rest of us. … So, the married students lived in apartments in town. Some of the professors were returning servicemen and I remember my freshman chemistry class being very difficult, because the professor and the veterans in the class would get off on other subjects, reminiscing, talking about completely different things. [laughter] My lab partner … was a veteran. He was the captain of the football team, and so, he was excused from lab and I had to do all the experiments myself. [laughter] The fraternities and sororities were the social life of the college, because Middlebury was very small, again, an agricultural community, and it was a completely dry town. … The fraternities in particular, the veterans, of course, were coming home, the fraternity houses were spit-and-polish. They were completely, you know, renovated and floors waxed and walls painted, by these young men who were just so pleased to be at home.

SH: As a young woman at Middlebury, with, obviously, a cousin along, in tow, so-to-speak, your father talked about who would be there, but did he also, at this point, give you any "dos" and "don'ts?"

AT: He sent me a copy of the Westminster College Oath, which I still have in my Middlebury scrapbooks. … That was all. No, no, … the women had a ten o'clock curfew every night. You had to check out of your dormitory after seven o'clock, even if you wanted to go to the library, much less the movies. … If you were one minute late, you were punished. You couldn't go out the next Saturday night, or something of that kind.

SH: This was a regular dorm, not a sorority.

AT: No, a regular dormitory. There were no sorority houses. … We did not live in sorority houses. We had apartments in town where we had our meetings and so on.

JO: You were involved in a sorority.

AT: I was a Kappa Kappa Gamma member, and I'm still a member of an alumnae association, which is kind of fun, reminiscing about the old days. [laughter]

SH: What was the dress for young women?

AT: Oh, my, we wore skirts. We could not wear slacks in town, we could not wear slacks to football games. … We had to wear skirts, complete dress, to breakfast in the morning. There was dress night, I think on Thursday nights, where we had to wear stockings. [laughter] …

SH: They were available by now, right?

AT: Exactly, but, of course, when I went to school, in the Fall of 1947, all of a sudden, the "New Look," the Dior "New Look," came in, and, all of a sudden, skirts dropped. … I can remember, of course, we wore skirts and sweaters. That was the uniform, almost, and … the sweaters were big and pulled down over the tops of our skirts, and a lot of us made extra yolks in the tops of our skirts, so that our skirts could be longer, in fashion. … Of course, all of our coats, our overcoats, were much shorter than our skirts. [laughter] I remember, my sophomore year, I had a new coat. [laughter]

SH: Did women wear a hat and gloves?

AT: To chapel, yes. We had required chapel. That's a Sunday chapel. We had required chapel on Sunday afternoons. We had morning chapel three times a week, Monday, Wednesday and Friday for upperclassmen, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday for underclassmen. We had Saturday classes then, three cuts in a semester; imagine that now, in your day. [laughter]

JO: I know.

SH: What kind of social activities were there?

AT: There were college dances, of course, in the local high school gymnasium, because the college didn't have one until, later, a wartime building was brought on campus and made into a building big enough for basketball games, … and so on, but the majority of the social life were fraternity and sorority affairs, which were fun. [laughter]

SH: What were some of the activities that you were involved in?

AT: My sorority, for the most part.

SH: What attracted you to that sorority?

AT: My mother and her sisters had all been Kappas, and Seely's grandmother and his aunts were all Kappas. [laughter]

SH: Hardly a choice there.

AT: No, no, but it was [fun]. We had a good time.

SH: Did you have a job?

AT: No, I did not. I was lucky. My family was able to pay tuition, which, I think, was something like twelve hundred dollars a year, a year. [laughter]

SH: How often did you come home?

AT: Just for, not for Thanksgiving, Christmas vacation. … Our exam period was after Christmas. This is before the "Jan Plan," [an independent study program completed over winter break], or whatever Rutgers calls it, was invented. We came home and studied. I can remember sitting in the Flemington Library, writing papers over Christmas vacation. [laughter] At Easter, if we could get a ride home, because we didn't have much vacation time. But, school started later in … September than it … does now.

SH: When you came home, this was when you worked in your father's newspaper.

AT: In the summer times, yes. … No, I didn't work in the newspaper when I was in college. I guess I did my freshman year, maybe my sophomore year. My junior year, at least, I was a member of the Hahne & Company [a Newark department store] College Board and I got on the Lehigh Valley Railroad every morning and went to Newark and sold, in early summer, bathing suits and sports clothes, and then, in the fall, or toward fall, the college clothes. We modeled. …

SH: Really? [laughter]

AT: Yes. We had a wonderful time.

SH: Did you travel at all? The war, as we talked about, had curtailed a lot of vacation travel.

AT: No, no, I didn't. My older sister and I did not, because, right after the war, of course, there was new technology, and so on, for my father's business and he was doing new press equipment … for the newspaper, and so on. My two younger sisters, during their college years, both had European summer vacations, and so on. After my father died in 1963, the following year, my mother took my older sister and me, we were both married at that time, [laughter] to Europe, for a, I think, five-week trip. … By that time, both my younger sisters had married Englishmen and were living in Britain, and so, we spent two weeks there, and then, we did the European bit.

SH: I have to ask, did they meet their spouses on their European tour?

AT: One did and one didn't. One, the first one, went over to work for a newspaper in England. A friend of my father hired her. … Of course, you could have a one-year working permit in Britain at that time, and she met her young, Oxford graduate chemist [laughter] and married at the very end of that year. The other one thought that was so romantic that she went to Britain right after college graduation and she met her husband. [laughter] My parents went over and they went on a Mediterranean cruise and she met her husband on that cruise. [laughter]

SH: I must say, the Moreau girls were out there.

AT: … The youngest one also became a teacher. She took teaching courses, … after college, and worked for the American Air Force in Britain after the war, and, of course, she wanted to go back, so that she'd be near the fellow she eventually married.

SH: When you went off to college, to Middlebury, you knew you wanted to major in home ec. You talked about how they had to redefine the course or set that up. What did you plan to do?

AT: Teach. I took teaching courses, which were, I still regret every minute I spent in them because … they were boring, they were pedantic, they were dull, useless, basically. … I did my teaching, my practice teaching, at Middlebury High School. I think I would have been a better teacher, a better parent, a better citizen, had I been able to take more poli sci [political science], more history, more anything, music appreciation, but I had to take them in order to be able to practice teach. I knew, … by that time, that Seely and I planned to marry and I thought, if I had a teaching degree, I could help out.

SH: That was the thought for women at that point, to help out.

AT: Well, I think most of my classmates expected to work for a year or two after college, in publishing, in an insurance company office, in whatever, marry, and hubby would take care of them forever after. … Women were not like your generation, my dear, [to Jessica Ondusko]. [laughter] They didn't expect to have a career.

SH: Do you want to share with us what you remember of the proposal and your engagement with Mr. Thomas? Did he propose at college?

AT: I don't even remember him proposing. I think it was just [that] we just had assumed it. By that time, I was wearing his fraternity pin; that was in lieu of an engagement ring. … Our senior year, we did not see too much of one another. I think the pressures were there, … but, anyway, when we graduated, our parents, of course, were friends, because … the two fathers had been in college together. My husband's grandfather was president, … had been president of Middlebury, as well as Rutgers. …

SH: Really? I knew about Rutgers, but I did not know about Middlebury.

AT: He was president of Middlebury College first. He was hired away by Penn State. He was at Penn State for five years, hired away from Penn State to come to Rutgers, to turn Rutgers into the State University of New Jersey. … He had been a chaplain during World War I. He … had been a Presbyterian minister. During World War II, … he was president of Norwich College in Vermont.

SH: Really?

AT: He was a remarkable man and I loved him dearly. [laughter] I remember him, in his later years, when I was at Middlebury, my husband and I would go down to Rutland, where he lived, to visit quite often, and I remember he had been in a terrible automobile accident. He was a

member of the Vermont State Legislature and was hit by a large construction vehicle and he broke his shoulder, and I remember him in his study, down in Rutland, telling me about his physical therapy. I don't think the term had been coined then, but, anyway, he said he was trying to get his shoulder back in use, and so, he stood up against a pillar … that was in his study, put his hands out straight on the pillar and started to sing, [Ms. Thomas sings], "On the banks of the old Raritan, my boys," [the Rutgers *alma mater*], with his deep, baritone voice, as he marched his hands up the pillar.

JO: Great story.

AT: It was something I remember fondly.

SH: Had he gone to Rutgers as an undergraduate?

AT: No, he was a graduate of Middlebury College.

SH: Was he a graduate student there?

AT: He was a graduate of Union Theological Seminary, was a Presbyterian minister in East Orange, New Jersey, for fifteen years before he was hired by Middlebury College to become president there.

SH: That is a great story. I thank you.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: I will put this back on.

AT: He was a wonderful fundraiser. Many of the buildings on the Middlebury campus were the result of his contacts with wealthy people who contributed, and that's why, I think, Penn State hired him, but came to Rutgers, as I said, too.

SH: As an undergraduate at Middlebury, dating Seely Thomas, were you aware then of that history and that connection?

AT: Oh, my, yes. My father was very fond of Dr. Thomas.

SH: He had been at Middlebury when your father was a student.

AT: Yes. In fact, he left during World War I to become a chaplain, and my father and Henry Thomas, and, as I said, Stewart Ross, moved into the top of one of the dormitories, Hepburn Hall, with Dr. Thomas' wife and their two youngest children. [laughter]

SH: Really?

AT: Yes. [laughter]

SH: Did your grandfather-in-law ever talk about his time as a chaplain in World War I?

AT: My husband's grandfather.

SH: I am sorry, your husband's grandfather; I missed a generation.

AT: No, but I have pictures of him, I have some memorabilia, that I've turned over to my grandson.

JO: When he was president of the University, I read that he was an advocate of making it a state university. Did he ever discuss this with you?

AT: Not with me, no, but I have read, of course, Richard P. McCormick's history of Rutgers [*Rutgers: A Bicentennial History* (1966)], and I know that … when he was hired, … one of the goals was to make Rutgers the State University of New Jersey and he worked very hard, worked with the State Chamber of Commerce. The roadblock, I guess, and I don't know where I learned this, whether it was from the McCormick history or whether it was from family lore, was that a great many of the state legislators were graduates of Rutgers College and there was no way they wanted to see their almost Ivy League school become a state university, heavens no.

JO: Wow.

SH: Exactly right.

AT: And so, … he finally gave up in, really, … frustration, I think, felt that it was impossible, that it was not going to happen, and so, he retired to Vermont, bought a farm in Mendon, above Rutland, Vermont, where he took cultivars from the New Jersey State Agricultural College's apple trees and he planted an orchard there, which one of his grandsons is still helping to run.

SH: Wonderful. [laughter]

AT: But, in addition to that, of course, as I said, he got involved in many other things, was a legislator and moving force in the State of Vermont.

SH: He had originally been from Vermont.

AT: Yes, he grew up there.

SH: When you and Mr. Thomas married, was it right after the war?

AT: No, I taught for a year.

SH: In Middlebury?

AT: No, I taught at North Hunterdon Regional High School in Hunterdon County. It was the first year the school was open. They had combined eleven school districts. … I had been hired at Thanksgiving time of my senior year at Middlebury. I was told my salary would be twenty-four hundred dollars a year, that I would have to write the course of study for the home economics department of the high school, which would have to be approved by the State Board of Education before the school would open. I did that for my senior thesis, with the help of the head of the home economics department, who was wonderful to me. … I had to select all the textbooks for freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior cooking and sewing classes. I spent that summer, after my graduation, buying everything from measuring spoons to ironing boards and sewing machines for the home ec department. There was one big room, with the sewing facilities at one end and the cooking, five cooking kitchens, in the other end. They realized that … there were going to be too many students at the high school to have in one class. So, they hired my best friend from high school, who was a Hood College home economics graduate, to teach home ec part-time and biology part-time. So, they put a cardboard, bi-fold door down the middle of this room, separating the sewing and cooking ends. They also had to put a … homeroom there. We had a rather difficult one. There were two boys who were on parole, for example, one of them for hitting their homeroom teacher with a baseball bat the year before. There was a boy who came in and had epileptic seizures very often in the wintertime. There was a boy who used to unscrew the wing nut screws on the sewing machine stools, so that when a girl came in and sat down, it would collapse. There were students who would try to leave the freezer door open. [laughter] I was very glad to only have one year there. [laughter]

SH: What an exciting year.

AT: Yes, and so, we were married and Seely was taking grad school courses at NYU and working for a CPA company in New York City, and so, we decided to live in Newark. We didn't own a car. We decided to live in Newark and he took the train over to New York every day and, that way, I could go out to Flemington on the train, occasionally, with our laundry, [laughter] come back with vegetables from my father's garden. [laughter]

SH: Were you married in Flemington?

AT: We were married in Flemington, and then, let's see, we were living in an apartment in Newark, a little, three-story garden apartment that had been built for veterans, and I was pregnant with our first child. My older sister had married and her husband had gone to work, … after college, for National Dairies, which was his father's company. So, my father thought, "Let's see, I don't have a son to take over my business; maybe Seely would be interested in working for me." So, he wrote a letter to Seely, offering him a job, told him that he would have to work in the back shop, learn the business from the ground up. Seely went out to Flemington to talk to my father one day. I did not go. I said, "It's your decision, dear." [laughter] He came back, thought. We talked about it. He said, "Okay, I'm going to do it." So, Flemington, in those days, did not have apartment houses. You had to wait until someone died before you could rent an apartment. [laughter] So, we moved in with my parents. Catherine was born the day we moved to Flemington, my first child, yes.

SH: Oh, my.

AT: I was staying in Highland Park with my in-laws. They took me to Newark, to Presbyterian Hospital, where I had my doctor, and had paid my bills. Seely went that morning to Flemington for the first day of his job. [laughter]

SH: What an adventure.

AT: Anyway, we were with my parents for about six months when a friend of my father's called him and said, "You know, my son and daughter-in-law are moving out of the apartment on the top floors of my Victorian house on Main Street. Would your daughter and her husband be interested?" Wow, were we! [laughter] We had a wonderful, wonderful apartment, living room, dining room, kitchen, three bedrooms, … a bathroom-and-a-half, a screened-in porch. Rent was seventy dollars a month.

SH: Wow, room. [laughter]

JO: Yes.

AT: Yes. It was wonderful. Our son, John, was born while we lived there, but the time came when we thought we'd better buy a house, and we had all those war bonds I mentioned earlier. So, we bought a house across the street from my parents, where I still live.

SH: Did your husband's parents remain in Highland Park?

AT: Yes.

SH: So many of our Rutgers professors have lived in Highland Park; was he also a faculty member?

AT: He was an attorney in New Brunswick, but he was an adjunct in the Law School at Newark.

SH: Okay, I just had to see if there was that connection.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: All right, please, continue; we were talking about you as a young wife and mother, now building your own home. You had your second child in Flemington. Can you talk about how the paper progresses, and life in Hunterdon County and Flemington?

AT: Well, I had another baby, [laughter] and I think my father thought that maybe, having put me through college, and so on, he ought to have a little return for that. He asked me if I would like to write a newspaper column, for "pin money," [laughter] as he put, and I said, "All right. What will it be about?" and he said, "Well, I think it should be focused toward home economics, toward home and family, and you write what you want," and so, the editor of the newspaper, the managing editor, called me and he said, "All right, let's talk about this. What do you want to call the column?" and I thought a minute and I said, "Well, how about, 'A Word to the Wives?'" and

he said, "Oh, how did you think of that?" and I said, "I don't know." [laughter] So, I wrote a newspaper column for forty-five years. [When] it started out, it was almost any area of homemaking, of course, food and recipes. Readers sent recipes to me. My children complained, bitterly, at times, [laughter] of all the things that I had to home test that they had to eat, [laughter] but there were other things, too. I can remember writing about how to make draperies and … various shopping tips and new businesses that had opened in the town, and so on, and this went on until 1999, when I retired. [laughter] People didn't cook the way they used to. Times had changed and I think readers had changed their interests. They were reading *Food and Wine* Magazine instead of my column. [laughter] Anyway, so, that's what I was doing, and I was very involved in local philanthropic efforts. As I've said earlier to you, I inherited a lot of my parents' things. I'm vice-president of the Cemetery Association, for example, [laughter] but I was a Red Cross trustee and others. I've been chair of the Flemington Library Board for more years than I can remember. So, that was my life, until, one day, I was in the office and I had a phone call from a member of the nominating committee of the Rutgers Board of Trustees, and he said, "Your name has been proposed for trustee and would you accept if elected?" I was so shocked, so absolutely astonished, I knew almost nothing about Rutgers, that I didn't have the good sense to say, "What portion of my life am I committing to this institution?" So, I said, "Yes, thank you very much." …

SH: What year was this?

AT: This was in, I think, 1984, the Fall of 1984, maybe. Anyway, I think I went on the board in 1985 and I remember going to the first meeting of the [Board of Trustees]. Well, I remember, first of all, going to a little session that Ed [Edward] Bloustein [Rutgers University President from 1971 to 1989] had up in the … Brower Commons, [the main dining hall on Rutgers' College Avenue Campus], up in … what was then the President's Dining Room, for new trustees, and I was terribly excited about this and I must have spoken up and said something, because I think he took an interest in me, gave me some opportunities to do things that I was astonished to be doing. I went to my first meeting of the Board of Trustees, though, which I remember vividly, in the fall, because it was the meeting at which Rutgers' involvement with investments in South Africa, the divestiture issue, was being voted on. … Of course, I knew this was coming up and I had been reading all I could about it. I read a book written by the only woman who … had been a member of the South African legislature, who begged American institutions not to divest, because, she said, "There will be absolutely no health care for women and children, in particular, in South Africa, if companies like Johnson and Johnson, for example, are not still here." So, I was one of four people on that board that voted no. The woman sitting next to me, I thought, was going to kill me. [laughter] Anyway, so, that was the beginning. I found out, much later, that it was Charlie Jurgensen who had nominated me. … He grew up in Hunterdon County and was a friend of my father. I had met him at a Hunterdon County Historical Society meeting, where I was a trustee, and I had just finished a year, well, several years, as a member of the New Jersey Press Association's board and I had just finished as chairman of the board, and I think Charlie thought, "Ah-ha, here's a woman who needs a new job," [laughter] and so, that started my association with Rutgers.

SH: What a nice spot to be in, because the University depends so much on its press.

AT: Well, that may have been part of the reason for thinking that [they would like] someone who was associated in some small way with journalism in New Jersey.

SH: Did Mr. Jurgensen know of the connection with your husband's family and Rutgers?

AT: Oh, yes. In fact, my father had been a Rotary Club member who had given him a 150-dollar scholarship, which enabled him to come to Rutgers. So, yes, maybe he thought he was paying back. [laughter] I don't know whether he'd think he'd done a good job of it or not now.

SH: What a dramatic time, interesting, exciting, a lot of adjectives that could be placed on those next four or five years.

AT: Those years, yes, and, of course, Ed Bloustein died a few days after we returned from that trip to Ireland.

SH: We did not have the recorder on when you were talking about this experience.

AT: Oh, well, my husband and I were invited by Dr. Bloustein to go to Ireland for the Emerald Isle Classic, which was to be a football game between Rutgers and Pittsburgh in Dublin, and we went and had a wonderful time. As I started to say, Ed died just a few days after our return. I was Chair of the Board of Trustees at that time and remember trying very hard to keep my composure as I had to read, at the Board of Trustees meeting, the, I guess you'd call it a eulogy.

SH: Did the Board of Trustees know that he was ill?

AT: I think we all knew that he had a heart condition. You mentioned Dr. [Norman] Reitman a minute ago. He was his physician, his cardiologist, and had often said that Ed was not a well person, but, of course, no one expected it.

SH: Prior to 1985, when you were on the board, how did you see Rutgers as it grew over the years? You talked about your father's involvement with Rutgers as it struggled. Earlier, your husband's grandfather had worked at making it a state university. Was that something that you, as a family, had stayed interested in, to see how Rutgers took on this new role?

AT: Not a great deal. I remember, in, … I think it was about 1980, when then Governor Tom Kean, who was known as the education governor, did what he did for Rutgers, which was, you know, very much in the papers. … I certainly knew about Rutgers through the years, because my father-in-law was, as I said, an adjunct law professor and my sisters-in-law were all alums.

SH: As with any state university, maybe every university, funding always seems to play such a huge role. How does someone who is on the Board of Trustees try to walk through that minefield, but, also, be very cognizant of the education of the students, the undergraduates and the graduate students?

AT: Well, we try to be as generous as we can. [laughter]

SH: I was just going to say, the reality of it is money is limited.

AT: … Right, right. I can remember, as Chair of the Educational Planning and Policy Committee, almost weeping at some of the stories, when we had our annual spring opportunity for students to come and speak to us about their concerns, about rising tuition. They were heartbreaking. On the other hand, we had the reality of constant pressures, financial pressures, that had to be addressed.

SH: Do you remain on the Board of Trustees?

AT: I'm an *emerita* now, that wonderful thing where I can speak my piece, but I have no responsibility. I have to keep slapping my hand, though, not to vote. [laughter]

SH: All right. You still attend the meetings.

AT: Yes, yes.

SH: You have seen very diverse presidents at Rutgers. Would you talk about the strength that you have seen? We will stay on the positive.

AT: Well, all I can say is, I hope I am never on another presidential search committee. [laughter] It's a wonderful opportunity, you learn a lot, and so on, but, going back, Ed Bloustein was a very warm, open, approachable person, loved people and liked talking to them. You could ask him almost anything and get a good, straight answer. I think Fran Lawrence [Francis Lawrence, who served as Rutgers University President from 1990 to 2002] came in feeling sort of under a cloud, in that everyone was still in shock over Ed's death, and, all of a sudden, Ed, who had had, I think, two or three votes of no confidence by the faculty, although he'd been here for many years and was a great president, I think Fran had the feeling that he [Bloustein] was, you know, set up there with a halo on his head. … It was hard to step in, I will say, for Fran. Fran had a young family. He had different needs, I think. … He was a much more private person than Ed had been, and I think a lot of people found that hard to adjust to. I think he did some wonderful things as President. … He'd had a different experience, of course. He'd always been with a private university, Tulane, so, he'd never had to deal with government issues, with legislators, and so on. That was very hard for him, I think. Early on, I think in the late '80s, early '90s, he recognized that the athletics program needed some revisions. He knew that Title IX, [a Federal bill that requires equal opportunity for women in education] could be a threat and that we'd better look at what was being done here. He'd made me a member of that committee, for some reason. [laughter] I guess they needed a woman, [laughter] and, boy, I learned a lot on that. So, that was really very, very [perceptive]. He was looking ahead. He brought a whole different focus to the presidency, I think, than Ed had had, and, of course, the same thing happened when Dick McCormick became President. [Editor's Note: Richard L. McCormick became the President of Rutgers University in 2002 and was the President at the time of the interview]. Of course, he had a Rutgers background. … He had also been with two other large public research universities and he … has brought some things. He's had some changes made that he learned from his previous experience. So, it's been a wonderful, wonderful twenty-some years. I often think, if I hadn't had the chance to … become a Trustee, and then, for fifteen years,

a member of the Board of Governors, and chair of both of them, what would my life would have been?

SH: How different is the Board of Governors from the Board of Trustees in the way they operate?

AT: Well, of course, the Board of Governors is the policy-setting organ. The Board of Trustees, until now, when it's changing again, has been the advisory group, so that, in some ways, I liked the Trustees better, in that it was the opportunity, through the Trustee advisory committees, … to get to know professors, to become familiar with what was going on in the various schools, and so on, and, also, to hear from students. When I became a member of the Board of Governors, there wasn't that opportunity. It was a completely different focus; equally fascinating.

SH: Both on the Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors, what has been your most challenging committee to serve on, and then, your favorite?

AT: Well, I think favorite was Educational Planning and Policy, because that's what we were here for. When I was Chair of the Board of Governors, I tried to go to all the TAC meetings that I could. I think athletics was the thing that really bothered me the most. There were changes that were made. I'm still annoyed by the disappearance of the six sports. I sometimes wonder, if I'd been still a member; you'd better delete this later on. [laughter] I still wonder, though, if I were a member of the Board of Governors, if I would have voted for that, because they were the sports that our best and brightest students were … part of. Crew was traditional at Rutgers, "On the banks of the old Raritan." It just seemed not the way to go.

SH: You talked about being nominated in 1984. What is the learning curve like, to catch up?

AT: I'm still on it. [laughter] … No, it was a long time. I can remember the first time I got up before the Board of Trustees to make a report. I was chair of the Library Trustees Advisory Committee and I must have been shaking, because Adrianne Anderson, who, … after that, was chair of the board, when I sat down, she patted my hand. She said, "That wasn't so bad, Anne, was it?" So, it was a lot to become familiar with, and there really was no orientation. You know, I could go to Norman McNatt, who was … [Vice-President and Secretary of the University] Jean Sidar's assistant secretary, and he and Jean were people who took me under their wing, and, of course, the Douglass ladies, Adrianne Anderson and others, helped me a great deal.

SH: Obviously, it has a lot of great rewards and there are things I am sure that you regret even now, but how long can you serve as an *emerita*? Will you be able to continue?

AT: I think I may be buried as one. [laughter]

SH: Well, I think they cannot do that.

AT: There's no term, there's no term for it.

SH: You can be as active as long as you want.

AT: Yes, and there are some *emeriti* … who never come and there are some who are very, very active, Floyd Bragg, [Dr. Paul] Pete Jennings.

SH: Can you still sit on committees and be a part of them?

AT: Well, the committees are disappearing from the Board of Trustees.

SH: Can you talk about how that came to be?

AT: I think … they're changing; it's still to be voted upon, but they will be having Trustee committees that … have a little different purpose.

SH: During this time that you are on the Board of Trustees and Board of Governors, there have been demonstrations, there have been teach-ins, Tent City, [an annual protest for various issues], those kinds of things. Do you have any experiences that you would like to share?

AT: I have one in particular, a couple, maybe. The first one, I was Chair of the Board of Trustees and we were going to meet in the Rutgers Student Center. We were having lunch beforehand, in the President's Dining Room in Brower Commons. The police came in and said that there was a demonstration going on and that there were students out there and that it wouldn't be safe for us to go across the street, that they would come back and tell us when we could do that. So, eventually, they came back and we went across the street, in a line, between two aisles of policemen, and … I guess I was the first one and I went into the room where our meeting was to be and it had been trashed by the protestors. … There were a few of them still in the room and, as I walked in, I noticed that the Glee Club was there. They were going to sing for us. … The new verses to the *alma mater* had been written and they were going to perform for us. Running toward me was a kid carrying my gavel, not a Glee Clubber. He was tackled by a Glee Club member, who then handed me the gavel, which may be one reason, other than the fact that my grandson was a Glee Clubber, [laughter] that I just think the Glee Club walks on water, yes.

SH: What was the protest about?

AT: You know, at this point, I don't know. It was probably tuition or one of those things. … There have been so many, they kind of fade in my mind, but that was one. Another one that I remember, I think, was in Newark. Oh, no, I remember two; I remember one down in the building that's behind Brower Commons, where … I think the computer …

JO: The computer lab, yes.

AT: Lab is now, that building.

SH: Records Hall.

AT: Yes. I think it was a World War II surplus building. Anyway, it was … there and there was a protest and someone, a student, poured a pitcher of water over Joe Seneca's head. He was vice-president, at that point, of the University. But, the one I really remember was in Newark. Fran Lawrence was President and there was a protest. I remember that the protestors stood behind each member of the Board of Governors with a pole and on top of it, a papier-mâché head. I knew which one was me, because it had a curly wig on it. We finally had to be ushered out of the room. It was very contentious, but that seems to have calmed down. [laughter] You're not having those now.

SH: During your time, there was this outreach to Camden and to Newark, and in years since. How has that gone? I just read that email, in the last week or so, where there is no longer a provost; they have been given a new title.

AT: They're going to be chancellors now.

SH: Chancellors. How has it been, because it was a huge expansion of both of those campuses and they have contributed so much to the rebuilding of the two areas?

AT: Well, I think this is one of the things that Dick McCormick felt they deserved, because they are overseeing more graduate degree programs, more expansion of campus, and so on, issues, that that's a title they should have, but, certainly, a lot has happened on both campuses and it's wonderful. You know, Camden Campus looks like an oasis of peace and calm and prosperity in that troubled city and, in Newark, it's just been a metamorphosis in that part of the city.

SH: Rutgers has contributed to New Brunswick's metamorphosis as well.

AT: Absolutely, it has, and New Brunswick has contributed to Rutgers, too. … So many issues now … involve both the city and the University that that seemed to be being rather well handled.

SH: Would it be fair to say that, because of the outreach that Rutgers has to make to the State Legislature, because of our funding issues, that now the different Rutgers campuses are also outreaching to the communities in which they are housed?

AT: Absolutely, absolutely, that's a necessity.

SH: From what I have read, it did not sound like that was always true.

AT: No, no, I think this is a fairly recent thing and I think that it's not only at Rutgers. I think that a great many, both public and private colleges in New Jersey and elsewhere, have had to look elsewhere for their funding and … for help.

SH: Knowing that there are many issues that we will not discuss on tape, would you mind sharing what you are most proud of in your work with the Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors?

AT: I can't take credit for a single thing. [laughter]

SH: How humble of you.

AT: No. …

SH: As a group, then, what were some? Are there any specific negotiations? You had said you hoped you never were on a presidential search again. Did you serve on both of them?

AT: Well, I just hope we don't need one very soon. [laughter]

SH: You were on both of the most recent ones.

AT: I was on the committee that hired Fran Lawrence, yes. I was sort of … an aside on another committee. … I can't remember what they called it. … I remember getting on a little plane once, though, with five other members, it was a little jet, to fly out to California to talk to Dick McCormick, [laughter] stopping to refuel in North Dakota or somewhere. [laughter] … I think I was on the final decision committee or something. I don't know. I don't remember how they set that. That was structured entirely differently from the first one, where it was just a committee of Trustees and Governors and others. The second one was a little different.

SH: Are you involved in the search for the new SAS [School of Arts and Sciences] Executive Dean?

AT: No, no.

SH: You talked about the Douglass women that were on the Board of Trustees and the Board of Governors. How involved were you in the reorganization that has now been implemented?

AT: I really haven't been, because I've been an *emerita* for … the last couple of years, several years. So, I really haven't been involved in that. …

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: Before we conclude, there is one follow-up question that pertains to World War II. What did you, as a young high school girl, know of the atom bomb and what that meant?

AT: The first thing I remember, of course, was when they dropped the bomb on Japan, and, I remember, I was at the newspaper office, standing behind a linotype machine, when somebody came in and told us that had happened. It was utter silence. No one said a thing, did a thing. It was just more than we could fathom, more horror, more destruction. I think the only redeeming thing was that we thought a lot of people's lives were going to be saved by this, because the war was not going to drag on.

SH: With that, I would ask, in the future, if we could follow up with other questions, because of your long and illustrious time here at Rutgers on the different boards, and give you our thanks for having served so long.

AT: Well, thank you both. It's been a great pleasure.

SH: Thank you.

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

Reviewed by Jeffery Guarneri 12/8/08
Reviewed by Ellie MacPherson 12/8/08
Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 5/29/09
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 6/1/09
Reviewed by Anne Moreau Thomas 6/8/09