RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM URBAN

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with William Urban on October 14, 2008, in Lakewood, New Jersey, with Shaun Illingworth …

Rabeya Rahman: … Rabeya Rahman.

Peter Iodoci: … And Peter Iodoci.

SI: Mr. Urban, thank you very much for having us here today. To begin, could you tell us where and when you were born?

William Urban: Yes, I was born in Trenton, New Jersey, October 15, 1913.

SI: What was your father's name?

WU: Father's name was Ralph, Ralph Ernest Urban.

SI: What about your mother?

WU: Mother is Mary Gunsaules Urban.

SI: Your father was originally from Pennsylvania.

WU: He was born in Lancaster County and lived all his childhood and youth in Pennsylvania, went to Princeton University and General Theological Seminary in New York and became rector of All Saints Church, Trenton, was there all the rest of his life. [Editor's Note: Reverend Urban served as rector of All Saints Church from 1900 to 1931. All Saints Church and the Trinity Episcopal Church merged in the early 1930s and the site of the All Saints Church became the Trinity Cathedral. Reverend Urban was elected suffragan bishop in June 1932.]

SI: Do you know how his family came to settle in Pennsylvania?

WU: Well, as far as I know, they came from Germany, like the rest of [the] Pennsylvania Germans, and they were German Methodists who came over here and a lot of them settled in Lancaster County and my family was one of them.

SI: What about your mother's family? Do you know anything about their background?

WU: Mother's family came from Northeastern Pennsylvania. She happened to be born in Washington, New Jersey, but she was raised in Stroudsburg. Her father and mother lived in Stroudsburg, well, all of their adult lives. … She was raised there in Stroudsburg.

SI: Do you know how your parents met?

WU: I think they met in the Methodist Church in Stroudsburg, but I'm not sure. I think so.

SI: The reason why your family came to Trenton was because your father took over the church.

WU: That's right. He was at Princeton when he became a candidate for Holy Orders, and so, he was in the Diocese of New Jersey and he was assigned a church in New Jersey.

SI: You have two older brothers.

WU: Yes, well, I had two older brothers, Richard and Joseph. Richard was born in Trenton and Joseph was born in Stroudsburg. They're both gone now and they were Episcopal clergymen also. One spent most of his life in the South, Florida and Texas, the other one was in the Diocese of Connecticut for many years.

SI: It is very interesting that both of your parents were college educated.

WU: Yes. My father went to Princeton and my mother went to the Baltimore College for Women, which is now Goucher [College], graduated in--well, she graduated in 1899 and Father graduated Princeton in 1896. …

SI: What did your mother study?

WU: I don't remember. I don't know what their studies were. They never talked about it.

SI: They never told you about their days in college.

WU: No.

SI: What are some of your earliest memories of growing up in Trenton?

WU: Let me think. Well, we lived in the western section of Trenton and I went to Cadwalader School, for grammar school, and then, I went to Junior High School #3, out on West State Street. We lived on Overbrook Avenue, next door to the church, and I can't remember very much about the other people of the town there. I remember some of them … and I had friends in the neighborhood, of course, but I don't remember what happened to any of them.

SI: What kind of neighborhood was it?

WU: Oh, it was a residential neighborhood, West Trenton, I think it still is. The cathedral, the Trinity Cathedral, is on the corner of West State Street and Overbrook Avenue and the whole neighborhood was a residential neighborhood, middle-class. I remember, very early in life, … the area was called Cadwalader Place. It was an eight-block area and had their own little community and … had a snowplow, came around, plowed the sidewalks, a horse-drawn plow, but the city took care of the rest of the services. … We were just off the river there, you know, one block. We lived one block in from the river. You know that area? I don't know if you know that area or not. So, as a boy, I played down along the river quite a lot and knew that area very well. I can't think of anything else to tell you about that.

SI: Was your father's congregation mostly from that area or would they come from all over?

WU: Oh, yes, no, they were mostly from that area, oh, yes. … The All Saints Church was founded--well, I don't know when. My father was the first rector of the church and, actually, the city line went down the middle of the street, so that the church was outside of the city, at that time. Very shortly after, they moved the city line westward about a mile, a mile-and-a-half. So, it came within the city, and my father took care of that congregation there and they were all from that area, very few from outside.

SI: As the son of the pastor, did you have to help out a lot?

WU: Oh, I was an altar boy, served at the altar many times. My father would get me up early in the morning, get me over to the church, serve at the altar. …

PI: You were probably very young, about five or six when World War II began. Do you remember anything about that?

WU: I was in the service in World War II.

SI: I think you meant World War I.

PI: World War I.

WU: Oh, World War I, no, I don't remember much about that, no. We had, I think, some food restrictions. There weren't very big restrictions. We had no butter, for example. … That's when margarine got introduced. We didn't have an automobile at that time, so, there was no problem about gasoline and that's about all I can remember about World War I.

SI: Do you remember any parades to send soldiers off or to welcome them home?

WU: No, I don't recall that, no. I don't recall even any celebration of World War I.

SI: Do you remember anybody expressing hatred towards Germans or that kind of thing?

WU: No, I don't. I think most of the people in my neighborhood were English people and I don't recall having any people from Germany until after the war, when I was--oh, I guess, middle 1920s. We had some German people move in, but nothing before that. No, we … weren't affected very much by that.

SI: Back when you were growing up, was Trenton a divided city, divided among different groups?

WU: Well, Trenton was a manufacturing city, and still is, and they had a lot of English people come to work in the potteries, and then, there was an Italian group and they worked in the factories. There was a steel factory down in South Trenton, Roebling, and, outside of that, I don't think they were ethnically divided very much.

SI: You do not remember any strife between different groups.

WU: No, no, I don't remember anything like that, no, not in my youth, no. It was a pretty nice city. [laughter] At that time, it was a pretty nice city to live in.

SI: What would you do for fun as a child? What were some of the activities you got involved in?

WU: Well, we had a gang of kids in my neighborhood and we ran around the neighborhood and created a lot of trouble. … We had a ball team. Out there at Junior Number #3, it used to be open fields, where, you know, baseball and football [were] played out there. I don't know whether those fields are still open or not, but there were big open spaces at that time, and I don't have any other activity, except going to school.

SI: What did you think of your schools? Were they good?

WU: Well, I thought they were all right, but my father didn't think so. He thought … the public schools weren't very good and, … after junior high school, he sent me away to school. I went to George School, over in Newtown, Pennsylvania.

SI: What were your favorite subjects in school?

WU: I can't remember that kind of thing very well. Well, I always enjoyed history. History is one of my big subjects, and I think English literature, but I can't remember beyond that.

SI: When your father sent you to the George School, did you live there or did you commute?

WU: Oh, yes, that was a boarding school. It's over in Newtown, Pennsylvania, and it wasn't very far away and Father thought it was a good school. So, he sent me there for a couple of years. …

SI: How different was Newtown from where you lived in Trenton?

WU: Oh, Newtown was a very small town, very small town, … but we spent most of our time on the school campus. I didn't see very much of the town. … All our activities were on the campus, and so on.

SI: Was that a very traditional prep school?

WU: I think so, yes.

SI: Did you have different houses and house competitions?

WU: Well, they had dormitories and classroom buildings, and so on, very much like a boarding school, any boarding school. It happened to be run by … Society of Friends, the Quakers, and perhaps you know, … they run several schools over in Pennsylvania and, down here in South

Jersey, they have a school. … My father felt that their education system was a good one, they had good teachers, and so, I spent two years over there. Then, I went to college in Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, and I finished college in '37, spent a year trying to find a job. '37 was a bad, very bad, year. There just weren't any jobs. I walked all over Philadelphia and Trenton, Camden--no, couldn't find a job anywhere. So, I went to library school in Drexel and graduated there in '39 and got a job in the Brooklyn Public Library and, well, [after] two years in the Brooklyn Public Library, the draft board sent me a letter and I was off to the service.

SI: Before we get into your time in the service, can we ask you about the Great Depression and what you remember about that?

WU: Well, I don't have a lot of memories about that. I know that [there were] certainly a lot of people out of work and I remember seeing, when I traveled to college, … men in New York, selling apples on the street corner, … but I never saw any problems, because I was not in that area. Trenton, well, it suffered during the Depression, but it still was able to keep its population pretty fairly well employed. So, I don't have a great deal of memories of the Depression. Those are the only ones I can think of at the time.

SI: Do you remember anything about the Stock Market Crash in 1929? Was that a big shock to everybody?

WU: Oh, yes, it was, and there'd be headlines in the paper, but it didn't affect me directly. I was just a student and it didn't affect me directly. So, I can't tell you much more about it than that.

SI: Did you find that your family had to cut back on things because of the Depression?

WU: Well, I don't know. … I don't think my father's salary was reduced. I think it was the same salary he had before, but it wasn't very big. I think he lived on four thousand dollars a year most of his life, and so, there was not a great loss for us during the Depression.

SI: Why did you choose Trinity College?

WU: Let's see why. Well, I had an uncle that had taught at Trinity College. He wasn't there when I went there, but he had been there before, and he told my father it [was] probably a pretty good place for me to go. [laughter] … My father did not want us to go to large institutions. He wanted a small college. So, Trinity was one of those.

SI: Had your brothers gone to college before you?

WU: Yes, they went to Haverford, both of them went to Haverford, over in Pennsylvania, and these are very small colleges. When I went to Trinity, there were less than five hundred students and you knew practically everybody on the campus and the classes were small classes, some of them. Some of them were large, but most of them were pretty small classes. So, my father felt this is a good way to get your college education.

PI: What was your major when you went to college?

WU: … History and philosophy.

SI: Do any of your professors and courses stand out in your mind?

WU: Well, yes, I had a history teacher whose name was (Humphrey?) and he was a pretty good teacher. I took two or three courses under him, Dr. (Humphrey?), and he was a good lecturer and pretty strict in his examinations, and so on. Otherwise, I don't find any outstanding [ones], I can't think of any outstanding ones, but that's a long time ago. [laughter] You're getting back in--I was finished in '37--so, that's … seventy-one years ago, yes.

PI: Is there anything in your undergraduate days that made you want to go to library school at Drexel?

WU: Oh, no, I don't think so. I was interested in literature and books and I worked in the college library for a while.

SI: At Trinity?

WU: Yes, at Trinity. In those days, we had the NYA, National Youth Administration, and the college received money to pay students to work in the library, or work any other place in the college, and so, I was paid with NYA funds. I think I had two years working in the library, yes, two years.

SI: Do you remember seeing any other aspects of the New Deal or Franklin Roosevelt's programs in action?

WU: Any other aspects of the New Deal?

SI: Yes, like the WPA? [Editor's Note: The Works Progress Administration, or, after 1939, the Works Project Administration, employed millions on public works projects like buildings and roads, as well as in specialized areas, such as the arts, from 1935 to 1943.]

WU: Oh, yes, I could see the people working on the highways and the streets. There was a lot of WPA work around and I don't recall that people worked in other areas, only in construction, but I know the WPA hired people for other types of work. I've used the Works Progress collection of books on the States [*The American Guide Series*] and they were very useful, and still are.

SI: Yes, they still print them, I think.

WU: Oh, yes. Some of them have been revised and there's one for each state, I think it is. …

SI: What did you and your family think of Franklin Roosevelt?

WU: Well, my family was in favor of Franklin Roosevelt. They thought he was a good President and that he had a good program and he made it work, and so, they were pretty strong on Franklin, yes. I don't know if they favored his repeated elections, but I don't recall that they [had] any strong objection, either.

SI: Were you interested in politics? Did you follow politics?

WU: No, no, I was not interested in politics. As a college student, I was interested … in college and the students and my studies and I guess I was interested in following sports and that was about it.

SI: Did you play any sports, in either high school or college?

WU: No, I played tennis … and I swam for the school swimming team, but that was all in the way of varsity sports.

SI: You also joined a fraternity at Trinity.

WU: Yes, I was a member of Sigma Nu Fraternity at Trinity. … Well, I guess I was steward in my final year. I was steward for the fraternity house, … but the fraternities in Trinity were, well, we were a small college, so, the fraternities were small and they did not exercise much influence on the college program.

SI: What would you do as a steward of the house?

WU: Oh, I ran the dining room and the kitchen, yes.

SI: You mentioned that the job market was very tight in 1937.

WU: It certainly was.

SI: Did you move back home during that year?

WU: Yes, I was living with my brother. My father died in 1935, before I graduated, and so, I was living with my brother down in South Jersey, in Gloucester County, and I hunted for jobs, as I said, in Camden, Philadelphia, Wilmington, anywhere I could try. … So, I decided I'd go to library school in Philadelphia, at Drexel. I commuted in from my brother's home in Swedesboro to Drexel every day and graduated there in '39.

SI: What was the focus of library school back then? What kind of subjects did you study?

WU: Oh, well, it was reference work and cataloguing, that type of thing, bibliography and preparation of a major bibliography. We didn't have any computers or anything like that, so, it's kind of different from what it is now.

SI: Cataloguing was particularly important.

WU: Oh, yes, cataloguing was very important, and [I] learned reference tools and how to use them, yes.

SI: Did you do any fieldwork while you were at Drexel?

WU: Yes, I worked in the Philadelphia Public Library for two weeks, in the documents section. … That's the only fieldwork we had, just two weeks.

SI: Did you have to write a thesis or was it all class work?

WU: Well, I prepared an annotated bibliography as a thesis and a bibliography on diplomatic preparations for [the] international air service of Pan American Airways. At that time, there was almost no international air service and Pan American Airways was the first one to really … open up airways to overseas and my bibliography was on the problem of diplomatic work to prepare for landing fields and air service in other countries. I think they had the first international service to Latin America; I know they did, yes. Pan American was the first airline to fly to Latin America and I think the first airline, maybe, to fly to Europe and the Pacific, so that it was a lot of searching for information for their preparations.

SI: Do you remember why you got interested in that subject?

WU: No, I don't. [laughter] I just picked that out of the air, I guess, and it was a complicated library search and I had to go to several different libraries to find the material and prepare the annotations.

PI: During your time at Drexel, there was the rise of Nazi Germany and a lot of things going on overseas. Was that being talked about or did people not necessarily discuss it?

WU: … Not very much, no, very little concern about--you mean the situation in Europe?

PI: Yes.

WU: Yes; no, very little talked about at that time. It was in the newspaper headlines, and so on, but it was not a big subject of discussion.

SI: Nobody thought that maybe the United States would get involved in the war.

WU: No. We were going to stay out. Well, a little later on, after--see, I got out of Drexel in '39--oh, end of 1940, '41, things began to heat up quite a lot and there was a lot of information in newspapers, big, big headlines about the fighting in Europe, and so on, and I'm sure … a lot of concern about getting involved. So, politicians assured us that they wouldn't get into the war, but, of course, they did in time, but, by that time, I was in Brooklyn, working in the Brooklyn Public Library. … I was there for two years, until September '41, when I was drafted in the service. …

SI: Before we talk about the service, can you tell us a little bit about your job at the Brooklyn Public Library?

WU: Yes. Well, I worked in a branch library for a while, in the Bedford Branch Library, out in what's now called Bed-Stuy [Bedford–Stuyvesant], and then, they called me into the main library, because the main library was under construction when I went there. … They were about to open it, and so, we had a group of us [who] were brought down to the main library to move the main library collections from downtown, a storage area, into the new building. I spent quite a lot of time working on that, [laughter] moving the collection in, making an inventory and all that sort of thing, a long job. Then, for a short period after they opened the library, I served in the circulation department there and set up new collections, and so on, but that wasn't very long before I got drafted into service.

SI: Tell us about the process of being drafted. You got drafted in September of 1941. Had you had to deal with the draft board before that?

WU: Oh, yes, they called me in and interviewed me and I had to go through a physical exam and wait for them to decide on which ones on their list they would put in service and they sent me a letter saying to report to--oh, I forgot, somewhere in New York City where I had to report--and then, we were shipped off to Fort Dix. … From Fort Dix, I was sent to Fort Knox, spent more than two years at Fort Knox, and I went to the Army Specialized Training Program in Ohio State University for six months, and then, down to Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and over to Camp Campbell in Kentucky. Finally, they shipped me overseas to the Philippines. I got … back from the Philippines in January '46, after V-J Day. [Editor's Note: V-J Day was declared on August 14, 1945, in the United States and August 15, 1945, in the Pacific.]

SI: When you first went in and you were sent to Fort Dix, how long were you at Fort Dix?

WU: Oh, just a couple of weeks, processing, really, is what it was, and deciding where to send you and what branch of the service to put you in. That's all. Then, we went right off to Fort Knox, in the armored force and for basic training. I had three months' basic training at that time. … During the basic training, they were looking for people who could work in an office, personnel office, and I got called up into that and I stayed there in that personnel office at Fort Knox, … as I said, for more than two years and I went to … Columbus, Ohio State, for a program called personnel psychology. Then, after that, I'm not sure they knew what to do with me, so, they sent me to an organization, to a unit, down in Fort Jackson, South Carolina. I was with that unit until they moved to Camp Campbell, … back in Kentucky again, and then, after a year there, I went to the Philippines.

SI: What was the unit that you joined at Fort Jackson?

WU: Fort Jackson was called … an armored headquarters, the headquarters unit, 20th Armored Headquarters, I think. Wasn't it the 20th Armored Division? That's something else. The 20th Armored Headquarters unit, and I stayed with that organization. They went to Camp Campbell, and then, I guess it was about V-J Day, V-E Day, excuse me, V-E Day, when they broke up all those units and sent them off, … some to Europe and some to the Pacific. [Editor's Note: V-E

Day was declared on May 8, 1945.] … I went to the Philippines, stationed in Manila, across the street from [General Douglas] MacArthur's headquarters, in a personnel office over there, six months, eight months, in Manila. … V-J Day came along and, after V-J Day, we were waiting to get a shipment back home and I finally got a shipment back home around Christmastime, spent Christmas and New Year's on the water, coming back, discharged in January.

SI: Since you were in the military before Pearl Harbor, what do you remember about the Army before Pearl Harbor? What was it like?

WU: Well, I had never been in the Army, so, I couldn't make a comparison, but it was all basic training. We're all being trained. The Army was being built up very rapidly, from a small organization to a very large one, and there had to be a lot of training done and I was at the training center in Fort Knox and we had unit after unit after unit come through there for their training. … That's the only thing I remember about Knox, was training.

SI: In the personnel office, you were processing these units in and out.

WU: Oh, yes, individuals and units, right, yes, and, well, did pretty much the same thing when I went to Fort Jackson and Camp Campbell. I had to check personnel records to make sure they were ready for overseas processing and make sure they didn't get delayed at the staging area and that sort of thing.

SI: In those early months, do you remember any shortages of supplies?

WU: Not in the service, no. We had rationing. When we went home on furlough, we were given ration stamps to take home with us to buy food and gasoline and my family was delighted to see me bring home those ration stamps, so [that] they could buy more gasoline and more food. That's the only shortages I remember.

SI: There were not shortages of rifles or ammunition.

WU: Oh, no, no. We didn't have to use wooden sticks or anything like that. We had plenty of rifles and machine guns and plenty of ammunition.

SI: In this personnel center, what would you do in a typical day?

WU: Well, we had to keep track of each soldier's personnel record. Each soldier had a book and all his personnel [records], all his information in it, all his personal information and all his training experience and whatever, and we had to keep track of all those and make sure they were kept right up-to-date. … When they were transferred somewhere, we had to prepare orders to transfer them and ship them off to the new unit. It's not an exciting job, but it was interesting, because we're handling personnel all the time. …

PI: When you would go through personnel files to make sure that these people were ready for combat, what were some of the things that you were specifically looking for, to tell whether somebody was ready or not?

WU: Oh, well, how long he'd been trained and what kind of a unit he was trained in and [did he] have any particular skills. … If he has a particular skill, you put that in his record, too. He might be a mechanic or an armorer, he may be quite familiar with arms and ammunition. Those things had to be put in his record, so that when he went to another unit, if he did go to another unit, they would know what he could do, you know. It's like anybody's personnel record and resume, I guess we call it nowadays, but they were kept in a small book, a little thing like that, and then, a soldier could carry it with him or they could be shipped easily to the next unit.

SI: Did you ever get into the punch card system?

WU: Into what?

SI: Where they were translating all this information you are talking about into punch cards, to help organize units better.

WU: They did have punch cards and we used the--they're not like the punch cards you have now--but they were the big cards, like this, with holes around the side and you had to sort them with needles and, you know, you put the needles in and drop out the cards of men who could speak German or men who could do something else special, and that was a sorting [method]. Hand sorting is what it was, no machine sorting in those days, although there was a Hollerith Machine, but that wasn't in the service. The Hollerith Machine was just introduced about that time and I saw one in operation when I was at Ohio State University, with what? cards used were, like, IBM cards, with the punches in the cards, and run through the machine, sorted out by fingers, but that was the only time I saw a machine sorting device in the Army.

SI: Would you use the hand sorting at Fort Knox or later?

WU: Later on, I got into hand sorting. I think we had it down there at--well, we had it, no, you're right, I had it at Fort Knox. I remember that, early in the game, yes, early in my service, they had these big cards with needle sorting, you could use the needles, yes. … If we got a call, you know, someone called the training unit, some units, somewhere else, would call for men … who were trained as tank drivers or as gunners, or something like that, you could sort them out with the needle sorting and find the ones you needed to ship out to fill this order.

SI: I know that they were always introducing new things, like this machine you described at Ohio State, to organize personnel. Do you remember any other innovations while you were there?

WU: Oh, I'm trying to think. No, we had programs and tests and measures and interviewing, and they had computers, not like the computers you have. … It was for use for statistical work, statistical analysis.

SI: Okay, with the crank?

WU: That's right, yes, all right, you know. [laughter]

SI: What would you use those for?

WU: … Well, we were just learning, is what we were doing. We weren't actually using them. We were learning how to use them and I think they used them for analyzing numbers of troops for this or that or the other thing. The people who make these machines--this is an aside, maybe you won't want it--but the people who make these machines were primarily interested in the compilation of statistics, any kind of statistics, and they used these machines in compiling statistics and there's nothing wrong with that, of course, but it had very little to do with the personnel work in the service, yes. Well, I had six months at Ohio State, a rather intense training there, forty hours a week of classes and lots of readings. It wasn't an easy program at all. It was very difficult.

SI: Were all the classes focused on personnel management and psychology?

WU: Yes; well, in my program. They had other programs in the Army Specialized Training Program. They had language … programs and something else, too. I can't remember what the other one was, but my program was all concerned with personnel work, as I said, tests and measurements, interviewing, statistics; … any rate, as I said, about forty hours a week of classes for six months and it was quite an intensive program.

SI: Did men wash out of the program?

WU: No. Well, I don't think so. As far as I know, everybody went through it. They had gone through a very rigid selection process before you were sent there and I had applied and … it was more than a year after I applied before they set up the program and put us in it. So, it was a long wait and a long preparation for that program.

SI: Were you disappointed when it ended?

WU: Disappointed?

SI: Were you disappointed when the program was closed down?

WU: Oh, well, they had it set up as a six-month program.

SI: Okay, you completed the program.

WU: Yes, oh, yes, and, after six months, they shipped you out to, as I said, they shipped me down to Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and I was there in Jackson for, oh, I guess we were there through the winter, about eight months or eight or nine months, then, shipped over to Camp Campbell in Kentucky.

SI: Having grown up in the Trenton-Philadelphia area, in the Northeast, what did you think of Kentucky and the South?

WU: Well, I don't know. You know, you don't see as much of this as you think you do when you're in the Army, but it was quite different from the Northeast and I was interested in it and what little I saw was quite interesting. We didn't get much contact with a lot of people. You know, you're stationed in a camp and the only time you see any people from outside is when you go into town and that's only once in a great while. So, we don't have a lot of contact with people in the area.

SI: What was interesting that you saw?

WU: Well, … a lot of them were poor farms, is what they were. I wasn't used to [that]. In the Northeast, the farmers I knew were fairly prosperous, but, in that area, they were not nearly as prosperous, at least in my area where I was. They were tobacco farmers and some just plain dirt farmers, who, well, they made a living, but that's about it. I didn't get into the horse country.

SI: How did the civilians treat the military?

WU: Oh, they were fine. Oh, yes, we were well treated, oh, yes. You stopped in a train station, there was always coffee and doughnuts for the soldiers. As long as you were in uniform, they thought [well of you]. They treated us very well, oh, yes. We were fighting a war and they were ready to help us out. The war was not overly popular, but, then, it wasn't so unpopular as it is these days, as the Iraq War, for example. We know that's unpopular, but the European War was not an unpopular war. … It was a serious threat.

SI: Did you want to go overseas? Was that something you were looking forward to?

WU: Did I want to go? No, I wasn't particularly interested in going overseas, because what I knew about overseas service wasn't much different from service right here in this country, unless you got into combat. … After service, well, I got discharged in January '46 and, … well, there weren't a lot of jobs around then, either, but I got a job at the University of Pennsylvania, the School of Education Library, where I worked for about eighteen months or so, twenty months, then, went to the Newark Public Library and stayed in the Newark Public Library until I retired, thirty-one years altogether in Newark.

SI: To go back to World War II, what do you remember about going overseas, the trip overseas?

WU: Well, we had to take a train ride all the way across the Continent to a camp in California, Camp Stoneman, on the Sacramento River, two weeks there, in order to get inoculations for three different diseases, and I can't remember the third one, but typhus and plague and something else. I can't remember the third one, but, after you got the shots, they put us on a ferry boat from the river and took us down into the bay, San Francisco Bay, transferred to a transport and out we sailed through the Golden Gate, twenty-three days from San Francisco to Manila, and it was a small ship, fourteen hundred of us jammed in the cabins and a very warm, calm trip. The ocean was quite calm all the way. In Manila, well, they put us in a replacement depot south of Manila for a while, until they decided which unit to send us to. I guess that was about a week or so there, and then, went into a unit in Manila and served there almost eight months, until I got a chance to get a ship back.

SI: What did you see in the Philippines? What was Manila like, for example?

WU: Well, Manila had been very badly bombed. Next to Warsaw, I guess Manila was the most heavily bombed city in the Second World War and a lot of destruction of government buildings--Manila was the capital and a lot of government buildings--and they were badly destroyed, very badly destroyed, and downtown Manila was a shambles, really. Buildings were lying on their side and, plus, a lot of rubble and I think they must have taken a long time to rebuild that community, but their residential parts of Manila were not badly damaged. I remember walking around the city, when I had any time off, and a lot of residential areas that were still in good shape, quite good shape, and the President's home, which was called Malacanang Palace, was in good shape, but, of course, the President wasn't there when I was there. It was open to the public. That was in good shape, good condition, and the building I worked in had been a teacher's college building and it was partly damaged, but still usable, quite a lot of it was usable. Across the street was the Manila City Hall, was a very big building that MacArthur used for his headquarters. That was only a small, small part damaged, small damage there.

SI: When you were in the States, you had been working with armored units. Were you still working with armored units?

WU: Oh, no. There was no armor or very little armor in the Philippines. It's no place for tanks, too much--well, the terrain is not suitable for tanks. So, I was working in a personnel office attached to MacArthur's headquarters.

SI: You were just processing infantrymen and other specialties.

WU: Yes, mostly officers, officer personnel, but some enlisted personnel, too.

SI: Were these replacements going up to the front?

WU: Well, they were still fighting in Northern Luzon and there was fighting in the south islands, like Mindoro, I think, but most of it was a build-up for an invasion of Japan. At that time, they were fighting in Saipan and Okinawa and getting ready to invade Japan's main island and they felt they needed a large army, … a lot of troops, to do that invasion, and so, this work was in connection with that.

SI: How many hours a day would you work on personnel?

WU: Oh, eight hours a day, I guess, something like that. We did live in a plywood barracks, built on stilts, because, when it rained, the water would be about a foot deep around the area and the barracks was set up on the stilts and their walkways were up on stilts, so [that] we didn't have to walk in a foot of water, but, during the dry spell, of course, it was [hot], land was dry, no water at all, but it was a hot place. Manila is hot and humid. … Well, we had, [the] building where I worked, had large windows and they had corrugated iron shutters on the windows, to keep out the sun. They were put out as awnings and, when the storms came, you could drop them down as a "close the windows" sort of thing.

SI: How many men were in the unit that worked there?

WU: Well, let's see, there must have been fifty or sixty of us and the building, as I said, had been a teacher's college, so, it was a pretty good-sized building, classrooms and an auditorium, that sort of thing. So, there was plenty of room and they used the auditorium to show films, try to entertain us, and used to go over to the movies at night, in the auditorium.

SI: Your unit was just handling records. They were not dealing with the men for the records, like interviewing them.

WU: No, not in Manila, no.

SI: Had you done that in the States?

WU: Oh, yes.

SI: Okay, you had interviewed men.

WU: Oh, yes.

SI: What would be the focus of your interviews?

WU: Well, find out what they knew and where they came from, you know, and what experience they had had in civilian life. Any experience … might be useful in military life. If you could pound a typewriter in civilian life, you could do it in the Army. So, these were important [things], to find out what their skills were.

SI: Were you able to gauge how well the Army matched up their skills with what they did?

WU: Well, I don't know how well I could gauge it, but I know there are a lot of people from civilian life whose skills were not useful in the Army at all. So, they simply had to put them wherever they could use them or need them. I know there were a number of lawyers, for example, or law students. They had no use for them in the service, or very little. So, they ended up in some other kind of a unit or some kind of work, and I think that applied to some others, too.

SI: I know, in the military, they were very concerned about weeding out gay and lesbian soldiers. Were you involved in any of that?

WU: No, I wasn't involved in that. … We had some problems with retarded people. Draft boards had to fill a quota. In order to fill the quota, they sent in whatever they had and, sometimes, they were men so badly retarded that they couldn't read or write … and they couldn't be taught. So, we had to weed them out and send them home. That's the only ones I got involved in. As far as gay people, no, I heard about some cases, but I didn't get involved in them.

SI: Would you administer literacy tests to these men?

WU: Oh, yes, and we even set up a school to try to teach some of them, try to teach them to read and write. Some of them couldn't learn at all, no learning skills at all.

SI: Did you see any cases where people were trying to get out of the military?

WU: I don't remember any particular case that I saw. I know I heard about cases and I know some men would try things. Malingering was not … something that I saw much of. When I was at Fort Knox, I got a bad reaction to yellow fever vaccine and developed a liver problem and jaundice, of course, and they didn't know how to treat it. They didn't know what to do for it except to put you in the hospital, give you bed rest and a bland diet. Well, when I was there, some of the men, not many of them, a couple of them I knew, tried to extend their stay in the hospital and I suppose that's a form of malingering. … Came time for a test, they'd eat a lot of chocolate and that would upset their liver function and they'd have to stay on for another week or something like that, but that's the only case I saw of malingering.

SI: You mentioned, in Manila, that they would show movies for you. Were there other forms of entertainment for the troops?

WU: In Manila?

SI: In Manila or the States.

WU: Well, in the States, … let's see, what was there? similar sports. We had sports activities and movies. That's all I can remember in the way of troop entertainment. Most of that entertainment that you hear about, … show people, they were overseas. They weren't much in the States.

RR: What kind of movies did they show? Do you remember?

WU: … What kind of what? What kind of movies? Oh, the usual movies from Hollywood; I remember seeing … *Oklahoma.* I think I saw *Oklahoma* and things like that, regular Hollywood movies, and, of course, they used films for training, too, used to be … some training films. There weren't many of them, but there were some. [Editor's Note: The film version of the 1943 stage musical *Oklahoma* was not released until 1955. It is possible that Mr. Urban heard the very popular 1943 release of the cast album.]

PI: When you would go out and experience these forms of entertainment, did you usually go with people from your unit?

WU: Yes, I had friends--oh, you mean in the Army?

PI: Yes.

WU: Oh, I had friends and we'd go into town. Sometimes, we'd go to a concert in Louisville. I remember going to Louisville for concerts, or going to restaurants … and night clubs, something like that.

PI: Was there much mingling with other units, other groups or branches?

WU: Most of my recreation time was spent with men in my own unit. … We didn't get acquainted with people in other units, no.

SI: You got married while you were in the service, correct?

WU: Yes.

SI: How did that come about?

WU: Well, I met my wife in library school and we became engaged and, after I'd been in the service a year or so, I asked her to marry me. So, we got married in 1942 and had a short honeymoon. Then, I went back to Fort Knox. She was a librarian, working in the Lehigh University Library.

SI: Was it difficult to set up a wedding during wartime?

WU: Oh, it wasn't much of a wedding. We had a very, very small reception, service in the church. My father-in-law was a Presbyterian minister and he married us in church, in the church right there in Drexel Hill--Drexel Hill, they were living, yes--and then, a small reception for the family, that's all.

SI: Was it difficult to get leave to do this?

WU: Well, I'd had a leave coming about that time. That's why I asked her to marry me about that time, [laughter] because I knew I had a leave or a furlough.

SI: Was your wife able to come out to Fort Knox and follow you around the country?

WU: … She came out to Louisville twice to meet me and stay at a hotel in Louisville, and then, when I was in Columbus, Ohio, she came out there and stayed for a week and brought her work with her and went into the university library and … did her work in there. After that, she didn't come anymore, because I was at places where … there was no place to come. Fort Jackson, well, I was only there six or eight months, I guess, and then, Camp Campbell, there was no place for anybody to come and stay.

SI: When you were in Manila, were you able to keep up good contact with your family and your wife?

WU: By mail, yes. At that time, … you wrote a letter on a form that they gave you and they microfilmed it. They shipped it back to the United States and re-printed it and sent it on to your

family, … and the same, opposite, the other way, too, but that was the only way we could communicate, no telephones. [Editor's Note: Victory mail or V-mail used a system of microfilming letter forms to conserve cargo space on ships carrying war materiel.]

SI: Being overseas, being away from your family and your wife for so long, did your morale suffer? Were you always in high spirits?

WU: Oh, I wasn't always very happy, if that's what you mean. None of us were, but I don't think I was terribly unhappy, either.

SI: In your offices in Manila, did you use any native help?

WU: No, no. The natives, well, they may have done some maintenance work in the building, let's put it that way. That's the only thing they did. They weren't part of the military and I don't know what they did for themselves. They did service the military in some ways by providing local transport, that kind of thing, but that's all.

SI: Did you have much interaction with the Filipinos?

WU: Not much, no. The women did … our laundry for us and the men did a little bit of transport work and that's about the only contact we had with them.

SI: Did you ever get to go outside of Manila, look around?

WU: Yes. … After V-J Day, I got a chance to go up to a rest camp in Northern Luzon, near Baguio, Camp John Hay, a camp that had been built at the time of the Spanish-American War by the Army for a rest area and I spent a week, ten days, a week I guess, up there, but we were still in a camp, not outside a camp much, because it was outside of Baguio and we didn't have any transport and we had to stick around there. After about a week, I got word that my number had come up for shipment home. So, I hitched a ride back to Manila and went to the depot, where they were processing us, and I got on a ship to San Francisco.

SI: I have heard that there was a lot of unrest among the men after the war ended over the point system and when they could go home. A lot of it was focused in Manila.

WU: Oh, well, no, I know there was some, that's true, but I think most of us realized that they were doing the best they could to ship us all home and it was a problem of shipping very large numbers of troops on a limited amount of shipping; same way when I got back here to the States in [the] San Francisco area. We had to wait for a train to bring us back to Pennsylvania, where I was discharged, and I sat in that camp out there in California for almost two weeks before I could get a train. …

PI: When you were writing letters back home, did you happen to read some of them when you arrived back home?

WU: Oh, yes. We had censorship.

PI: Did you notice a lot of it?

WU: Well, I didn't know about it. I knew it was there, that's all, and, once in a while, something on a letter I got from home would be blacked out. I couldn't read it, but, … as I said, I didn't know any censors, I wasn't in on it, but I just knew it was there.

PI: You said you did not have that much contact with the native people.

WU: No, very little.

PI: The few contacts that you did have, it only went as far as their duties. You did not get a chance to know them.

WU: No, no. We were kept pretty busy and we were housed quite separately from the native population. So, there was very little contact. What contact there was was not always favorable to the troops. The local hooch, for example, was bad and a lot of boys ended up in the hospital with temporary blindness and that sort of thing. So, what they did was to round up all the beer they could find in the South Pacific and issue a ration of beer to each troop, each of us. We got a case of beer a month, to keep us away from the local hooch, but, once they got the local liquor straightened out, why, the beer rations stopped.

SI: What did you think of your officers and did you have much contact with officers?

WU: Yes, I had quite a bit of contact with officers. Most of the ones I knew … had been in civil life before the service and had gone in as Reserve officers or specially … trained at the time. They weren't--what are they called?--regular Army. They were not regular Army and they were very much like me, college graduates. Some of them were lawyers and they had to take work wherever it was assigned to them, because the Army didn't need all those lawyers, and they were very much like the rest of us, only in a better position.

SI: Had you ever considered applying for Officer Candidate School?

WU: I tried, but my eyesight wasn't good enough to qualify for officer training school, no. They turned me down.

SI: I think one thing we skipped over was Pearl Harbor, where you were.

WU: I was at Fort Knox at the time and sitting in the barracks, Sunday afternoon. Somebody came in and said they just bombed Pearl Harbor and I guess that set off a session of gloom. I mean, nobody wanted that, but, after that, we just went on with our training and it didn't affect us directly. Indirectly, it did, of course, but not directly. [Editor's Note: The United States and Japan held peace talks in Washington, DC, from November 20, 1941, to the day of the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7, 1941.]

SI: Was that before you had been put into personnel?

WU: No, I was in personnel at that time, yes.

SI: They did not start sending you out on guard duty or things like that.

WU: No, no, it was still the same procedure. I think they set up special guard duties at camps in California and Oregon, and so on, along the coastline, but, interior, I don't think it made much difference.

PI: Do you remember where you were August 6, 1945, when they dropped the bomb on Hiroshima? [Editor's Note: Hiroshima was the target of the first atomic raid on August 6, 1945. Nagasaki was attacked on August 9, 1945.]

WU: Yes, I was in Manila.

PI: You were in Manila.

WU: Yes. When they dropped the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, yes, I was in Manila and, of course, that was the end of the war for us and it was shortly after that that Japanese emissaries came to Manila to meet MacArthur for an armistice. … We stood in the window of our building and could see them across the street when they arrived and General [Charles A.] Willoughby, [Chief of Intelligence], came out to greet them and he was about to shake hands when he changed his mind and pulled his hand back. He's going to shake hands with these Japanese? no, but that's all I saw of it. He took them into MacArthur's headquarters and arranged their armistice, yes.

SI: How did things change after V-J Day? Did your job change much?

WU: No, no, it was about the same, though we had to organize a unit, what they called a recovered personnel unit, to go into Japan and recover American prisoners and, also, you know, we didn't have any Japanese-[Americans] in the Army in the Pacific. They were over in Europe, but there was a Japanese unit of interpreters and translators and they were all enlisted men and their commanding officer's afraid that they would lose face if they went to Japan as enlisted men and he wanted to make them officers. Well, the military said, "No, … maybe you could make them warrant officers, if you get the applications in within twenty-four hours." … So, I and one other fellow sat in the office most of the night making out those applications for that and they got it. We got them in there. ... These were Japanese fellows … mostly from Hawaii and they needed them for translation and interpretation.

SI: What else was involved in assembling this unit that would recover the POWs?

WU: … Oh, well, they were just taught how to interview them and find out who they were and, you know, see if they could find any records for them. Many of the POWs had no records and they had to identify the men and make sure they were who they were, if they could, and get some kind of a record, … some paper record, so [that] they could give orders and ship them back

home. … I didn't go with them, so, I don't know too much about it. I knew a couple of fellows who went.

SI: Did they offer you the position?

WU: No. I was too near going home and I guess my rank was a little high, too. They wanted privates and corporals and like that. I was a sergeant.

SI: What about V-J Day? Was there any kind of celebration?

WU: Not where I was, no. No, it's just another day. I'm sure there was here in the States, but not in the Philippines. They were just glad it was over.

PI: You said that you worked across the street from General MacArthur. Did you ever get to actually meet him or see him?

WU: No, no. … He had all his own personnel in that city hall building and there were a lot of them. Of course, they were building up the troops and he had, oh, high grade officers in with him and a lot of enlisted personnel to do all the paperwork, but I didn't get to see [that]. I hardly even saw him.

SI: What did you think of MacArthur?

WU: Oh, General MacArthur was a great strategist. His campaigns were remarkable, but he was not a person who was well-liked by his troops. He kept saying that he would get you home this time or that time and it kept going on and on. The troops got very unhappy with him, because they weren't being shipped home, but he was a great strategist, there's no doubt about it. … When he got into Japan, well, that's a matter of opinion, a lot of it is opinion, … he had an awful lot of power and I think, in the end, it went to his head and President Truman finally fired him, because he was trying to go over everybody's head, but that's all I could say about him. [Editor's Note: President Harry S. Truman relieved General Douglas MacArthur from command on April 11, 1951, due to his public comments which threatened to escalate the Korean War into a larger war with China.]

SI: Is there anything else you would like to say about the war before we move on?

WU: No, I don't have anything else, no.

SI: Could we talk a little bit about your career at Newark?

WU: Well, all right. I went to Newark in 1949, as a beginning librarian, actually, but soon promoted to the next grade, and I served in Newark for thirty-one years before I retired. I was in the reference department and, about 1951, we remodeled the main building and changed the interior quite a bit and divided it up into departments and divisions and I became in charge of the science-technology division and had that division for several years, until the chief reference librarian left. He went to go to Phoenix, Arizona, and I became chief reference librarian, had

that job for several years, until, oh, [I do not know] how many years I had that job, at least ten years, anyway. … Then, the director retired and I became assistant director, and then, the next director retired and I became director. Oh, about three years I was director before I retired and Newark had a very fine collection of its books and materials. As you probably know, it's the largest public library in the state and I enjoyed working there because of the collections. You had a collection of periodicals that, well, it dated back to [the] early nineteenth century, the beginning of periodical publication, files and files and files of periodicals, which I tried to turn some of them into microfilm to save space. It got so voluminous, we couldn't store them all and I turned a lot of them into microfilm. Also, it was a US Documents depository and, if you've ever handled them, you may know that they eat up space at a terrific, great rate [laughter] and that was another problem, try to find storage space for them. Well, I enjoyed reference work and I enjoyed being head of the reference department. … I had good people to work with and I think the department functioned very well, okay.

SI: Where were you living at the time? Were you living in Newark or outside?

WU: I lived … out in the suburbs for a little while. Then, I became chief reference librarian and the director said it'd be a good idea if I moved into the city. So, I moved in the city, on Mount Prospect Avenue, an apartment house up at 583 Mount Prospect. It was an old building with good-sized apartments. … We had a two-bedroom apartment and they were pretty good-sized rooms and it was a very comfortable place until the riots and, after the riots, the neighborhood changed and the building changed and things were not so comfortable. When were the riots, in '69, yes? [Editor's Note: The Newark riots lasted from July 12 to July 17, 1967. They began after the police arrested an African-American cab driver and rumors spread that he had been killed in custody. The riots resulted in over two dozen deaths, over seven hundred injuries, fifteen hundred arrests and property damage exceeding ten million dollars.]

RR: How did you get your position at the Newark Public Library, because, before then, you were working at UPenn, correct?

WU: … Well, I had worked in the Brooklyn Library for two years and, when I got out of the service, I worked in the University of Pennsylvania library for a year-and-a-half. So, I think I was pretty well acquainted with libraries by the time I got to Newark. I'm not sure I answered your question, but I can't quite understand what you're asking.

RR: Why did you go to Newark Public Library?

WU: Why did I go to a public library? Well, I thought I'd like to work with the public more than just college students and, yes, Pennsylvania was just working with the students, which is quite all right, but I thought I'd like to work with the general public and it was more satisfactory for me.

SI: Did you answer an ad or did you know somebody?

WU: No, no, I was looking for another job, is what I was doing, and a counselor at the Drexel Library School said that Newark Public Library was looking for librarians. So, I applied there

and they … needed librarians there, so, I got a job there, without much trouble, except that I had to take Civil Service exams when I got there, but I managed to pass that all right and get the job.

SI: In working with the public at Newark, what kind of reference problems would you deal with?

WU: All kinds.

SI: Was it mostly students?

WU: Well, there were a lot of students, that's true, but we had to work with the business and industry, because we had material they needed. We had patents, we had a patent depository, we had US Documents and we had science and technology journals and we had a lot of calls from industry and business, as well as the general public, yes. … Newark was very much an industrial city at that time, chemical industries and there was a thread mill and leather factories and, well, almost all kinds of business and there was a lot of industry in the area around Newark. … Some of the industries had their own librarians and they would come to the public library to get material that they needed.

SI: How many people did you have working under you when you were chief of reference?

WU: … When I was chief reference librarian, I had about thirty people, including pages and bookshelvers, and so on; … well, eighteen or twenty librarians under me, yes.

SI: Would any of them specialize?

WU: Well, some of them worked in science and technology or some worked in [the] social science collection, then, some served in the fiction library, literature, yes, and I don't recall anybody in art. They had a separate art department in the Newark Library, so that we covered the other fields of knowledge, except for art and music.

SI: Can you tell us about the riots, that period?

WU: … Well, we had to close the library. … I don't remember how long, it must have been about ten days, two weeks, something like that. We had to close the library because there was no transportation for people to get from home to work. The busses had stopped running. So, we had no way to get the personnel in to service the libraries, so, we had to close them, branches and the main library. … I think, in my neighborhood, there was plenty of National Guard patrols, but there was no actual firing or anything like that in my neighborhood, but they were riding around all the time in their little vehicles and it was not very comfortable. We stayed indoors almost all the time and … we never went downtown during the riots. Nobody did. I can't think of other things that caused any trouble. We couldn't get out. Well, we did get out to get food at the market, but that's about the only time we got out in that period, that two-week or three-week period. We heard about, well, firing and that sort of thing, guns going off downtown and in the other parts of the city, but we didn't have anybody actually rioting in my neighborhood. After the riots, well, things changed quite a lot. The whole city changed, population changed and

neighborhoods changed and it was quite different from before the riots and, well, we were all right, okay, but we had trouble with evening service at the libraries. … People wouldn't come out in the evenings. So, we had to close them down at night. Nobody would come out, nobody would come to the library. They wouldn't venture out after dark. … I think that went on a long time after the riots. … Well, people didn't want to come to the library, the librarians didn't want to have to go home after nine o'clock at night, or something like that, and it was quite a difficult period, try to keep the libraries functioning.

SI: Were there any other ways that the libraries were affected, in terms of now having to service new populations?

WU: Well, we maintained the service after the riots. During the riots, we had to quit, but, after the riots, we maintained service. All our neighborhood branches, as well as the main library, the hours were a little limited, as I said, because … [we] had to cut down on nighttime hours, but, otherwise, we kept service going.

SI: I know, today in libraries, there is a lot of emphasis on public outreach and public programs. Did they have any of that when you were in the library?

WU: Oh, yes, yes, we had programs in the main library, especially programs for children and young people, related to reading, of course, and they had adult programs in the main library. I don't know if you know the Newark Library or not, but there's an auditorium up on the fourth floor and we used that for adult programs and, sometimes, young people's programs and the branches, … well, they had children's programs in the branches, that was all, and, yes, that's about it.

SI: Did the libraries do anything after the riots to try and address certain issues? I know at other institutions, like Rutgers, they would try to have forums or programs to try and get to the root issues.

WU: No. Well, the library had continuing programs and they did have--well, I don't know if there's anything specifically related to that--but they had the exhibits and programs on various ethnic groups, the black group and the Hispanic group and, sometimes, … people from European origin, to try to, well, try to interest them in their own culture and … the use of the library.

RR: Your wife also worked at the library.

WU: Yes, she worked. She was in charge of the young adult room for several years and I think she actually got involved in counseling young people there in the library. Then, she retired about ten years before I did and, oh, I think they had to give up the young adult room. There's another thing. After the riots, the young people wouldn't come out in the evenings to the programs they had for them and wouldn't come to the libraries, because I guess their families said it wasn't safe for them to come out at night. So, they had to give up those young adult programs and, finally, had to give up the young adult room altogether, because young adults didn't come. After they got to college, they would come, but they went to the adult area. So, the young adult room just went out of operation.

SI: You were the director in the late 1970s.

WU: Yes. About three years, I was director, not very long. I had been assistant director for about five years before that.

SI: Were there either major problems that you faced as assistant director and director or major initiatives that you tried to get accomplished in that time period?

WU: Oh, yes. Well, the major problem was budget cuts. We had to reduce library hours, because our wages were cut and we couldn't hire enough personnel to cover the library hours. We had to reduce the hours of opening, which is something we didn't want to do. I felt that we should add more hours, rather than reducing them, but we didn't have the money. The city was short of funds, like they always are, and we had a grant from the State and used that to help maintain some hours, but that's all we had.

SI: Was the library able to grow much during your time after the riots?

WU: Be able to what?

SI: Grow?

WU: Oh, well, yes, it did grow. We opened two small branches, storefronts in rented quarters where there had been no branch service before, and, otherwise, we had no way to grow. We still maintained a book-mobile service to some housing areas, and I guess they still do. I don't know; all right?

SI: Is there anything else you want to say about your career or your life?

WU: No, I think not. [laughter] I think you've asked me a lot of questions and I think you've gotten about all I can remember.

SI: I just have one more question. Did you ever use the GI Bill, any aspect of the GI Bill?

WU: No, I didn't, no. I know all about it, but I didn't use it, no.

PI: Did you happen to stay in touch with any of the members of your unit after the war?

WU: No, no. It was not a cohesive unit, like a regiment or a battalion. It was just a headquarters unit and they weren't tied together by regimental loyalty or anything of that sort. So, I didn't make any contact with them and, of course, they came from all over, so, I didn't [live near them].

PI: Having lived through six wars, do have any like special views about either Korea or Vietnam, or maybe the War in Iraq?

WU: Well, I do, but I don't know whether I want to say them or not. [laughter] I think some of the wars were very unnecessary, let me put it that way. I thought the European War in which I fought was necessary. I don't think we could stay out of that, but I don't think we needed Vietnam. I think we could have stayed out of that and, certainly, we could have stayed out of Iraq and I think we might have been a lot better off if we had, but that's about all I can say about it.

PI: How do you think these wars relate to World War II? Having been through World War II and, now, hearing and reading about the other wars, how would you relate those to your experience in World War II?

WU: Well, I don't think these other wars made a lot of difference in my life. Of course, World War II did. It made all kinds of difference, but the other wars didn't affect me directly. I was not involved, my living conditions were not changed by the wars and as World War II had been. … So, I had no problem with them, except that I think they were a lot. Some of them were a terrible waste. …

RR: How good were the libraries' relations with the Newark universities, like Rutgers University, and to the museum?

WU: Oh, there's only less than a hundred at that time. I think it was only about eighty or eighty-five students in my class and I don't know how long that lasted, but it was a very small group when I was there.

SI: The lawnmower may have garbled what Rabeya said; she was asking, did the Newark Public Library have a close relationship with Rutgers-Newark, NJIT or any of those universities?

WU: No, it did not. … I remember, NJIT [New Jersey Institute of Technology], some of us worked up there, part-time, … but, when it became--oh, it was NCE, that's what it was. I guess you don't remember.

SI: Newark College of Engineering.

WU: Yes, but, then, it became NJIT. They enlarged their library and hired a couple more librarians. …

SI: You worked there part-time.

WU: I did for a little while, worked there part-time, when I first went to Newark. NCE, I worked in the evenings for, oh, I guess a couple years.

SI: Doing reference work?

WU: Yes.

SI: You had studied history in college and the humanities. Was it difficult to go into the science and technology end of reference?

WU: Well, I had had some science and it wasn't too difficult. I mean, as far as reference work is concerned, you still have to use the standard indexes and abstract services to search for answers, and so, it wasn't very different from working in the humanities.

SI: Thank you very much.

WU: All right.

SI: We appreciate your time. Is there anything else you would like to say?

WU: No, I think I'm talked out.

SI: Thank you very much, we appreciate it.

WU: All right, you're welcome.

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

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 3/20/14
Reviewed by Joseph James Morley 3/30/14