Tara Kraenzlin…This is an interview with Catherine Ballantine on March 2, 1999 in New Brunswick New Jersey with Tara Kraenzlin and Michael Bino. Okay and I guess I would like to begin by asking you a few questions about your family. Now your parents ... were from?

Catherine Ballantine: Pennsylvania.

TK: Lancaster County, is that right?

CB: That’s right. My mother was from Lancaster and my father was from a small town, Georgetown, in Lancaster County.

TK: And what did they do there for a living or did they just grow up there?

CB: Actually, that’s where they were born and grew up. My father went to George school in Newton, Pennsylvania and then to Penn State and was a chemist. My mother went to Millersville, a Normal School at that time, now a university. She taught in a country school for two years before they were married. Then they lived in Auburn, New York where I was born … I had three older brothers and a younger sister and we moved to Ridgewood, New Jersey in 1929.

TK: And do you know how your parents came to meet?

CB: On a blind date. Mother was with two of her older sisters, who were out on a date. They met on a blind date on Memorial Day in 1912 and were married a year later, in October.

TK: And then they moved to New York?

CB: Yes, actually in-between, they were in Pennsylvania for awhile and then up to Auburn, New York and then to Ridgewood.

Michael Bino: What was the motivation for the move? Do you why they moved?

CB: Well, dad’s job.

MB: Did he follow his …

CB: His work … originally, he worked for a mining company. I'm not sure which one, a coal mining company … and then he was with a cordage company in Auburn. When he went to Ridgewood he was with what was then Barber Flax, later known as the Linen Thread Company. He worked as their chief chemist and during the war years he worked on special solutions … They were providing netting for keeping the submarines out of the harbors and so the coatings he was working on was to preserve the linen, to keep it from deteriorating.

MB: Did your mother work outside of the house?

CB: During the war, she did take a job with Wright Aeronautical Company working in their cafeteria and she also did volunteer work with the Red Cross during the war years.
TK: Growing up with four siblings, what do you remember about playing and what you did in your spare time?

CB: Well, of course, we used to play a lot of games, such as kick-the-can, hopscotch, jump rope, marbles. My brothers were older than I was and actually I guess we didn't play together too much. We used to spend our summers up at Owasco Lake in New York State and there, of course, we went swimming, fishing. My younger sister is five years younger than I am and for awhile I felt I was too old to play with her.

TK: And were there other kids your age in the neighborhood?

CB: Yes, we had quite a few children in the area and we lived just down the street from the school and some of them would come over to play.

TK: And how would you describe your time at elementary school … your years there? You went to elementary school in Ridgewood?

CB: Yes. I went to Kenilworth school, which is no longer there, and I had some wonderful teachers. One that I especially enjoyed in sixth grade I felt gave us a lot of experience in art and really kindled a great interest in the Middle Ages in me.

TK: Oh wow, already in sixth grade.

CB: Yes, then we went to junior high and Ridgewood High School where we had students from three other elementary schools. There was another junior high, but just the one high school. We had students coming from several other towns. They were bussed in from Paramus, from Fairlawn, from Glen Rock they generally walked, and we had, a couple that came down by train from Allendale and Ramsey.

TK: So all of the sudden you, your world was bigger and you had a lot more people around from all these different schools.

CB: Yes, definitely. We had a class in high school of 313 and, of course, in elementary school we had probably maybe twenty-five or so.

TK: So by middle school you were already seeing a lot of these kids from neighboring towns and then by high school it came together again?

CB: No, they were just in high school from other towns. In junior high they came from another elementary school.

MB: Did you always feel that you were bound for college, that you would always make a natural progression from high school to college …

CB: I don’t know if I really thought about it when I was younger, but as I got older my grades were such that I felt that I should continue and, of course, my brothers went to college and my
sister, also.

TK: Which, which subjects caught your interest in high school?

CB: Well, I always liked math very much and then languages. I had studied Latin in junior high and high school. We had a wonderful German teacher in high school and in third year we had a very small class because of the war, as people weren't taking the course, but she would take us into New York and we would go to operas and to German restaurants, and so that was a very interesting course. But I have always enjoyed math and science, I think it came naturally through my father because he did consulting work in chemistry and had a laboratory in the house so I saw experiments going on.

TK: Were you in any clubs in high school?

CB: In high school, I belonged to the German club and I was on costuming and props of different plays.

TK: Which plays did you do?

CB: The play, I don’t remember the name of it anymore, and also golf club. A group of us started bowling and wanted the school to sponsor a club but they thought that the bowling alley wasn't the right place for the girls so they wouldn't back up a bowling club for the girls. But we went down and bowled once a week anyway, a group of us.

TK: This was a great way to, this was how you would meet your friends through secret clubs …

CB: We also had a YMCA girls club, which met regularly, and had special programs and dances where the girls would ask the boys to the girl’s club dances.

TK: Since you did mention that you were interested in or involved in the German club, do you recall following the developments in Europe towards the later years in high school as things were starting to develop in Europe? Did you hear much about that or did you notice it?

CB: Not so much, except that during junior and senior high school, after the war had started there was an English woman who came over and was looking for people to do knitting. We started a group of girls, who met regularly and knitted for the British. They supplied the yarns and we knit for their army and their air corps. We did balaclavas, scarves, mittens and vests and through them I got pen pals. I wrote to one man who was in the navy, starting in high school. I wrote to him for several years and I also wrote to a man who was in the British tank corps, for about a year and then I stopped hearing from him. I don’t know really what happened, whether it was just a lack of interest, or if something happened in the service.

TK: So through this British woman you learned more about volunteering and things like that?

CB: Yes, really, I guess that’s where my volunteerism started.
TK: And, when you were in high school, did your parents bring up the idea of going to college, or a counselor suggests it to you? In your senior year, how did it come that you applied to NJC?

CB: Well, actually, I had two older brothers who were in college at the same time. The one brother was out at Penn State, the other brother was at Bergen Community College, so the finances were limited. I got a state scholarship, and then I had a scholarship from the College Club in Ridgewood, and also a scholarship through Douglass.

TK: Right. Okay, so it was pretty obvious where you would go based on scholarships...

CB: Because of the financial aid

TK: Had you come to visit the campus beforehand?

CB: Yes, a couple of times. We would come down on special visiting days.

TK: And what did you think? Were you impressed by the campus? Did you go to any of the classes?

CB: No, we didn’t go to any of the classes. It was usually, I think, on a Saturday or Sunday that they had that. We had a tour of the campus and had a chance to talk to some of the women who had graduated already.

TK: But this convinced you that this would be a good decision?

CB: Yes.

TK: And what did you do the summer prior, the summer between high school and college, did you spend that working or ...

CB: Before college we always went up to Owasco Lake for the summer. We would go as soon as school was out and we wouldn’t come back until Labor Day. But then during college after the first year, we had to do a project, for Home Ec[onomics] for six weeks. Then after that, I worked in an industrial cafeteria. Between sophomore and junior year I worked at DuPont Explosives in Pompton Lakes. I was in the explosive rivet department, and they were using those for making airplanes. Then between junior and senior year, again we had to do a project for our course, and I worked as a chief dietitian cook at a Girl Scout camp up in Binghamton, New York. That was a very interesting experience because the camp director believed in a very rugged camp, so there was no electricity. Actually, we lived in tents and no hot water as far as washing. In the kitchen itself, they had a cookstove from the First World War and it was stoked by coal. Originally, or ordinarily, they would have an adult male who would be the handy man around camp. But that year because of service they weren’t available, so they started out with an eighteen year old young man. He didn’t like getting up in the morning to do his jobs, so they fired him and they had two fourteen year olds who served as our handymen. Each week they went into Binghamton to pick up the food supply for the week. We had an icebox, and they would come in with the large cake of ice and frozen fish and whatever meats were available. The office actually was the
one that did the purchasing. So the meats were kind of in short supply and they would start out with everything iced and cold at the beginning of the week but by the end of the week the fish was defrosted [laughter] and ready to serve. And they would deliver the milk in twenty or thirty gallon cans, and that came every other day and we ...

TK: So you were responsible for planning out the meals for everyone?

CB: Yes, and cooking. I had an assistant that helped with that. Then the girls themselves washed up their dishes afterwards, and sometimes they would help with special food preparation. If it were a vegetable, for instance, potato peeling and things like that. And then we had a couple of days off, or evenings off, during the week when they would be cooking out at their individual sites. Very often they would ask us to go on hayrides or something with them.

TK: Had you been a Girl Scout growing up?

CB: For a short time, not for very long. It was very interesting.

TK: But you enjoyed your summer there, it was very hectic?

CB: Yes.

MB: At the point, when you were working at this camp, had you decided that you were a Home Ec[onomics] major, or ...

CB: Right from the start.

MB: Right from the start.

CB: I was majoring in foods and nutrition. Yes.

MB: And what made you decide to go into that?

CB: Actually, I had been interested in becoming a test kitchen worker. I guess, again, it was my interest in science. Actually, I had been very much overweight as a young teenager and then as I lost weight as a senior in high school, I guess, I became interested more in nutrition and kind of leaned in that direction.

TK: Interesting to see how everything all worked and fit together.

CB: Yes.

TK: Okay. So you came to NJC and what was it like when you first ... where did you live?

CB: We lived on Gibbons Campus the first two years, and then I was on what was Douglass ...

TK: Were you assigned to a random roommate or was it someone you knew from high school?
CB: I had a roommate that I knew the first year, then the ensuing years we used to have lotteries as to who was going to have first choice of houses, and so forth, and I was on Douglass Campus the last two years, which is now Corwin Campus.

TK: And what did you think of living away from home for the first time?

CB: I enjoyed it very much. We had a wonderful house. The one that I was in actually was ... we had the assistant campus director living downstairs. The girls were all very congenial and we had a great time together. Sometimes we would have supper, we would cook hotdogs in the fireplace on a Friday or Saturday night and, they always had special activities at the recreation area once a month. They would have a breakfast on campus or have a sing or something. At that time they called Douglass the singing college; they very often would get together for singing, that was one way of entertainment.

TK: I think Michael has some questions as to the different traditions they had at NJC at that time.

MB: Yes, I was curious in the different indoctrination rituals for the freshmen, what were those like?

CB: Well, we had what they called an Indian costume. We had to have a green headband with a green feather, and a green belt with a little pouch that we wore. We had to carry matches and the Redbook, which was our book telling what the rules of the college were. If a sophomore wanted matches we would have to give them matches. Then they had Campus Night when we would burn the costumes. Each year the costume was a different theme.

MB: So the costumes were a pleasant thing, or …

CB: No, actually, it really didn’t bother us. We just took it as a lot of fun.

TK: So what was the theme the year, for your first year for Campus Night?

CB: Oh, we had to have the Indian ...

TK: Indian costumes that was the theme, and then the next year … outer space Martians or something?

CB: And then the next year, yes, right, I think it was rabbits one year. [laughter]

TK: Oh, you lucked out then. Did you ever feel that there was an unfair looking down upon freshman or you just thought this was a normal rite of passage?

CB: I never felt looked down upon really. I just thought it was part of life and I enjoyed it.

TK: Some of our Rutgers College men tell terrible stories about the beanies; that they were quite
traumatized by it.

CB: Oh, really?

TK: I'm exaggerating.

CB: That was something that the girls were always anxious to get, the beanies. That was the way of showing that they belonged to somebody and then sophomore year I actually had my husband’s. At that point it wasn’t a beanie any longer, it was the white with the red Rutgers … I forget what they call that.

TK: The insignia or the pennant?

CB: Pardon?

TK: Or the pennant was it or …

CB: No, it was kind of a fedora type of hat.

TK: Did you attend chapel regularly?

CB: Yes, we had to go to chapel twice a week. On Tuesdays was a religious speaker and they had speakers from every denomination. They had rabbis and ministers, and lay people from the Catholic Church and then on Fridays it was a mixture. It might be some well-known speaker in some other area.

TK: More of a devotional or inspirational …

CB: And it was something I felt very worthwhile … and I think it’s a shame that they cut it out, really.

TK: So you enjoyed going to chapel.

CB: It gave you a good background and I think it gave everybody an insight of really how much the different religions had in common.

TK: It’s very progressive for the time that they would give you all these different speakers.

MB: How about some of the other ceremonies, Yule Log, perhaps, or Sacred Path?

CB: At Christmastime they always had the Yule Log ceremony and they did caroling. Then we went outside and caroled. Then they had the Christmas dinner and a Christmas dance after that. So that was always a night that we stayed up the whole night and then the students would go home the next morning. And Sacred Path ceremony, of course, was very special for the freshmen because after that they could go down that special path in front of College Hall, whereas, before that the freshman weren’t supposed to use that at all. Also then we could wear red; we weren’t
supposed to wear red freshman year up until Sacred Path.

TK: And so …

CB: Another thing in connection with the chapel, they always had a special speaker at the Dean’s house and when you got to be a senior she invited a few seniors each Tuesday and Friday and the speaker would be at the luncheon, so that was something to look forward to. Freshman year they had a Dean’s tea at the beginning of the year and then they also had a special reception over here at Rutgers in the old gym. That was a chance for the freshman girls and the freshman fellows at Rutgers to get together. That was a dance. They bussed us over and …

TK: Do you have fond memories of these dances?

CB: Yes, actually, that one in particular not as much, but later on we did have our own dances at Douglass. We had in addition to the Christmas dance, a junior, and a senior graduation dance and the girls, again, would ask their guests.

TK: So there was a lot of interaction between the campuses.

CB: Yes, quite a bit.

TK: As a Home Economics major, did you actually take any classes with the Rutgers College men?

CB: No.

TK: Any chemistry or anything?

CB: No. There was one girl in our class who majored in Ceramics and she came over to Rutgers and I think one or two others might have been studying Greek that they came over for. But other than that classes weren’t shared.

TK: Yeah, sometimes usually certain of the sciences or the languages would be the exception.

CB: Yes.

TK: And could you describe the department at the time, the department of Home Economics? How many women were involved in it?

CB: The professors?

TK: Or just the student body; was it a large major?

CB: Yes, it was very large. Very often some of them would change and go into another field before graduation. But it was one of the largest departments at that time and we had four, five professors, I believe. There was the head of the department, I think there were two professors
that taught clothing, and three in foods, and the practice house.

MB: What were some of the other options as far as majors are concerned? The other departments, what were they like?

CB: Well, the others, of course, would be fine arts or science. We had some chemistry majors, bacteriology majors, I guess, probably some that majored in zoology. Of course, in the Home Ec[onomics] department there was the foods and nutrition or the teacher training. It was split up that way.

TK: And you decided that you were more interested in nutrition than in becoming a teacher.

CB: Yes, I didn’t feel at that time that I wanted to teach, although during freshman year another student and I went down to the Jane Addams house. We volunteered to work there in the Neighborhood House. We taught cooking, and that was a strange experience too because …

TK: Where was that exactly?

CB: It was over near the college, I forget which street.

TK: Right off campus.

CB: Yes. The professor that was the liaison actually would decide what we were going to make. She would have the secretary in the office make copies of the recipe for us and we would go to the store on the way over to the Neighborhood House. We had twenty-five cents to buy the supplies for the day [laughs] so you can imagine what it was like. The girls were about eight or nine or ten and we would do some cooking, and then they had notebooks, and they would put the recipes in their notebook. That was the volunteer work I did at that point.

TK: So you got to both teach and do the nutrition emphasis, as well.

CB: Yes.

TK: Did you have any professors that stood out as being excellent professors at that time?

CB: Nobody more than another, but we had professors that we felt we enjoyed being with and felt at ease with.

TK: Did you become especially close with the other women in your major?

CB: Yes, actually I still am in contact with several from our group. We sat together in the dining hall. There were eight of us together and we’ve really kept up. Every five years when we have a reunion most of us, if we don’t get down, at least keep in touch at Christmastime or during the course of the year.

TK: And have they all ended up in different places?
CB: Yes. One of them is up in New York State, one’s out in Ohio, one’s out in Michigan. One of the girls died a couple of years after graduation. Another one is in another part of New Jersey, another one is in southern New Jersey.

TK: Did I read correctly that you were involved in the soccer team at Douglass?

CB: I played … actually we didn’t have the teams like they do now. …

TK: Club sports?

CB: Just on campus that we played soccer for a short time.

TK: And had you only started that in college or had you …

CB: No, that was in college. No, my husband was quite a soccer player here at Rutgers and in fact, he was captain of the team one year.

TK: And soccer was really taking a back seat to football at Rutgers in those days; isn’t that true?

CB: At that time, soccer wasn’t as popular in the States as it is …

TK: …as it is now. I guess I’ll ask you, again, when you were involved in the German department and you joined the German club, did you continue with your studies in German in college?

CB: I studied one year, freshman year. That was when I was in the German club here at school.

TK: And after that you just didn’t have time, or was it … why did you decide …

CB: Well, we had so many required courses that we had to take in Home Ec[onomics] that we had very few to choose from.

TK: Did you notice that the department there was small or you really didn’t have a chance to …

CB: The German department I believe was quite small.

TK: Now at the time that you came, in the fall of 1941, by the end of the semester the US is beginning to be involved in World War II. Do you remember where you were, or if you were on campus, on Pearl Harbor Day?

CB: Oh, I was on campus. If I remember correctly, I was in the house and we heard it on the radio.

TK: And do you remember thinking what this would mean for you and your fellow students?
CB: Actually, I thought more about my two uncles who were out in the Pacific at the time. I had two uncles that had gone to Annapolis. The one had been in Guam, and we found out that he got back to the States the day that Guam was taken. And the other one was in the Pacific on a ship, we didn’t know just where. They were my mother’s two younger brothers, and the one later became … a captain serving in French-Indochina, which of course then became Vietnam, at a time when they were having problems. If I remember right, he was so disturbed by the conditions there that he retired from the Navy as a Captain, the other one retired from the Navy as a Rear Admiral, Uncle Ken, the one who had been in Guam, had gone on to Harvard Business School and had been the bank president at Guam during his naval career. And my other uncle also got a masters after his Annapolis training at George Washington University.

MB: Were your brothers of age?

CB: My oldest brother was married at that point and he was in a company which felt that he was needed there. He was with Bakelite. My middle brother, after he completed Bergen Community College, was drafted into the army and was eventually shipped to Oran and then he was in the Anzio beachhead and Casino fighting. He was sent home eventually with battle fatigue. My younger brother, after he graduated from Penn State, on a speeded up course, in January of ’43. He was in the Navy, did some training up at Cornell, and then was down in Florida. He was an engineer aboard the Doyle, which served in D-Day, and also the invasion of southern France. Then later his ship was supposed to go to Japan, and, in fact, he did get as far as Japan, but at that time the bomb had been dropped so they weren’t involved in fighting at that point.

MB: What was the nature of communication between, say, your brothers, your uncles, and home because you had mention earlier that you were able to establish a pen-pal relationship with the British officers?

CB: Well, of course, all of our mail at that point was censored and very often we would get letters with parts cut out. We, of course, did write, but how much they got I don’t really know.

TK: Did you keep in touch with a lot of your friends at home that had gone into the service? Were you involved in that effort of keeping their spirits up by writing or something like that?

CB: No, actually, we didn’t do much corresponding, other than the individual people that we knew.

TK: What were the immediate changes that you saw on campus after the US began to be involved in the war?

CB: They started up what they called ‘war courses’ which were voluntary, we didn’t get any credit for those. The one I signed up for, Leadership in Recreation, actually I was the only freshman in the group. They were mostly junior and senior Physical Education majors. We did different trips to Fort Dix and to Kilmer through that and then also to the … We had had programs that we could go to in New York before the war. Then because of the gas situation they had to cut out the theater trips but they still would do local bussing back and forth to campus here where they would have a concert series. Then later on, as there were more and more
soldiers at Kilmer that became a problem. So we had to group whenever we went off-campus in the evening. We had to have three or four people walking together, they thought it was too dangerous otherwise. Of course, we had to have our food stamps that we turned in at the dining hall. Those were the main things that I think we were aware of.

TK: Did you start to notice a decrease in the number of men over on this side of town?

CB: Here at Rutgers, as there were fewer regular students, they had the ASTP program, so there were a lot of young men around.

TK: And you were involved in the USO and the dances and things like that?

CB: Yes.

TK: And what was that like?

CB: Well, they had USO dances here … on Albany Street. We would come down to dance or just talk to the soldiers and of course when we went to Dix, or Kilmer, this is what it was primarily. Actually, I had met my husband the beginning of sophomore year, and then he expected to be drafted. But he had injured himself high jumping and gotten an infected … an ulcerated ankle and kept being rejected. He wasn’t drafted until ’44. So during that year, what would have been his junior year, he worked down in Trenton at an airplane factory.

TK: It seems that we have to back up a moment and you have to tell us where it was that you met him? Was it at one of these dances?

CB: Here at Rutgers. No, again, it was a blind date for me. One of his fraternity brother …

TK: Was it a double date you had went on originally?

CB: Yes.

TK: And you met him during your freshman year or …

CB: Sophomore year.

TK: And then you dated throughout the rest of your time … he was here for the next two years of your time at Rutgers?

CB: Yes, actually, my junior and senior year. Senior year we finally got engaged, just before he was to go overseas. He had started out, the train was on route to San Francisco, he was shipping out of Treasure Island, when his mother died. The Red Cross intervened, he came back, and was home for a short time. He went out through Treasure Island to Oahu, and then from there to the Marianas and the Ryukyus and Okinawa.

TK: And a lot of the women at NJC also had boyfriends or fiancées abroad.
CB: Yes.

TK: Or in the service.

CB: Yes, some of them, of course, dated the ASTP young men and many of them were killed in the Battle of the Bulge. Of course, this was very sad for many of them. Then there were some of them that were married to Army or Navy people. We had a couple of older students at that time, which was unusual. In our particular class, in Home Ec[onomics], we had one woman who had, I think just one little boy, about seven years old, but she came. She had completed two years of college before that and then she came and graduated with us, and there was another woman in the class after us who came in. Otherwise, I guess most of us were the same age, or the same age group.

TK: Tell us a little bit about New Brunswick as a town. What did you think actually of it, what were the best places to go or stores?

CB: There were two or three different movie houses that we would come to and they had a couple of department stores. We’d come down … and there was a store quite near us called, Zajac’s. It was a drug store that we would go to. I think they had sodas, if I remember rightly. Sometimes in the evening we would come down and have pizza and go to one of the theaters. Then there was another sweet shop that was called Thode’s and we always came down for … fudge cake … Senior year we marched down in our caps and gowns and they treated us to this … we didn’t pay for it … It was like a brownie with ice cream and chocolate syrup.

TK: Brownie a’la mode.

CB: That was one of the big things.

TK: So that was sort of a celebration.

CB: Yes.

TK: You were saying that after the war that there was a requirement put out that you travel in groups for safety.

CB: During the war years, yes.

TK: I’m sorry, during the war. So would that cut down on the number of times you would go out on the weekend and stuff like that?

CB: Usually you could find somebody that would go along, so that wasn’t any problem.

TK: And your involvement, when you graduated in May of 1945 and things are starting to wind down in Europe, what did you know of the situation as far as the war was concerned?
CB: Of course, we were all very happy when the war in Europe was over. Those of us that still had people in the Pacific were more concerned, actually. Other than that, I guess we weren’t as involved. … Some of the students might have been.

TK: So there really was no relief.

CB: No.

TK: Quite yet.

CB: No.

TK: So what did you do in that summer following graduation?

CB: I, of course, was looking for work and then I started and my first job as an assistant analytical chemist with the Baker’s Yeast Company. When my husband came home, the following May, and discharged, I was married. Then we came back to Rutgers and lived up in the trailer camp at the stadium and that in itself was quite an experience.

TK: Tell us about that. We’ve heard it a number of times before but it’s always interesting because people have very differing views on this. Some people saw it as being in a sense, community and others thought it was just awful.

CB: Oh, well, we loved it. Actually, our trailer was right across from the water station and the bathhouse so we just had to go across the street …

TK: The social center.

CB: That was down at one end. Of course, we had electricity but we didn’t have any running water. We had to carry our water from the water station and then we would have a bucket down underneath the sink for dirty water you had to take back to empty at the water station, and they had a launderette down at the other end. I felt it was very compact and everything. Then most of us began to have families while we were there. My son was born at the beginning of my husband’s senior year. At that point, we had to have the one day bed taken out. It was just a nice size little room, because the closets opened up so it closed off, made a little room for the baby’s crib and bassinet, and I was able to get a rocking chair and a little bureau in there for him. But then, of course, as the children get older, why, then you need more equipment; the highchair and the other things began to get a little crowded.

TK: And how long did you stay in the trailer?

CB: We were there two years, junior and senior year.

TK: How did it feel to be around ‘the banks’ after you had graduated?

CB: Well, I don’t know that it felt any different, really, because we always enjoyed it here.
MB: I was curious, you had said you had your first child. Were you working during that time?

CB: Yes, actually, after we moved down here I worked at Ethicon Sutures which was out on the highway at that point. I was testing raw gut for the sutures and umbilical tape. The Food Technology Department had just opened up that fall and I had applied, but it was April before I finally was hired there. That was when Dr. MacLinn was first taking on people. Mel Frank and I were the first people to start working in the Food Technology Department. At that time we were up at the old dairy building on what is now Cook Campus and so I worked there. Eventually as he got more funds I was on the research faculty, while my husband was finishing up.

TK: That must have been a very exciting position for you, to have a position open up back at Rutgers.

CB: It was very interesting and, actually, I was doing some research. But after my son was born I worked half a day. I would work in the morning and then I would go home and take care of him in the afternoon and so Dr. MacLinn let me work on the paper at home. But because I was only working half-time by the time I got the paper finished, a similar one had been published.

TK: Oh, no.

CB: So I never got published.

TK: A little race that you couldn’t quite …

CB: Then they were going to be moving into a reconverted building and I helped to plan the first chemistry lab there. So that was exciting.

TK: So around where they are now?

CB: No, … where they are now is … a brand new building and much bigger. This was just down the street from where the dairy building had been. I don’t remember what building it had been before that.

TK: When you worked those half-days were you able to find daycare for your son or did you know of someone?

CB: No, actually a friend from Douglass was living there in the trailer with her husband.

TK: Did she also have children?

CB: She had a son just a couple of months older than mine. She would take him in the morning and I still keep in touch with her. Her husband …

TK: Did she remain in New Jersey?
CB: No, she is up in Massachusetts now. Her husband, actually, died quite suddenly of polio while they were still at Rutgers, and she has since remarried.

MB: I wanted to backtrack a little bit. You said your first job was after graduation. Did you work at all while you were at school?

CB: Well, at school, other than summer jobs, the only other time I worked was over at J[ohnson] & J[ohnson]. They needed workers in their bandage packaging. So many of the women were getting better paying jobs, that they were short of workers. So they hired Douglass students; three hours shifts, fifty cents an hour and we did that during the school term.

MB: So were many of your friends involved in that?

CB: Yes, there were a lot of us. We would go down in groups after supper and work our three hour shifts and then go home. Packing bandages of various kinds …

MB: And the summer jobs, what were those?

CB: Well, as I said, the first one was a cafeteria worker in an electronics factory, and the second one was with DuPont Explosives in the explosive rivet department, and the third year as the chief dietician at the Girl Scout camp.

TK: And when your husband graduated, where did that take you next?

CB: Pardon?

TK: When your husband graduated, where did that take you next? Where was his first job?

CB: Well, his first job was out in Michigan. So we moved out to the big town of Brooklyn, a town of 400 during the winter months, and actually it was in a resort area. There were a lot of lakes in that area, so they had more people in the summer.

TK: At the time that he was teaching high school, you came back to Rutgers so your husband could get a Masters degree.

CB: Yes, we lived up in what was called the faculty apartments, at that time and he did substitute teaching while he was working on his degree. I did some jobs; actually they were part-time. One was selling cosmetics on a party basis and then also I worked at the hospital teaching student nurses. Then when he graduated with his Masters we moved up to Glen Rock.

TK: And you have been there since.

CB: Pardon?
TK: And you’ve been there since … in Glen Rock.

CB: Yes.

TK: And what was his first job after his Masters degree?

CB: Actually, that’s the funny part. He had intended to be a teacher. He majored in Physical Education, but he ended up in industry, and he worked with Dumont, first in their personnel department, and then one day they loaned him out to the purchasing department and that was where he ended up. And he worked for them, and, eventually, they were taken over by Fairchild and then by Thompson Electronics.

TK: And what was his Masters degree?

CB: It was Physical Education, in education.

TK: As well …

CB: No, actually when he was working on his undergraduate degree, there were a lot of openings for Physical Education teachers here in New Jersey. But by the time he graduated, in the meantime, so many of the veterans had graduated that there weren’t any openings here.

TK: Yeah, a lot of men had the same thing happen. But then in other areas fairly new jobs were opening up, so that is how you came to be in Michigan.

CB: Yes

MB: I was interested in the fact since you left the Glen Rock [and] Ridgewood area before the war, and then you returned there later, what was the difference and how would you compare the two?

CB: Well, of course there has been a lot of construction in that area … during those years. The towns themselves were pretty much, basically, the same I would say, other than that they had grown in size, bigger population.

TK: And do you live in a house that was built recently, was it …

CB: It was new when we moved in. We had gone back because my husband, actually he was working first in Paterson and so we wanted to be in that area, and my parents were still in Ridgewood, so we were close to them.

TK: And when were your daughters born?

CB: Pardon?

TK: Your daughters?
CB: What about them?

TK: When they were born … in Michigan or back in New Jersey?

CB: Oh, no, well, my son of course had been born in New Jersey and then we had gone out to Michigan. I was expecting my first daughter, my second child, before my husband graduated, so she was due in January. I came back, he stayed out in Michigan and then we went back out. Then my third daughter was born after we moved up to Glen Rock.

TK: Okay, and during that time did you work when you first moved to Glen Rock?

CB: Not at first. After my youngest was born, I was doing volunteer work as a Girl Scout leader, and then also as a Cub Scout den mother.

TK: Had this all been inspired by your camp experience those few years ago?

CB: We would always enjoy the outdoors when we lived up at the lake. We would go on what we called hikes and picnics and things. So then when I was working as a Cub Scout den leader I had gone over to the education building in Ridgewood one day to get some materials. I noticed a sign that said that if you had a bachelor’s degree you could take a seminar at William Paterson and teach. So that is how I started getting into teaching. I took the course, and the first day we were there the president of the college came in and he said, “If you don’t expect to be teaching in the fall, you don’t belong in this course.” So I sent in applications to Glen Rock and Ridgewood and Fair Lawn and was offered a job in Ridgewood and started on a provisional certificate.

TK: Meaning you were finishing your teaching certification?

CB: Well, this was to teach. Then I found that to continue teaching, to be certified, I would have needed thirty credits in elementary education, but I only needed nine in Home Ec[onomics]. So I came back and I took courses at Rutgers-Newark and down here at Douglass and at Montclair and got my teaching certificate. I taught in Paterson for sixteen years.

TK: And what were Paterson schools like at that time?

CB: When I first went there it was quite different from what it is today. We were, as a Home Ec[onomics] teacher, in a couple of different schools a week, and we would have maybe 350 students all together. They also shipped us from one school to another sometimes. I was transferred up into the high school and taught there for a while. I had vested, and after vesting I decided I still wasn’t busy enough and I did substitute teaching, temporary and part-time work. I did some demonstrating for different companies, but then I went back to teaching and taught another three years.

TK: Back at the same school?

CB: Well, different schools. I was teaching, actually, Special Ed[ucation] students and primary
students.

TK: Did it ever occur that your children ended up in the same school that you were teaching in?

CB: No.

TK: That can be troublesome sometimes. I noticed that your son came to Rutgers; did your husband have anything to do with that decision or was it just logical living in New Jersey?

CB: I don’t know … my husband had, of course, brought him down, and, of course, he was born here and it sort of seemed a natural progression.

TK: Born at Rutgers, come back to Rutgers. What, if anything, do you remember of the news programs on Vietnam in the ‘60s and ‘70s? Did you see any of that, or any effect on the students that you were teaching?

CB: No, not really. Of course, in Paterson we have a lot of African-American students, and also there were a lot of students, from the islands and they were in groups. In another one of the areas there were a lot of Arabic students, so you didn’t get into some of that.

TK: It didn’t effect them in the same way, you think?

CB: No.

TK: How about as far as where you lived, staying so many years, did you stay in the same house in Glen Rock from the time you moved there?

CB: Yes.

TK: And did you see the neighborhood change a lot, many times over, or did you have a lot of long standing neighbors?

CB: There has been quite a bit. Actually our street is a short street. There are only about eleven houses, and of the eleven there are only three families that have been there since it was built. The others have been people in or out, sometimes more than once.

TK: And did you establish a lot of lasting bonds with the people living near you … make close friendships in that sense?

CB: Actually, while I was working I didn’t find that I had time for it, as a rule. Since I retired in ’91 I have really become more involved because I’ve been doing volunteer work with a couple of organizations. I had been more active in College Club and we have a book fair that we work on all through the year.

TK: Children and local students …
CB: Actually, there are a couple of purposes. Originally, it was started by some college women to be together to discuss different topics. Also raising scholarship money is one of their prime purposes. All of the fundraising we do is for scholarships and loans. But they also have excellent speakers each month and also as one of their fundraisers they generally will have an outstanding speaker.

TK: And you work in close coordination … cooperation with the high schools in that area?

CB: Yes, actually any of the children in the towns that the members come from can apply for scholarships or loans.

TK: Did all three of your children attend school, attend college?

CB: Yes, as you know my son graduated from Rutgers, and went with AT&T after graduation and has been with them ever since. My older daughter, or middle child, graduated from Kent State and she’s a Home Ec[onomics] teacher currently. My younger daughter also graduated from Kent State and she and her husband have a wholesale tire business in Indianapolis.

TK: Your middle daughter became a Home Ec[onomics] teacher. Did you cook a lot or share a lot of your experiences with Home Economics with her while she was younger?

CB: She enjoyed sewing very much. I guess, probably it was maybe a sharing with them, my son, too. I taught him how to use the sewing machine and he used to sew the patches on his jeans. But he had joined a cooking club when he was in junior high [school] and enjoyed that very much. He did a lot of bachelor cooking before he got married.

TK: Right, and your husband during this time; did he stay with the same company?

CB: He was with what was Dumont originally most of his working life, and then a couple of years before he died he went to another electronics company, an English company.

TK: In the same area, though?

CB: Yes.

TK: And you always found that everything was a reasonable commute from the Glen Rock area?

CB: Yes. He had about a half-hour drive usually. Part of the time it was in Elmwood Park and part of the time they were in Clifton and then Passaic.

TK: You had described so many fond memories of your time going up to the lake in New York, did you establish some of these same vacation traditions with your children … like the same place every year?

CB: We tried to travel different places. My sister at one point lived down in Alexandria, Virginia. So we visited there, and saw quite a bit of Washington. [We] went on down to
Williamsburg, Monticello, and Jamestown …

TK: Did you ever make it cross country?

CB: Yes. My husband was a Scout leader and we drove out to Philmont one year. That was a very interesting trip because we would stop at places along the way that we thought the children would enjoy. We went to Springfield and saw Lincoln’s home there, we went to New Salem. We went to Hannibal, Missouri, and stopped there. They went to Dodge City… these were all on the way out, or back.

TK: Sort of legendary places.

CB: Of course, there at Philmont we lived at Tent City for the week that we were there. The children all belonged to a special group. They had a school bus take my younger daughter out, the younger ones went to a special place for the day. They had the Kit Carson girls and the Kit Carson boys, and then the men, of course, were having their special Scout training, and the women had special activities. They had a square dance one night, and a buffalo barbecue another night.

TK: And looking back on things now, how do you feel that your education at Douglass, or NJC, prepared you for your career path both in chemistry and in teaching?

CB: Well, actually, I felt that we got such a good background that you were able to make transfers from one thing to another very easily. The fact of living together with different people in the houses gave you some background in getting along with different people and meeting different situations.

MB: What were the study habits like, I’m curious to know?

CB: Study habits?

MB: Where did the kids go to study? Was the library accessible?

CB: Oh, yes. We could go to the library, depending on whether you were doing special research, otherwise in the dorm where you could do your work with your textbooks and things.

MB: So the dorms was an environment conducive to study?

CB: Well, we had our individual house rules where you had to be quiet between such an hour and such an hour and that was study time. Maybe after that, we would get together and have some snacks or something.

MB: During your time at NJC, was the Student Center built yet, or what was the center student life?

CB: Actually, on each campus they had one building that they … called ‘Cabin’ on Douglass, it
was the ‘Lodge’ on Douglass, and you could go over there if you wanted to. Other than that they
didn’t have any central place. It would just be those individual centers for the individual campus.

MB: What about the pond, was it of legendary status as it is today?

CB: [laughs] Yes, it was there.

MB: Actually I wanted to ask you about the Campus News because in 1941 there was some sort
of scandal and I was wondering if you had any knowledge of that?

CB: Scandal?

TK: As far as the Campus News ceases to exist as it had before. You don’t remember?

CB: No.

TK: It might have been before she came in.

MB: It might have.

TK: Do you remember any other scandals.

CB: No, not really.

TK: I’m kidding. How would you compare your own career path to some of the other women
you graduated with? It seems that you probably worked more years, or did you find that a lot of
your friends ended up working, or did most of them stay at home?

CB: No, actually, I think mine was perhaps a little more unusual than some, partly because of
course my husband going back to school and we weren’t as financially …

TK: Secure?

CB: … Advantaged as some of the others. I was trying to think of the ones that … in this group
that we were close together, that sat together … one worked for a few years before she got
married, but I don’t think she continued after she was married. Another one, well, two of them
married ministers and neither one of them worked, now the one does some work. Another one
worked before she was married but then after she was married she didn’t work, and then the
same with the two others of that particular group. But I think that now there are more that have
gone back to work that didn’t earlier on.

TK: Was it always important for you to work, or was it just a matter of necessity?

CB: Actually, when I was in college, freshman year, the campus director had called us over after
first term and she had me in tears because she said that I should be doing more than I was as far
as leadership because of my scholarships and she gave the same talk to so many of the girls. I
don’t know if it’s because of that I always felt that I should be doing more. So when I started teaching I felt that at least I was giving back some of the scholarship that had been given to me and also by the volunteer work …

TK: So you were actually, from the official people at Douglass, you were sort of given a sense of obligation to the campus because of being a recipient of a state scholarship?

CB: That’s really what it’s amounted to.

TK: Do you feel that you’ve paid them back? [laughter]

CB: I think at this point.

TK: We’ll call it even. Now you’d mentioned before that sometimes you see you friends from NJC when you go back for reunions. Are you very active in going to the reunions and the alumnae organization?

CB: Yes, I’ve gone to most of the five-year reunions. I was class vice-president, twice and I was chairman of the reunion one year, and I’ve been class historian. Right now, I’m class treasurer.

TK: So you’ve been pretty involved.

CB: Yes.

TK: And what year did your husband end up graduating?

CB: He graduated in ’48 then and got his masters in ’51.

TK: So he comes back on the eight and the three years, and you come back on the five and the …

CB: No, he died thirteen years ago, so …

TK: Would he be involved at the time in Rutgers?

CB: Actually, he never came back to any reunions.

TK: Did you always come back, or is it something that grew after a few years?

CB: No, I came, I think, right from the start.

TK: For some people, what we find is that even the fiftieth anniversary will kick off a renewed interest in coming back to Rutgers, or a thirtieth anniversary. Some significant year will make them start going back, or just if they’ve retired and they’re back in New Jersey. Michael, do you have any more questions about NJC?
MB: Did you do any compiling, you said you were the class historian, did you do any compiling for the fiftieth anniversary?

CB: Actually, as class historian, we kept a notebook of any news about people in the class, births and so forth.

TK: Would they call you and give you this information or would you check the newspapers and things like that?

CB: Usually, somebody would send a copy.

TK: So through that did you put together any scrapbook, or anything like that?

CB: Well, the class scrapbook, yes, we kept that and we still have them. There are at least two I think now.

TK: And what are some of the other days you come back to NJC besides reunion weekend? Do you come back for any of the traditions or anything like that?

CB: Not so much any more. When I was younger and the children were smaller, I came back a couple of special days of training. I was on the alumnae board for a while representing our county group, and I would come down for the board meetings.

TK: And now that you’ve retired you said that you spend a lot more time in volunteer work, and you’d mentioned the College Council, I guess?

CB: College Club. And I also do respite visits and a well-baby clinic. I weigh and measure the babies, once a month they have …

TK: In your area?

CB: It’s in town, yes.

TK: Sort of keeping up all different aspects of things you had been involved in before, in education and health?

CB: Yes, that’s what it amounts to.

MB: How about travel; have you traveled abroad at all?

CB: Yes, actually, I have wonderful memories of trips with my husband. Once the children were through college we started traveling. Then also, I’ve kept it up on my own with Elder Hostel. I’ve gone to England about ten times, and I’ve been to Europe several times.

TK: What’s your particular interest in England?
CB: Well, actually, I’ve done all different things. I did three walking tours, one in Scotland and Yorkshire, one in Cornwall and one in Wales. But each time it’s something different. I did some Elder Hostels there. One was a fine arts trip. We spent a week in London studying theater, a week in Cambridge studying literature, and a week up in Glasgow studying art and I did one three week trip, country houses, and one up in Scotland. We went on up into the Orkneys and to the Isle of Skye. And I did an Elder Hostel service program tutoring English in Poland. Then I did a food and wine one in France. I did another one, Gallo-French history, in France last year.

TK: And this is usually an assorted group of people from various backgrounds, or states?

CB: Yes.

TK: So it’s a good opportunity to meet other Americans.

CB: Oh, definitely, yes … the Rutgers trips a couple years ago up in Yorkshire we visited Herriot country and Bronte country and when my husband was alive we visited down in South America. My sister, at that time, was living in Rio. Her husband was with the US aid program. We actually flew into Bogota, then went down through Peru to Cuzco and on down to La Paz, Bolivia, then into San Palo in Brazil and then Rio and up through Brazil, to Caracas and we’ve been to the Canadian Rockies …

TK: What did you think, what was your impressions … you are really getting into quite a bit of Brazil there?

CB: And South America. Actually that was quite an unusual trip; that was back in ’72. There was a lot of upheaval at that time, so in Bogota there were soldiers with their rifles out on every street corner. Actually, one evening we had gone out for a walk after dinner. When we came back, along both sides of the steps into the hotel the soldiers were lined up with their rifles with another truck of them right in front. But we found that the president of the country was there giving a speech to a doctor’s convention.

TK: But it was intimidating.

CB: The same thing in the other countries for the most part. There were these armed soldiers on various corners. When we got to Cuzco we met a family that had been backpacking and they said that as they backpacked, every so often, they would be stopped and the soldiers would ask them what they did and they wanted to know exactly, for instance, what the housewife of the family did. It was very unusual, of course, you didn’t have that in Brazil itself.

TK: And you were describing some of your other trips; you said that you had gone to the Canadian Rockies.

CB: Yes, we did one heli-hiking tour up in the Bobby Burns area of the Purcell Mountains and that was very interesting. We would go up to four different locations each time so we were up in the helicopter eight times a day. They divided us into three groups, they would take one group up and drop us off, and then they would go back for another one and we would be in each location
maybe an hour or so walking around. One time you’d be on a glacier walking around, another time you might be on a mountain ridge, or by a mountain lake.

TK: And having been so involved in the German club, did you ever make it to Germany and Central Europe?

CB: Yes, to France two times, Switzerland two times, Italy two times, Austria and Germany two times.

TK: What was your impression of it? Were you able to remember anything at all from high school?

CB: Yes, actually that was an interesting experience. When we went down to South America I got tapes to try to learn Spanish and Portuguese and when I got down there, I found instead of remembering what I had learned on the tapes, I was speaking German. The German came back.

TK: I think what happens is your foreign language reflex kicks in regardless of what language you need.

CB: Well, I had reached the point in my third year, of German, where I could actually think in German. So that made a big difference, I did remember a little. I wouldn’t be able to carry on a conversation I'm sure.

TK: Right. That’s something that you could recognize words on signs and things like that. That’s neat. And one of the questions I’m really curious about is looking back on it now, how do you feel when you come to campus these days, both this side of campus and the NJC side?

CB: Well, of course, there are a lot of changes. Actually, as to my reaction I don’t know that I have any big reaction, just that we’ve had fond memories.

TK: And you also saw the campus grow between the time that you stayed here and the time that you stayed here with your husband, and also during, after the time that he came back for his masters. Was it overwhelming in a way to see Rutgers get so large?

CB: No, I think, it’s just you see the changes going all through different aspects of your life and the towns you live in and the changes that go on, and it’s just something that you kind of expect.

TK: When your husband came back to Rutgers, did he make use of any of his GI benefits?

CB: Did he what?

TK: Make use of the GI Bill?

CB: I’m sorry, I still …

TK: Make use of the GI Bill in paying for college?
CB: Oh, yes. Yes he was working under the GI Bill. He was getting ninety dollars a month and our trailer cost twenty dollars a month so that was one of the reasons why I had to work. That didn’t stretch as far as we needed.

TK: And at that time when you saw a lot of things, all the different changes, what did you think of the name change from NJC to Douglass? I know a lot of people have strong opinions about that.

CB: Well, that seemed quite a natural change because there had been a lot said about Dean Douglass, although we didn’t know her. When we were there it was Dean Corwin.

TK: But to you it seemed natural and okay?

CB: It seemed like a perfectly natural thing.

TK: Did you read much in the Caellian or what was the Campus News, the newspapers or anything? Did you rely on the campus newspapers to keep you aware of what was going on in the world or did you look more to the radio?

CB: I think probably the radio.

TK: Did you remember listening to favorite programs or anything like that?

CB: Oh, that was such a long time ago. Of course, in high school we used to do our homework with the radio on. We would listen to something like the “Inner Sanctum” is one that comes to mind. I don’t especially remember the other programs at this point.

TK: How would you describe your experiences having come back and being involved with the alumni? Have you been able to see, have you been able to get to know, any of the people who you helped with getting scholarships to come to Rutgers or come to Douglass?

CB: No, I haven’t have any experience with that.

TK: In that program you are involved in, the scholarships are handed out regardless of where you are going, its not specified by state, or anything like that?

CB: I haven’t worked on any of the committees that give out the scholarships. We do get notice through our local bulletin that tells who they are and where they’re going. I haven’t had any experience with that.

TK: And where is your next trip planned for?

CB: Actually, I don’t have one planned at this point.

TK: Where is one point that you’d like to go but have never been?
CB: I’ve never been to Scandinavia.

TK: That might be something of interest to you?

CB: I think that because we had a Swedish student living with us for half a year, an exchange student.

TK: When your children were in high school?

CB: Yes, they had a … I guess they don’t have them as much as they used to, but when the children were smaller we had groups in Glen Rock every summer, when they were on the bus trip. We had a student from Australia, one from New Zealand, a boy from Norway, a girl from Egypt, a girl from Turkey, a girl from Japan, just for weekends, and we had a girl from Thailand, and then a Swedish student for half of the year.

TK: Through AFS?

CB: Yes, through AFS.

TK: And did any of your children go over to Europe?

CB: No, not with AFS.

TK: What was it like having this exchange student with you? Did you find any cultural differences over food or anything like that?

CB: No, actually I didn’t. The Thai students were going to be with us for a week. They were on their last … just before they were going home. So they were anxious for Thai food. Some of the girls got together and went into New York and bought food and came to our house and cooked. Most of these students, the boys and the girls were there, so we had the Thai food. That, of course, was a different experience.

TK: Quite exciting in Glen Rock.

CB: Yes.

MB: I had an NJC question; a number of the alumnus had expressed opinions about the elimination of the Home Ec[onomics] major, and I was wondering if you had any feelings about that?

CB: Well, this is something that has happened all over the country. They change so much, first they started changing the name and giving it a different name. I felt it was something that prepared you for both working outside of the home as well as inside of the home. Of course, at the time I was teaching, we used to say that Home Ec[onomics] was one place that provided a thousand different job titles because there were so many areas that would be covered by it. It
seemed like it was happening all over the country, and I know there was a big change in that area.

TK: When you were teaching, were you involved in, for example, a teacher’s organization for teachers of Home Economics or anything like that?

CB: I used to belong to the Home Economics Association, yes.

TK: Did you discuss this at any of your conventions, the gradual renaming of the major? It seems like they would take certain aspects of it and put it as a visual art, certain aspects … basically, because it was this all encompassing major they were trying to rename it like so that nutrition fits under chemistry, or you know …

CB: Well, actually, at the time I belonged to the Home Economics Association it was before this was going on. Then our local group, which was a county group, broke up. So they never really did go into that.

TK: And there was never any threat while you were working, for example, that your position would be renamed or you would have to teach a different subject or anything like that?

CB: No.

TK: Because that has also sometimes happened in different high schools across the country depending …

CB: Actually, my daughter was in a school in Paterson when the State took over. They cut out everything but reading, writing, and arithmetic in ten of the schools. That happened in one of the schools she was in. So she was teaching math, then later on she was transferred to a primary school where she was working with preschool through third graders.

TK: A lot of those elements in it.

CB: She has them when their own teacher has an hour of preparation or something.

TK: Do you have anything you would like to add, anything to state for the record, about your experiences at Rutgers, or at NJC, or about your time in New Jersey, any area you think we’ve missed?

CB: I don’t think of anything off hand.

TK: Okay, well, then we’d like to close by thanking you for coming out today, and we’ll put the rest off the record.

CB: My pleasure.

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