

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH DOROTHY M. FIELD

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

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

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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and

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NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

DOMINGO DUARTE

Melissa Falk: This begins an interview with the Reverend Dorothy Field on March 27, 2006 at her home in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania with Melissa Falk ...

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: ... and Sandra Stewart Holyoak.

MF: In order to begin I want to ask you when and where you were born?

Dorothy Field: I was born on June 10, 1925 in Port Chester, New York.

MF: Going to your parents, how did your mother and father first meet?

DF: Goodness, it was on a blind date, as I recall. I mean I was not there, of course. But, I've heard the story and that's all I can tell you, that's all I know. [laughter]

MF: What year were your parents married?

DF: 1923.

MF: We know from your pre-interview survey that your father served in World War I. Have you heard any stories about his service in the war?

DF: Well, he was in the Medical Corps and one of the doctors there suggested that he go on and study medicine. They thought he would make a good surgeon, he had good hands for it, [laughter] but he said he had seen so many wounded and in such terrible conditions during the war, he did not really think he would want to do that, so, he did not go on into medicine.

MF: He did serve in Europe during World War I.

DF: Yes, he was in France.

MF: Did your mother have any experiences during World War I that were memorable?

DF: She was taking ... a Red Cross course in helping here, and she told us that ... the person who was helping her said, "You would give all your patients pneumonia because ... you shake the sheets so well." [laughter] That's about the most I can remember of what she did during the war.

SH: Please tell us a little bit about the family backgrounds of your mother and father. Where was your father from?

DF: Oh, my father was born and brought up in Port Chester, New York. His mother was from Canada, his father was from London, England. ... I don't know how they met, but they were married and came to Port Chester. My grandfather had a house built there and they lived there. [Regarding] my mother's family, her mother's family came from around [the] Lockport, New York, area and had been here since sixteen-something [the seventeenth century]. ... Her father was born here, but her grandfather was born in England. ... He worked in a department store in

Buffalo, New York, and then, he had his own [store] in Tonawanda, just outside of Buffalo. ... When Lincoln died and his body was being transported from place to place so that people could honor him, my great-grandfather was one of the honor guards when he was in Buffalo. He was proud of that. ... Then my mother went to Buffalo, what was Buffalo State Normal, then, became Buffalo State Teacher's College, now part of SUNY, the State University of New York. My mother was a school teacher. My father was an accountant in a silk company ... Duplan Company in New York City.

SH: What was it called?

DF: Duplan ... D-U-P-L-A-N. It was a French-owned silk company. When I was a little kid, I know I did one of my school projects on silk. I had silkworms that had been dumped in hot water so they wouldn't be coming out of their cocoons. ... They also had some rayon business, and then, just toward the end of my father's career, nylon was coming in and they ... worked with nylon. My dad worked in New York City, in Manhattan.

SH: Where would you visit grandparents?

DF: My mother's family was ... in the Buffalo area, and ... when I was about four years old, they opened the part of the Erie Canal through that area. I shook hands with the then Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt of New York State [laughter] because he came for the opening.

SH: What were some of the stories you heard about the building of the Erie Canal?

DF: Oh, I don't really [have any], but my grandparent's home was quite close to it. ...

MF: That is interesting; I know that you mentioned on your pre-interview survey that your family had pretty strong ties to the Republican Party.

DF: Yes.

MF: Did your family have a certain opinion of FDR?

DF: It wasn't very good at that point, or later. I have matured. [laughter] I grew up in Westchester County, New York, which was very Republican for many years, it's changing ... [laughter] However, it was a chance to shake hands with the governor [laughter].

SH: What else can you tell us about growing up in Port Chester? Is it a small town, a big town?

DF: It's an interesting town because it was the largest village in New York State ... There was the Village of Port Chester and the Village of Rye, which were within the town of Rye. Rye petitioned to become a city, and did. Port Chester petitioned to become a city; it was not allowed to because several of the politicians lived on the outskirts, and if it had become a city, their taxes would have gone up. [laughter] ... So, even Governor [Herbert] Lehman, who's the only one that I remember, vetoed the bill to become a city. As far as I know, it's still a village.

SH: What interested you as a young woman, a very young woman I should say?

DF: How young? ... You mean while I was in school? ...

SH: When you were in elementary or grade school; what do you remember?

DF: I remember that I hated history in fifth grade, it bored me stiff, and yet I went on and majored in history [laughter] and loved it, [I still] love it. I don't know what changed all of a sudden but, ... the history that I finally came upon was much more interesting than, I think it was the Middle Ages, in fifth grade. ... It [Port Chester] was a nice place to be and not too big, not far from New York. ... As I said, my dad worked in New York, so often on school holidays my mother and then my brother, who is five years younger than I, would go in and meet my dad. ... I always wanted to go to a restaurant called Caruso's and have spaghetti. My father said [to me] one time, "You can have spaghetti at home," because I loved it, and we did, but it was a little bit different at Caruso's.

SH: What would you do in these holidays into the city?

DF: A lot of times it was shopping. When I was nine or ten, Shirley Temple was a big star and the Shirley Temple dolls [were popular]. ... I decided I wanted to have one. My mother and father said, "Okay, why don't you work for it and earn the money?" It cost all of five dollars at Macy's, and so I washed dishes, [laughter] for five cents or ten cents, I've forgotten which, a time, until I earned the money to go in and get my doll. ... Then, of course, there was the sales tax. If you bought it, if you took it back from New York, you had to pay the sales tax. If it was sent out you did not have to pay. ... I was so anxious to have that doll, I even paid ... the sales tax.

SH: You could have it mailed to you and you did not pay?

DF: Yes, but I remember I really wanted to take that doll with me.

MF: Now, this was during the Depression.

DF: Yes, correct.

MF: So, was money hard to come by for your family?

DF: Well, we never did without anything, but when I think back, you know, we managed; my father had a job all through the Depression, which was very fortunate, not everybody did. ... We lived in White Plains, New York for a year or so when I was about four. ... My aunt and uncle, my mother's aunt and uncle, lived with us in the apartment. The rent was one hundred and twenty-five dollars a month, which was pretty high in those days, so they helped pay the rent there. Uncle Fred had a large lumberyard in New York City. He had done very well, but, during the war, there was not much, I mean people weren't building houses and other things.

SH: Do you mean during the Depression?

DF: ... Yes, excuse me, during the Depression. ... I remember my mother saying he would go into his office everyday and sit because there was very little, if any, business being conducted, but there were people jumping off [buildings], out of windows because they didn't have jobs, and nothing like that, fortunately, ever happened with us.

SH: Did you see any effects of the Depression? Did you see any of the lines for food or jobs?

DF: Well, I remember seeing them in the paper, I never saw any myself. ... The other thing I remember is that there was a lot of violence connected with the auto workers' union at that time. ... I guess people were killed sometimes. That was far removed from me, but I do remember.

MF: Were the effects of the Depression more evident when you traveled to New York than in your own local community?

DF: I guess we were pretty well insulated from it. I really didn't see any effects, at least that I can remember.

SH: What about in school? Did you notice that suddenly someone was not there that had been a classmate before?

DF: No. ... We had seven elementary schools in Port Chester. The one I went to probably had the fewest [number of] people who would have been affected. When I got to junior high, because we all came together to the one junior high, I saw more people who ... would probably have really felt the effects of the Depression.

SH: Was your school segregated or integrated at that point?

DF: I'm sorry to say that it probably was segregated. We did have a family who moved into the area one time and then they moved out. I think they were not encouraged to stay, which is too bad. Years later, my dad and Mr. Brooks, who was the father of the family, worked together in Scouts ... but I always felt bad about that. I think my first remembrance of, or being aware of discrimination was in connection with an African-American ... dentist who did very well. ... He had bought a house on the outskirts, where ... you had to have money to buy something, and I remember people talking about him, saying, "Well, yes, after all, ... you know, he does have money," and I thought to myself, "Why does he have to have money?" I mean, why can't anybody live where they would like to live? ... I think that was probably one of the things that started me down the track that I eventually went. There were a great many Italian families. We were not far from the Westchester Country Club, which had been built some years earlier. A number of families had come over to work on the country club. ... We didn't really know much about them. I did meet the kids when I went to junior high. ... Later, my first job between my freshman and sophomore years at NJC [now Douglass College at Rutgers], was in the Life Saver factory, making the candies. There were only three factories at that time that made Life Savers. ... The president of the company played golf with my Uncle Bill. There were only two of us who were summer help because they closed one week during the summer, so everybody got a

vacation. ... The African-American night-watchman's son was going to college, and he and I were the two summer people who worked [there]. ... I worked with some of the girls from the Italian families. They took me to one of the taverns down on South Main Street. ... I remember, when I went, my mother said, she wasn't really snobbish, but she said, "Remember, you're a Maslin, behave yourself." [laughter] ... I enjoyed them, and I had tomato pie. Years later, tomato pie became pizza. [laughter] ... That was good.

SH: What were some of the customs that were unique to your home growing up? Was there a Canadian or English influence?

DF: ... I don't know, I mean, I suppose so, but I can't really sort anything out at this point.

SH: Was your family always Episcopalian?

DF: My mother's family were Methodists and ... my dad's family were Episcopalians. We lived in his hometown, so we all went to the Episcopal Church. However, the year we were in White Plains, we went to the Methodist Church. ... I was talking about it today at lunch, with a couple of friends, ... this was when I was about three or four. The children in the Sunday school had a Christmas program, and I had a poem to read. ... I would just whisper it, I would not read it out loud. I said to my friends, "Look at me now." [laughter] ... Anyway, I remember that. And I remember that we wore these long stockings, ribbed stockings, when we were little kids, and I hated them. ... I can remember rolling them down so they looked like socks, not stockings. [laughter]

MF: Did your family have any particular customs for holidays like Christmas or Easter that you remember?

DF: Most of my dad's family, he was one of eight children, although two died as babies, lived within fifteen minutes driving distance of one another. ... [The family] came to our house for Thanksgiving, and we went to my Aunt Sally's, my father's younger sister, house for Christmas and to his brother's, who was just two years older than he, for New Year's. So, it was nice because we were all together.

MF: Did you have a lot of young cousins?

DF: There were ten of us in that generation, so, yes, there were enough to keep us busy.

SH: How often did you get to visit your mother's family?

DF: Probably about once a year. ... Eventually, my grandparents came down, and my grandmother was stricken with a very bad case of arthritis. She had had it before, but she really collapsed in our house and was in bed for six weeks. At the same time I was in bed with scarlet fever, so my poor mother was running up and down the stairs. Later, my mother and father built an addition on our house, and my grandparents lived there for some years, until they went back to the Buffalo area.

SH: Was your mother part of a large family as well?

DF: No, my mother had just one sister. ... Although my grandfather had another brother and two sisters. ... That was interesting, because two of them were rabid Republicans, and two of them were rabid Democrats. ... Uncle John, my great-uncle John, was a dentist, who lived in Wappingers Falls, near Poughkeepsie, New York. ... He would come down every once in a while. He was one of the Democrats, and I can remember the discussions we used to have. [laughter] ... One time, we went up to see them on a school holiday ... my father was at work, we were off from school, we went up and I remember [my brother] saying, "Dad isn't here, so maybe we won't have arguments at the table." Unfortunately, his sister was there, arguing with our great-uncle. [laughter] I was allowed to do that. Although I had to be respectful, I could still express myself. I appreciated that.

SH: So you were not just "seen but not heard."

DF: Right.

MF: What was your relationship like with your siblings growing up?

DF: I had just the one brother, and I was very protective of him. I was five years older than he. However, one morning ... when I was in seventh grade, the first half of seventh grade was at the elementary school, because the junior high was crowded, ... my brother, Charles, was in kindergarten, I think I had been annoyed with something that my mother had done, or said, or whatever, but anyway I was annoyed. We started off for school. I didn't think he was going fast enough, and I gave him a shove. He fell and hurt his knee quite badly, and it was bleeding. The principal, Miss Banta, ... washed it off and tried to take care of it. We got home and my uncle, who was our pediatrician, looked at it, too. But the upshot was that Charles developed water on the knee. ... I was scared to death, because my mother had tutored a fellow who had had water on the knee and was lame because of it. ... I could see my brother becoming crippled [and knew] that I had done this to him. ... I remember getting down and praying hard that he would be all right, because ... he was five and ... I was ten. ... When my dad came home, the first night, I don't think we knew about the water on the knee, but we knew he had a bad knee. ... I was thinking, "Well, you know what's going to happen," and I can remember my father saying, "No, Dot doesn't need to be punished, she is punished enough." I sure was. My conscience was really raw.

MF: In general, you did not have too many fights with your brother?

DF: No, no, he used to tickle me ... I mean, actually tickle me, which drove me nuts. ... I don't know whether it was the difference between our ages, or whether it was just the fact that ... it wouldn't have been looked upon with any great favor in our family, but I just didn't do it.

SH: So, there was no after-effects, no water on the knee?

DF: No, thank God.

MF: Your mother was a school teacher, was she home in the afternoon when you and your brother got home from school?

DF: Yes. She had taught before I was born, and then I don't think she taught again until I was in second grade and a teacher retired. She was an older teacher, and I don't know ... whether there was some reason why, but in the middle of the year she retired. ... So, my mother comes to teach the class I am [also in]. She was so anxious not to show partiality to me. If the principal wanted something, she would push a buzzer which would buzz in the room, and then somebody would be sent to find out what she wanted. ... I was dying to do that, but my mother would never let me go because she didn't want to show partiality. ... I finally got her to promise that the next time the buzzer rang I could go, but before that happened, I was skipped out of that grade into the next one. I don't know whether that was with malice aforethought or what, but I never got to go to the office. That was my big remembrance of my mother as my teacher.

MF: That must have certainly been an experience. You could never forget to do your homework, or complain about your teacher.

DF: No, I couldn't do that.

SH: Did you have to call her "Miss Maslin"?

DF: Probably, I didn't really call her much of anything. ... Later, in home economics, I had my aunt's friend, whom I had always called by her first name around the house, and it seems to me I didn't call her much of anything either, because I didn't want to call her "Miss Whatever," and I knew I probably shouldn't call her by her first name.

SH: Were you involved in the Girl Scouts?

DF: Yes, I was. I didn't go terribly far, I mean, I didn't get anything like Gold Bar. ... I'm not sure we had Brownies, but I was an intermediate Scout, or what we called intermediate Scouts at that time. ... I have two daughters and two sons and I was a Brownie leader for a total of eight years, four years for each girl, and then Den mother for two years, one year for each of the boys, so, yes, I've had some Scouting experience.

SH: Did your brother also join the Scouts?

DF: Yes, he did, and he became an Eagle Scout.

SH: What fun things did you do as a young woman up to junior-high, and through the junior-high days?

DF: How much fun I don't know, but I used to play kick ball with the kids across the street. I can remember kicking the ball down the street and trying to run to the base or whatever it was, and we played badminton. Nearby, in Rye, there was a large amusement park, Playland, and we used to go there. ... Also, where we lived had been a big estate, and the manor house on the estate had been made into a five-story apartment. The rest of the land was divided up, and

houses were built. ... We used to go up on the roof of the apartment on Tuesdays and Fridays, when they had fireworks at Playland, and we could see them from there. ... That was fun. One time, on the Fourth of July, ... I told you we were in ... the Village of Port Chester in the town of Rye, well, Port Chester did not allow fireworks, but in the town of Rye you could have them. ... So we went to Playland to see the fireworks. We were standing in back of the shooting gallery at one point and the manager was shooting with his gun upside down. He should have had more sense, I mean, he was the manager of that particular place. The empty cartridge came out and hit me in the neck, and I had powder burns all down my neck. I fussed about this as we walked over to ... where we were going to have our picnic supper. ... Unfortunately, as I was told, I fussed about a lot of things, so nobody paid any attention to me until we got to the park where we were going to eat. My mother looked at my neck, and here it is all blood and soot and everything. So, then we had to go back home and I had to have a tetanus shot. ... That was not the toxoid they use now, it was an anti-tetanus to which I was allergic, and I broke out in hives. People sometimes say, "Well, you're lucky it wasn't in your throat, because that could have been bad." ... Anyway, I remember that it was not comfortable, so, it was an unfortunate Fourth of July.

SH: You talked about having scarlet fever; what was the treatment for scarlet fever then?

DF: Not really much of anything except to stay ... in bed, for three weeks I think it was, and I was quarantined. My dad had to live at his mother's ... so he could go to work, and my brother had to live with one of my aunts and uncles so that he could go to school. ... What I do remember is I got a little radio ... my father brought home a little radio ... so I could hear my programs. It was at the time of [King] George the V's twenty-fifth anniversary in England and I remember hearing it [at] like six o'clock in the morning, maybe even earlier, on that little radio.

MF: Did you have any favorite radio programs?

DF: Oh, *Jolly Bill and Jane*, I can't think of the others. There were a couple of others ... there was Jack Armstrong, but I never really ... listened much to Jack Armstrong. ... What I remember about Jolly Bill and Jane is that they were sponsored by Cream-of-Wheat, which I detested. It used to gag me, but I wanted to eat this stuff in order to get whatever it was they were giving away. [laughter] ... They would send charts you could put gold stars on for something, I have no idea what. ...

SH: Were there any shows that you were not allowed to listen to?

DF: I can't think of anything. I did listen to *The Shadow* ... I mean, when I was a little older, after *Jolly Bill and Jane*. ... I can remember sometimes running downstairs, I was so scared when this came on [and I was told], "Don't listen to it if you're going to be like that." When we were in college we listened to *Inner Sanctum*. There would be a whole batch of us in one room and we would shriek. ... [laughter]

SH: How did your family feel when Franklin Roosevelt was elected president?

DF: Not happy about it.

SH: Was there any sense of pride, because he had been the Governor of New York?

DF: I can't think of any.

[TAPE PAUSED]

MF: You mentioned that history was one of your least favorite subjects when you were a younger student; did you have a favorite subject?

DF: ... Well, I always wanted to read, so literature was [a favorite]. ... I learned to read because my mother taught remedial reading with kids who came to the house, ... I can remember, when I was about three years old, ... she would have flash cards around, with words on them. I would hear the children doing the sounds, as she was a great believer in phonetics and phonics, and so I learned to read. ... There never was any pressure, it was that I just loved it. ... I can remember standing on the piano bench watching the minute hand on the clock, reading these little paper books, this was before *Dick and Jane*, but it was something like that, timing myself, to see how fast I could read those books. [laughter]

SH: Did you go to the library often?

DF: Oh, yes, and when I was in high school, the war had begun, and the library didn't pay very well, so, some of the assistants had gone off to work in the war industries, where they got a little bit more money. ... I used to work there two hours a day after school. I was paid for two hours on Saturday, too, but I usually stayed for four. I got the great sum of three dollars a week for that. ... Then, between high school and college, [in] the summer, I was the official summer substitute for two months, for July and August, and I got a hundred dollars. That was why I decided to go to the LifeSavers factory [the] next year where I got three-hundred dollars for the summer. ...

SH: You're good in math.

DF: Yes, I could figure that one out.

SH: Did you have any particular chores that were yours around the house?

DF: ... Well, sort of, to pick up after myself. I didn't have anything other than that really, I guess. ... We had two landings on our stairs. There were a couple of steps that went up and then a longer one, and then a couple more. My mother would fold up the laundry and put it on the landing. ... I don't know that I was ever told [to], but I remember picking up the laundry, when it was on the landing, taking it up, and putting it away.

MF: As you got older, was your mother influential with your schooling decisions? Did she help you with your courses or help guide your education?

DF: Well, I have to tell you what my mother said; she did not want me to bring books home, so that people thought that's all I did. ... She loved education and, I mean, she was in it, but she thought that there was more to life than just education, so she said, you know, "Don't spend your whole life doing it," but she was very supportive. ... The way I happened to go to Douglass, I had graduated in January; New York State had half-year promotions, and I had been skipped a couple of times. I was going to go to Syracuse, and I had all my papers and I knew I was supposed to meet at Humboldt Gymnasium on such and such a day and get started there. ... Then, I don't know, somehow I heard about NJC [New Jersey College for Women] and we went over to Miss Belknap [who] was in the administration there at that point. We talked with her, and I decided that was where I was going, so I didn't go to Syracuse. ... I stayed on ... in the high school until June, and I took three years of Spanish. I'd had French, and so Spanish was pretty easy, but I really didn't have a good background in it. I mean, I took the three-year regents and got a good mark in it, ... but, when I went to NJC ... I had [to] take intermediate Spanish, because I had three years credit. ... I was sort of lost at first, but I eventually got back on the track, ... and I took a couple of other things that I would not have been able to take in high school.

SH: Why do you think you picked NJC over Syracuse? You were seventeen years old; you were very young.

DF: Yes. It just appealed to me, I don't know why, but I just liked it. And my mother liked it too when we got down there. ... The application for scholarships was closing just about that time, but they took the application, and I received one of the National Scholarships. They gave two that year for out-of-state students. ... I was really pleased.

SH: How did you hear about NJC? Did you look on it more favorably because it was a women's college?

DF: ... No, actually the idea was that I was going to live in a co-educational world, and the co-educational college was the place to go. So, I do not know, but we did hear about it, whether we read something about it that sort of appealed to us, or what it was.

SH: Maybe one of your high school teachers?

DF: No.

SH: Interesting how the word got out.

DF: Yes.

MF: Had you always known that you wanted to attend a college?

DF: Oh, yes, [laughter] that was a foregone conclusion.

MF: Were your high school teachers encouraging? Did they play a role in the decision making process?

DF: ... No, I don't think they did much. I mean, there were ... relatively few women who went on to college. ... Actually, the school I went to was academic, I mean, if you took advantage of it, but they didn't really push a whole lot. What they loved was the band, the music program, ... which was topnotch. The music teacher used to take some of his band members on a cruise. They would be the orchestra, or a band, for the cruises during spring vacation, and it was good. ... I've always, I don't know, I guess I was just born to be interested in education. ...

SH: Did you take music courses, were you musical? You talked about the piano and timing.

DF: ... Well, yes, I took piano lessons. I didn't like to practice, so I don't do too well, but I did sing in the glee club and in the choir at church.

SH: Were there clubs in school?

DF: Oh, yes. There's a French Club, and a Latin Club, and history. I can't remember what else, and I was editor of the yearbook. ...

SH: Did you take any of that into NJC with you? Did you work on the yearbook there or anything?

DF: No, I don't think I did actually, ... none of the clubs I was involved in particularly. Emily Hickman had an International Relations Club that I was in. ...

SH: Tell us about your freshman year at NJC.

DF: Well, yes.

SH: This is 1942.

DF: ... Yes, the Fall of '42. ... Then, of course, we were in the war, and we had things like CDC, Civilian Defense Conditioning, with which I was not particularly intrigued, but you had to do it. ... We had to be in by seven o'clock at night, I think, during the week, and occasionally you could get a special permission to be out, but we had to sign in and sign out when we went out. ... Camp Kilmer was down the road, and some of us went down there with various groups, but you had to have a parent's permission to go down there.

SH: What did you do?

DF: Well, sort of like the USO kinds of things. You talked to them. ... Then, of course, we did have Rutgers students in our classes, because ... there were so relatively few men, they didn't offer everything ... at Rutgers College, and so, some of them came and joined our classes. ... I remember one fellow saying, "It's going to be terrible when I have to tell my grandchildren I graduated from New Jersey College for Women." Of course he wouldn't have, it was Rutgers, but that was ...

SH: I think we need to back up and ask you what your memories are of December 7, 1941.

DF: I was going to go babysitting that afternoon, it was a Sunday, and a friend of my father's was there for Sunday dinner, and we were sitting around the table, and, I guess, the news came over the radio, you know, that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. ... We were all sort of in a state of shock, I guess, and so, I don't really have vivid memories, but that ...

SH: You had talked about your family having a connection to England. In the years prior to America's entrance into the war, were there any discussions around the table about that?

DF: Yes, there must have been, but I can't remember anything specific. ... I was an Anglophile and I always defended England, and a lot of people were not in those days. ... I don't know whether there was still something remaining from the colonial era, or what, but I can remember defending England. Even before we went into the war, we had a civilian defense. ... My dad was one of the persons in the neighborhood who was on call. ... Oh, yes, we had chickens. We had chickens in the garage, because meat was getting scarce, and I can remember those chickens. Now my brother had two ducks, but we ended up eating them, and we ate some of the chickens, too. [laughter]

MF: Before Pearl Harbor did you follow the advancement of Germany throughout Europe, or did that seem distant?

DF: Well, let me tell you, this is after Pearl Harbor, but when I was in school I remember Emily Hickman saying, "You are going to have to tell your grandchildren that you don't know what went on during the war, because you'll have to say, 'I was in college at the time.'" She was disgusted with us because we didn't [follow the news]; we used to have lectures and all kinds of things on campus, you know, but, I guess, we were more interested in reading our books than in reading the newspapers. ...

SH: Emily Hickman encouraged you to stay abreast of what was going on.

DF: Oh yes, and then, while we were there, she had a year's leave of absence, I guess it was a year, at the time of the San Francisco Conference, where the United Nations was put together. ... She went out, she and Helen Gahagan Douglas were the two sort of liaisons between the conference itself and the people outside. ... We were very proud of her. She was a great person anyway, and she had her own characteristics. [laughter] She was an experience, ... and then she came back and resumed teaching. ... She was involved in a whole lot of ... things with odd names, I mean, complicated names. When the sophomores had a play that kind of was a take-off on the faculty, I was Emily Hickman, and I was president of ... "The Society for the Preservation of the Spreading of the Belief That Horse Meat Was Morally Bad to Eat." ... Because these were the sort of complicated things that she really did. Well, years later, I'm in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and ... the League of Women Voters, and all these sorts of Emily Hickman kinds of things. So I thought, well, foretelling. ... Emily died a year after I graduated. She was on her way home from school, after graduation. She must have fallen asleep, and she drove into a reservoir and was drowned. That was a great loss to the school.

SH: Who was the dean when you were there?

DF: Margaret Corwin, Dean Corwin, and then she left. ... No, I guess, it's after I graduated that some of the others came in. ...

SH: Now was (Dean Boddie?) there?

DF: Yes.

SH: Do you have stories about (Dean Boddie?)?

DF: ... No, but I think she was the one who met with my mother and me, in addition to Miss Belknap, and we were impressed with her.

SH: Now, who was the woman besides (Miss Boddie?)?

DF: Miss Belknap. Yes, she must have been, not one of the deans, but someone in the administration. She's the one who told us about the scholarship, ... as I recall.

SH: You talked about having a very early curfew.

DF: I think it was seven o'clock during the week.

SH: Did you have a lights out?

DF: No, no.

MF: Where did you live on campus?

DF: Always on Douglass, not Douglass, I'm sorry, on Gibbons. ...

SH: You talked about taking these foreign languages, did you ever think of going to the French House or the Spanish House?

DF: No. I had friends, in fact, my freshman year roommate, later, lived in the German House, but, no, I never did.

SH: Do you remember who your big sister was?

DF: ... I couldn't tell you her name. She also had that scholarship, the same scholarship I did, but I don't remember her name, [Grace Donkersloot].

SH: Do you remember your little sister?

DF: No. Her first name was Pat.

SH: Do you remember any of the traditions around Douglass?

DF: The Sacred Path, oh yes. ... My first eight weeks, despite the fact that I chose Douglass, I wasn't so sure that, that was where I wanted to be. I don't remember what it was, oh, I mean why, but I can remember writing to my father and mother and saying, "I'm going to get a job in the summer and pay back my scholarship," because you couldn't get your transcript if you didn't, "and commute to Barnard the next year." [laughter] But by the end of that first term, I wouldn't have left for anything, and so things changed. But I was ... one of the Yule-log bearers, the second, when I was a sophomore. ... Sacred Path, we of course didn't dare walk on until we were taken down by our sisters. I remember, across from Gibbons, crossing the bridge and how we would go in lockstep and the thing was swaying back and forth.

SH: As a freshman you were then, you took part in initiations.

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

MF: Side two, tape one.

SH: Please continue.

DF: Yes, we had ... little hats, the kind of hats you ... make out of paper, but ours were not paper, and we had swords. We had a little belt ... [and a] little wooden sword and that's what we wore. ...

SH: Were the sophomores particularly picky that year?

DF: I don't remember whether they were, they might have been. [laughter]

SH: As a sophomore did you do the same to the freshman?

DF: Trample on the freshmen? I think we tried to be kind to them. One of the things we did, I don't know whether it was the first year or second, but some of us went to Johnson and Johnson in the evening and rolled bandages for the war effort.

SH: That was one of my questions, what did you do for the war effort? Did you have a Victory Garden?

DF: Well, my dad's hobby was gardening, so yes, we [did], long before the war.

SH: You talked about Camp Kilmer and wrapping bandages at J&J, were there other war-related activities for the young women at NJC?

DF: I can't remember specifically, as I said, we had lectures [that dealt] with the war and the CDC, the Civilian Defense Conditioning, was to get us ready, in case we had to do anything.

SH: Did anyone consider joining the military?

DF: Well, we had ASTP fellas, too. They were, don't ask me what the ASTP is, but they were in the Army and sent to Rutgers for education and some of them ... had classes at Douglass and we ran into them in classes, but I don't think of anybody who left school to join.

SH: No women left to go to the war?

DF: No.

MF: How often did you go home when you were at the New Jersey College for Women?

DF: Well, I went home for long vacations. I remember I was a waitress for three years and a dining hall captain for my last year. ... I remember, the first year, I was there for Thanksgiving. Of course, I always went home at Christmas, and I might have gone home several other times. I [would] take the Pennsylvania Railroad to New York and then the New York-New Haven and Hartford out to my hometown, but I don't think I went home too often.

MF: When you did go home, were you able to notice any changes to Port Chester during the course of the war?

DF: Not really, I don't think so.

MF: There were not any local boys that went off for the war?

DF: Well, yes, there were. My uncle was the chairperson of the ... draft board in Westchester County, so, we heard tales of some of them. But, ... none of my cousins went, several of them were older, quite a bit older, because my dad was the fifth of the ... six children who survived. So, his sister, older sister and brother were a fair amount older. ... I had friends who were in the service, but ... fortunately, they weren't killed or wounded.

SH: Were women encouraged to join the military?

DF: At that time? I don't think particularly at school, but, yes, otherwise. I mean, they were fully accepted and eager to have them join. ...

SH: Were there courses offered at Douglass that were specifically offered because of the war?

DF: Specifically because of the war? If they were, I didn't have any.

SH: What about math and sciences, things like that?

DF: Well, they might have, but that was not my [thing]. I was a history major with a political science minor, political science and English, or something like that, so, I didn't have too many of the science classes.

SH: What kind of discussions did you have? Were there any discussions as to how this war came to be?

DF: Well, of course, in our history classes we could see how some of the issues might have arisen, but ... I don't think we got terribly involved in them. I mean, nothing as it was during the Vietnam War, I mean, that affected campuses so, but I think we were not that affected by the Second World War.

SH: Was anyone seriously dating anyone who had gone into the military?

DF: Well, I did go out with one of the ASTP fellows, and that was interesting because ... he had ... taught dancing for Arthur Murray, so he was a neat dancer, and it was very interesting going to the dances with him.

SH: How much social activity was there? Were they shared with Rutgers?

DF: There were people who went from Douglass to Rutgers for house parties and things like that. ... There was a concert series at the university that we went to. There were little theater play[s]. ... It turned out to be my cousin-in-law who played the lead, very often, Art Meredith, who was at Rutgers at that time. ... They were the little theater plays at Douglass, but, of course, we had to have males in them, so Art was usually the star of the show. ... There were those kinds of things, and the plays, like the roasting that we gave the faculty ...

MF: Did you have any interaction with the fraternities on campus?

DF: I don't recall that I did go much with the fellows who were in the fraternities. Some of my ... housemates did. One of my friends married, is married to, one of the fellows who was there. ... I was going with my ASTP friend, so I didn't have ... any necessity to go to the fraternities.

MF: How did you get back and forth between Rutgers College and NJC?

DF: Walked. We walked, most of us, most of the time. [laughter] I mean, there was a bus that went ... down George Street, into the center of town, but mostly we walked. I can remember some very cold walks, coming back from the concerts especially. Sometimes the fellows had cars, but ... well, people weren't driving a whole lot anyway during the war, if they didn't have to. [laughter]

SH: How did that affect your mother and father? Did they talk about that, the rationing of sugar and coffee?

DF: Well, we had the ration books—the blue stamps and red stamps. Red stamps were for meat and blue stamps for were everything else that had to be rationed. ... I can remember my mother had saved up quite a few of the ... blue stamps which would be canned goods and stuff like that. ... We did not have a car at that point. I could take a bus, but I had to walk up the hill from the bus stop. I can remember spending all these blue stamps and coming home loaded with canned goods and here I am trying to walk up the hill with a [bag] from the bus [laughter], but we got

along okay with it. ... Then I was a waitress at the Shore between my sophomore and junior years and, of course, everybody had to bring their ration books to the hotel. ...

SH: Really, you had to use them there?

DF: Yes. ...

SH: Which town on the Shore?

DF: Spring Lake ... I really enjoyed that. ... I remember we did go on the bus to Asbury Park, and other places.

SH: Was there a group of you who did this or did you go by yourself?

DF: No, I didn't go by myself; I was with one other woman who is in my class. Whether there were others, I can't remember.

SH: Did you have a house or an apartment that you rented?

DF: No. ... The hotel provided housing; they had either an extra building or part of the hotel that we stayed in. ... We were not too far from Lakehurst, and, you know, the blimps were doing sea patrol to see if there were any submarines. ... You could almost reach out and touch those things. ... It was fascinating.

SH: What kind of a blackout was along the boardwalk in Spring Lake?

DF: You know, I can't even remember that. I remember in my home, we had blackout curtains. The hotel must have had something, I don't know, I don't remember.

MF: During all this time what was your main source of news of the events that were going on overseas? Was it the radio, the newspaper, word of mouth?

DF: Well, I suppose ... the radio and the newspaper. As I say, we apparently were not reading the newspaper much because of Emily's comment that we wouldn't know what was going on because we'd been in college, which is probably true for a lot of us, I mean, because we were concerned about what was going on on the campus. ... There was nothing like anti-war protests, or anything like that at that point; we were all behind the war. ...

SH: What clubs were you involved in at NJC?

DF: Well, as I say, the International Relations [Club], I know I was in others but I can't think [of them] ... I was in Phi Beta Kappa as of my junior year. So, I guess I did go to those meetings. ... There were a batch of us when we were being initiated who thought about singing, "Phi Beta Kappa was never meant for me, because you can't have brains and beauty both down here at NJC." We debated on whether we would sing it out openly. We didn't, but we used to sing it quietly. [laughter] ... It was funny.

MF: In the International Relations Club did you discuss the war?

DF: Well, there, there we would, because it was Emily Hickman. ... Well, it was more the peace after the war. One of the things I remember her saying, not there but in a class at one time when we were talking about Stalin and the killings that went on in Russia under him, ... she said, "You cannot excuse them, but you can explain it," and I have thought of that so often. You know, from his standpoint, this is what he had to do, and I thought of that so often in other things. You cannot exonerate what goes on, but you do have to try to understand why they're doing these kinds of things. ... It's helpful, too, I think; keeps you from going off the deep end or having a knee-jerk reaction about things.

MF: Was there any sense or knowledge of what was going on with the concentration camps that the Nazis created?

DF: ... Well ... no, I don't really think that we had a good understanding of what it was, and, of course in that, we were not different from most of the rest of the people. But we had a ... young woman in our house ... who was, I suppose, a refugee. I mean, her family had been over there. ... Even with that, you know, I don't recall a great deal of [discussion]. We tended to talk more about the religious differences, but ... I think that in this country it was sort of downplayed, you know. ...

SH: The young woman, who was the refugee, was she a Jewish woman?

DF: Yes, yes.

SH: Was her whole family with her?

DF: Yes, I think so. I don't think she had lost people actually, but it was strange to think because ... we certainly did not consider it in the way that we should have been aware of it.

SH: Did you go to the movies often?

DF: Yes.

SH: Did you see the newsreels to keep you abreast of the news?

DF: Of the fighting, yes.

SH: Were there any women that you were aware of that were writing to boyfriends?

DF: Oh, yes, yes.

SH: Could you be married and go to NJC?

DF: I think toward the end of my time there you could. I think in the beginning you could not; or you could be married, but you couldn't live on campus. I think that was it.

MF: You mentioned Emily Hickman several times; did you have any other favorite teachers while you were there?

DF: Margaret Judson was a British history teacher, and that was what I really liked. I did my honors paper on Thomas Cranmer, who was sort of the architect of the Church of England. ... There was, still is, I guess, St. John the Evangelist, a little church down the street from my college, and Horace Perot was the pastor. ... His wife was in an institution, so he was married, but, ... somehow or other, apparently, he was able to divorce her, eventually, and he married one of the physics professors. ... There were some of us who sang in the choir. Margaret Judson sang in the choir. I sang in the choir and there were several others of us, because it was such a small church. There was a larger Episcopal church there in town that a lot of the people went to. St. John's didn't have an altar guild and some of us from school went down on Saturday mornings, we shined the brasses and fixed the altar. ...

SH: I think Christ Church is the bigger one.

DF: Christ Church, yes.

MF: Do you remember what sort of requirements you had as part of graduation for Douglass College and with your history major?

DF: Well, I did the history honors paper. Margaret Judson was my professor for that. There was Dr. Schmidt, I had for American history. What do you mean by requirement? I mean the normal ...

MF: Could you take classes in the specific disciplines that interested you, or did you have to fulfill major and graduation requirements?

DF: Oh, well, yes, you had a certain amount of language and of English, mathematics, science. I had to take a science course, and I took biology ... botany with Dr. Small ... because, as I say I was not a great scientist and steered clear of it as much as possible. ... I had the math with Mr. Walter, I think was his name. ... So, in order to have a major or minor, you had [to have] a certain number of credits in each of those. That was it that I recall. ... So I took poli sci, a couple of courses in that, and the histories.

SH: Who taught your conditioning?

DF: Oh, that was part of the phys-ed. I guess, it was at the end of, maybe it was the end of freshman year, I'm not sure, we all had to have physicals, or, I mean, we went to the clinic, and my blood pressure was low. The doctor said ... "Mine is low, and yours is lower," and I thought, "Ah, now I won't have to take gym," [laughter] and so she said, "Now go out and work hard." So, that was it. ... I had lived through the CDC and whether that was, I think that must have been extra in addition to what we normally had to take. ... I had three cousins who had all

had riding lessons, ... before college, and one of them even had her own horse. I thought that sounded pretty good, and I would like to take riding lessons, so, my first phys-ed, I signed up for riding lessons. Well, I got on this horse, I finished the lessons, but I had never been up so high in my life. [laughter] ... I thought, that's enough for me, [I] refused to go riding anymore.

SH: Was it over at the Ag College, where the horses were?

DF: No, they were not there. We must have gone to a stable, I think.

MF: From your experience, what were the most popular majors at NJC at that time?

DF: Heavens, I don't know, sociology, there was a lot of sociology; music because Douglass has always had a good music department.

SH: Did you sing with the glee club?

DF: I did. I wasn't in ... choir, but I sang with the glee [club].

MF: Do you think most of the young women that were there were preparing to join the work force or were they waiting to get married?

DF: Well, I think a lot were hoping to get married, but I think they also planned to work ... you know, to have some kind of a career. It was just at the beginning, you know, of people, women thinking more of a career other than teaching, or nursing, or whatever. ... I think a lot, probably a lot of them did plan to teach, and we had a library school, so that some of them majored in library science. That, actually, was what I was supposed [to do], not during school, but my first job was as assistant to the reference librarian at Rutgers University Library. The idea was that I would go back and take library science at Douglass, but I was married the September that I graduated, and we were living in Somerville, New Jersey for a year, so I commuted to my work. ... So, I talked my way out of going to library school, but it was an interesting experience. You know, at Rutgers, they all sign out their own books, and we used to joke about the fact that the higher the degree the less legible their signature was. Then, the next year, my husband did graduate work at the University of Michigan, so I worked in the university library there and in the library extension service, which was specifically for alumni. They would write in and ask for references, or, we had long lists of things, we clipped newspapers and kept them in files so that we could provide that for them.

SH: For the University of Michigan?

DF: Yes.

MF: To backtrack a little bit, how did you meet your husband?

DF: Well, when I was a sophomore there was a young woman in my house, [who] came in one night and she said, "Did you say you're from Port Chester?" and I said, "Yes." ... She [asked], "[Do you know] my great-uncle John ... Ingman?" I said, "Yes, he's the treasurer of the church I

go to.” ... So, Jean and I, it was Jean Field, and she and I struck up a friendship and her brother was in the service at that point. He had graduated from Worcester Tech [Worcester Polytechnic Institute] in Massachusetts and he was in the Navy in the Philippines. ... So, I don’t know when I first met him actually, but eventually I did. ... At that point then I dropped the ASTP fellow, and David came home from the service, so that was it.

MF: Did you correspond with him while he was still overseas?

DF: Yes, and he with me. ... Jean lived in Somerville, New Jersey, which is not very far from New Brunswick, so, I frequently went to her house with her because she could go back in a matter of [an] hour, whatever.

MF: Did you often talk to your husband about his experiences while he was overseas?

DF: Well, he had written quite a bit of it, and, yes, we conversed when he was back.

SH: So you really met through letters first?

DF: I’m trying to figure out when I first met him. I mean, I’m not sure that I wrote before I had met him, but he must have been home on leave, or so. I don’t know, maybe not, because he was in the Pacific. I mean, that would have been a long way to come on leave.

SH: When did he graduate from Worcester?

DF: ‘44.

SH: Perhaps you met him before he actually left?

DF: Well, yes, yes, I must have met him when he was still at [Worcester]. Because Jean would have started in ‘43 at Douglass. ... Actually, we’re [Jean and I] the same age. ...

SH: She was a year behind you in school?

DF: Yes. She’s a month older than I. ... We were at, I don’t know one of those places where they served alcohol. ... She didn’t know that I was younger, and she insisted that whenever somebody questioned that I was all right to drink, because I was older than she was. ... Then I said, “Oh, I’m a month younger than you.” [laughter] ...

SH: Did you save any of your letters?

DF: Well, we were divorced in 1976, and so, I think, at that time I threw them out. [laughter]

MF: Your husband only served for the tail end of the war then?

DF: Well, yes, I think he started right out after graduation in ‘44. ...

MF: He was back and married by '46?

DF: '46, yes, he was out of the service at that point. ...

SH: Did you marry in New Brunswick?

DF: No, in Port Chester, my hometown. ... Then, as I say, we spent a year in Somerville. We actually lived at his mother's house. We had the upstairs. We had sort of a kitchen in what had been a nursery for one of the kids. There were just two, Jean and David, and then we had a big bedroom, a sort of bedroom-living room, and bath; that was where we were. Then we went out to Michigan. We built a trailer while we were in Somerville. All the GIs were coming back and going to school and there were very, very, few places in which to live, so, we built this trailer. I used to scour the junkyards around to get stuff for it after work. ... Then we took it out to Ypsilanti, which is right next to Ann Arbor. ... It was very interesting, because Ann Arbor went on daylight savings and Ypsilanti did not. ... So getting to school in Ann Arbor [was difficult]. ... There were a whole batch of young kids who lived there who were going to the school. ... Of course, cars were hard to get. We had a '36 Chevy with which we pulled this trailer, which was three tons, I think, or something like [that]. I mean because we built it, it was much heavier than it should have been. ...

SH: Had you been working at the university for that year?

DF: ... I was working then, yes. ... David had worked at Johns Manville during the summer when he was in college because Manville is right near Somerville. ... He had graduated in, what was it? ... I guess, just plain mechanical [engineering]. When he was at Michigan he was taking automotive engineering. ... One of the kids, one of the young fellows in the trailer park, had a Chevy, a new Chevy, and so he would take us all to the university. The one who lived next to us was in law school at the university. He and his wife had their first baby while we were there. Dewy is the one that had the Chevy and so we would go in. ... The difference in the time was interesting. We got to Michigan in the Summer of '47, and ... we were there for a little more than a year, and came out here and Nancy was born here a couple of months after we were out here. ... That was an interesting time in the trailer park, too. ...

MF: I just have a couple of more questions regarding Rutgers and NJC. During your last couple of years there, from '45 to '46, what changes did you see at both Rutgers and NJC as the servicemen started coming home from the war?

DF: Well, of course, I wasn't there too long when they were coming home. It sort of remained as [it was]. I mean that, we had some fellows from Rutgers, and then we had the ASTP was still there for the most part, but there were more men coming in, ... so, it was interesting to see more on the campus.

SH: You graduated in 1946. Tell us about what it was like when you heard that the war was over in Europe. Were there any celebrations?

DF: Well, ... that was in the summer, yes, or something, so I think I was home. ... Oh, no, this was when Roosevelt died, and that was April I think. ... I told you, my family and I were not Roosevelt fans, but we had a service at chapel, and that was the most moving service. ... I remember singing *America the Beautiful* as part of it, and the tears started rolling down my cheeks for this man that I never even liked, but I have come to appreciate him. ... I think he was a great president. ...

SH: What kind of confidence did you have in Truman?

DF: I didn't have any. ... Now ... I appreciate him. Yes, I remember I couldn't vote in that election when he ran, because we had just moved to this area. ... I can remember writing to my mother and father that I had a horrible feeling he was going to win, and he did. ... I wasn't happy about it, but, you know, time changes a lot of things, looking back. But when I was in school, they would say, "How could you be a history major, and a Phi Beta Kappa, and be a Republican?" [laughter] You know, because most of the kids that I knew were not.

SH: As the war ended in Europe was there a celebration.

DF: At school?

SH: At school or at all?

DF: I suppose we must have, I mean, certainly we would have.

SH: I don't know if you were already working in Spring Lake?

DF: ... Between my junior and senior years, which would have been 1945, I was working at Scott Foresman [Pearson Scott Foresman] in New York City. They're the ones that put out *Dick and Jane, and Sally*. ... Another woman from my class and I worked there. I always wanted to work in New York, my dad worked in New York. I wanted a commutation ticket on the train, which I had. ... [They had] the edition for the public schools, and then they had what we called the Catholic edition (the Cathedral edition) for Catholic schools. ... Oh, and the sad thing was, because this was the war and people couldn't get things when they wanted them, we would be processing ... orders that had come in, like March, and say, "Please ship immediately," and we're doing this in the summer. ... The last day I was there, I let a whole order go out, ordinary plain, not Cathedral edition, which was what they wanted, I remember that clearly. ... I remember, I guess it must have been Europe, with ... people shooting off things, and being so excited about it.

SH: Then do you remember when they celebrated the end of the war in Japan, V-J Day?

DF: Yes. ... In a way, it was sad because of the dropping of the bomb, and, of course, there were people who said, "Yes, but they saved our lives." I mean, I still have friends who say, "well, it saved my life because I probably could have been killed in the war." ... "Yes, but think about all those Japanese that got killed," I mean. ... I was out of school by that time ... What

was that summer? '45, yes, and so, we were excited about it, but, also, it was a bittersweet, kind of. ...

SH: You came back to finish your senior year then, after the war was over.

DF: Yes.

SH: Was there a huge influx of GIs to campus?

DF: Well, I think there must have been more coming to the university, I mean, to Rutgers College. Yes, because they were, but I'm not sure they all got out at the same [time], you know, there were a lot of them that were still in the service. ... I don't think there was a tremendous influx at that time.

SH: Did you have anything to do with the University Heights where they had all the married students?

DF: No.

SH: You did not at all?

DF: No, but they had, what were the colleges that they had there? There was Livingston College and there was another one?

SH: The Ag College?

DF: Well, there was the Ag School. But, oh, yes, when I first went there we had ... some kind of a religious group. ... I mean, we weren't overboard with religion ... and we met a couple of the fellows ... who were in the doctoral program at the Ag School. Several of my friends married them after they graduated.

SH: Do you remember who they were?

DF: Well, one was John Lowrie Malcolm, who died about two years ago and ... oh, Art Van Dyke. Yes, I get a Christmas card from him and his wife every year. Dottie was in my class and John's wife, Janet, was my roommate freshman year. ... She graduated a year ahead of us.

MF: Did you have any compulsory religious requirements while you were at NJC? Did you have to go to church services?

DF: ... Oh, chapel, yes. Yes, we had chapel on Tuesday and Friday. ... I was a waitress, waitresses couldn't go to the Friday one, because it was around the time that we would be getting ready for lunch, but we had to go on Tuesday, which was earlier.

MF: Did anyone object to going to the chapel services?

DF: I don't think so.

MF: It was just accepted?

DF: Yes.

MF: In your correspondence with your husband while he was still in the Philippines did you notice any censorship in the letters that you received?

DF: I don't think there was any, no.

MF: So, in the letters it seemed that he was pretty free in what he was writing?

DF: Yes, but he wasn't saying things that probably would have been censored. I mean he was more focused I think on positive things than negative about the service.

SH: What was he on, you said he was in the Navy?

DF: He was [an] electronics technician mate.

SH: Do you remember what the name of the ship was, that he was on?

DF: No, but the island he was on was on Manikani Island. [laughter]

MF: When he came back from the war did he benefit from the GI Bill?

DF: Yes, that's how he did his graduate work out in Michigan.

MF: You actually briefly mentioned before the International Relations Club, coming from that sort of background did you have any opinions on the formation of the United Nations?

DF: Yes ... about that time, the World Federalist started, and I was originally a member when it started. I haven't kept up my membership with them, but I was interested in internationalism and I was really pleased about the United Nations.

MF: And so then you and your husband spent about a year in Michigan?

DF: Yes. ... He was recruited by what was then Piasecki Helicopter Corporation, which then became Vertol Helicopter Corporation [Vertol Aircraft Corporation]. ... Now, it's the Vertol Division of Boeing, which is down not too far from where you are today.

MF: How long after you were married before you had your first child?

DF: We were married in September 1946, and Nancy was born in November 1948.

MF: So at that point did you become a full-time mother?

DF: Yes, yes, and we lived ... came out here, and we had this trailer, and we looked around to find a place to put the trailer. There were three places in Delaware County that we could have it. ... What we ended up on was West Ninth Street, which runs sort of along the Delaware River. ... I mean ... there's a community between Ninth Street and the Delaware, but, I mean, it runs parallel. ... It was [called] Cox Trailer Park. We lived there for two years, and then we bought property about two blocks from here. ... We were going to have a house built ... and by this time we also had Michael. Nancy was two in November, Michael had been born the previous July, and we moved in October, just before she was two. ... We moved to a little house in a little community within Aston Township called Green Ridge. ... I currently serve a church now in Aston Township, so I have kind of gone full circle. We were there for a year and then ... we moved to the house that we had built. ... It was just outside of Swarthmore, and it would have been nice to be in Swarthmore, so the kids could go to school here. ... So, five years later, we moved to Vassar Avenue. All the streets in Swarthmore are either colleges, or trees, [laughter] except for Park Avenue. ... Well, there is Park College, too. We were there for twenty-four years, and I sold that and came here.

MF: How far apart are the ages of your other children?

DF: There are twenty months between Nancy and Michael, and twenty months between Michael and Susan, and thirty months between Susan and Jeffrey. [laughter]

MF: So, you must have had quite a handful.

DF: I had four under six for two months. Yes, it was a lot.

SH: We will not ask if you were working at that time.

DF: I was working, but not gainfully, or, I mean, at least not monetarily gainfully.

SH: Did you go back to the workforce at all?

DF: Yes. ... I started teaching nursery school. I decided to go to [the] University of Pennsylvania and get a master's degree in education, elementary education. At that time, Pennsylvania was crying for teachers, and so, the State was paying half of one's tuition for liberal arts majors to go back and get degrees, master's degrees in education. ... So, I thought, "Well, if they would pay half of it, I'll go to Penn." ... I got a master's degree in education. I was then teaching, I had been teaching at the Friends Nursery School, where my kids went, but Penn said, "You have to have full time teaching experience. We don't give master's degrees to people ... who just teach nursery school." So, I taught for one year at a public school in first grade. Penn required one year. ... Then, I didn't do anything for a year; I didn't work for a year. ...

SH: It sounds like you had a lot of work with four children.

DF: [laughter] ... Then one of the other nursery schools in town was losing the founder. ... [A] friend of mine was director at that time, she said, "Will you consider it?" I said, "Yes, I'd be

glad to.” I was there for nine years. Then, I taught kindergarten in Springfield, the first four years they had public kindergartens, just over here. They hadn’t had public kindergartens, but they had a lot of church kindergartens, because [there were] no public [ones]. ... The first two years I taught were in Princeton Presbyterian Church, which had built a great, big kindergarten room, ... and then I moved into one of the public schools. At that point, I decided I had enough teaching. ... Also, my husband had left and we were getting a divorce. ... I was sort of knocked back on my heels for a while, then, I thought, “Maybe I can do something that I would really like to do.” So, I thought about going to the seminary. I’d been active as a lay person at the conference level. ... In the United Methodist Church, we have what’s called a conference, like a diocese or synod. ... I had been active as a lay person mostly in the field of civil rights, human rights, and that kind of thing. ... So, I thought, “Well, I’ll see what it’s like to go to seminary.” I applied to Drew, and I was admitted, and ended up finishing my degree, [a] Master of Divinity degree from Drew.

SH: Did you go back to New Jersey?

DF: No, I commuted from here ... two and three times a week, and I loved it. ... Later, I was on the alumni committee for a long time. ... I was driving ... two-and-a-quarter hours up and two-and-a-quarters back. ... I thought, “I don’t think I really need this anymore,” so I said, “Take me off.” ... It was good and I’ve really enjoyed it. I served churches outside of the area but I always kept my house here. It was while I was still in the seminary that I bought this. It was just a hole in the ground when I bought it. ...

SH: Really?

DF: Yes. I thought, “This is going to be the only condominium in Swarthmore, I think I would like to have it.” ... There are several apartments now that have become condominiums, but this is the only one that was built as a condominium. ... So, I bought it and I kept it, even though I served a couple of churches in what we call the Anthracite District in Shamokin, which is the heart of the anthracite coal country. ... I was in Lebanon, ... actually Cornwall, but near Lebanon, Pennsylvania for a couple of years, ... then I retired and came back here.

SH: How old were your children when you started going to the seminary? What was your youngest?

DF: I started in ’78 and Jeffery was born ...

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

MF: This continues an interview with the Rev. Dorothy Field on March 27, 2006 at her home in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania with Melissa Falk and Sandra Stewart Holyoak.

DF: Okay, Jeffrey was born in 1954, so what would he be, twenty-four? Yes.

SH: So they were basically out of the house and grown.

DF: Yes, right. ... So, I've been in an ordained ministry ever since.

SH: You are ordained with the United Methodist Church.

DF: Yes. It was interesting. When ... we moved to the house where we lived for twenty-four years, Nancy was about three years old. ... I was taking her to the different Sunday schools, and the Methodist Sunday School was, oh it was beautiful. The room where they had ... the little kids was nice and sunny, and the teacher was someone who taught at the Friends School in Media. She was really a wonderful person. ... So, I sort of gravitated there and I didn't feel too out of place since, as I say, my mother's family had been Methodists. We had a new pastor come and he wanted a large membership class. He asked me if I would join and I said, "No, I'm Episcopalian, I'm going to remain one." ... He said, "Well, if you've been confirmed in the Episcopal Church they never take you off the roll," so I said, "Fine, in Swarthmore I'll be a Methodist." So, I'm still here. ... Now, we are United Methodist because we united with another denomination, and that became the name.

SH: How uncommon was it for a woman to be ordained?

DF: It wasn't terribly, I mean, the United Methodist Church has been ordaining women since 1956. ... We celebrate the fiftieth anniversary this year. ... There were not a whole lot, and there are certainly more and more. In fact, they say in some seminaries the women outnumber the men.

MF: You mentioned that civil rights was one of the reasons you were interested in joining the seminary. Were there any particular instances of inequality that you had experienced, maybe during the 1960s, that prompted that?

DF: Oh, sure. I mean, I lived through the whole civil rights movement. But, as I say, way back, remember I said, in Port Chester, I couldn't understand why somebody had to be well-to-do if one were African-American in order to live where he wanted to? ... Now, another thing, I don't know whether it was a great influence or not but I can remember when we would sit down to eat, my mother would say, it seems to me a lot, probably it wasn't, but, "I wish every little boy and girl in the world has as much to eat as we do." ... So, I grew up thinking, "Well, every little boy and girl doesn't and that's not fair," I don't know, ... it seemed to me that what causes me to act, or try to act, is injustice and discrimination. ... The other thing is thinking, "What if this were my son or my daughter, and how would I feel, you know, if they're being tormented, or discriminated against, or whatever?"

MF: Were there any specific projects that you worked on, or groups that you were involved with, during your time as part of the church?

DF: Well, yes, this was before I was ordained, before I went to seminary, ... I was part of a group in Chester. Chester is the largest city in our county; it's probably ... at least one of the poorest in Pennsylvania. ... There was a young man at ... Swarthmore, who is now an ordained Presbyterian pastor in Princeton, but he had started a group called the Chester Home Improvement Project. ... One of the things that they did was to have kids from the college and

then, eventually, high school kids go down on Friday night. They would ... live in one of the neighborhood houses. ... They'd have people talking to them about the conditions there on Friday evening, and then, Saturday, they would work on houses. It really was a home improvement project and they would work in cooperation with the persons who were in those particular houses. ... Then they would have some more discussions. In addition to that kind of a thing, it became a community action agency. ... Some of us from Swarthmore went down, was active in that, and so I knew about that. African-Americans and some whites in the West End Ministerium were trying to build houses in Chester and I knew about that. Then, because of some things that happened in our United Methodist Conference, we were supposed to try to see where we could make some impact on what was going on. My pastor and I went to see someone about this housing project. He turned out to be Wilson Goode, who ultimately came to be the mayor of Philadelphia, but at that point he was a consultant on these houses. As I say, the group I was with were laughing at the ministers trying to do these houses. ... One of the churches, one of the white churches, the Baptist church in Upland, had offered to let them use some of their money, ... interest-free. It was as a loan, but it was interest-free, to help them get started. The man, ... the contractor who was doing the houses, was an African-American, and, at that time, he could not get a performance bond. This is the 1950s, '60s. ... I talked with the pastor and [said] "Why don't we ... get something started?" We got the people together in other churches in Swarthmore and we were able to raise fifteen-thousand dollars, which isn't very much, but it was supposed to be a revolving fund to help build. ... Then, the people at Friends Meeting put up one-hundred-thousand dollars of their investments as a bond, a performance bond, which is what is supposed to have given the people the clearance to go ahead and build the houses. So, they built, ultimately, forty-eight houses for persons to buy under certain housing, some legislation. I forgot now what the term was, it wasn't Section 8 housing, but it was something like that. ... Those houses are still there. But ... the first eight houses were played up in the Chester paper, because these was the first new houses in Chester in ten years. So, I felt good about that. Also, ... I got people, again in the churches, to say we would accept some Vietnamese refugees who wanted to stay here. They happened to be young fellows who had been on a ship. The captain of the ship said he wasn't going back to Vietnam, he was going to go somewhere else, so they had to go with him. ... They ended up in the United States. We had three of those fellows that the churches had offered to sponsor. ... They were living with me for a very short time. There were a couple of things like that. ... Then, within the church we, our conference, merged with what had been the Delaware Conference, which was the African-American Conference, because early on, we were separated. ... I was always the token person who went to all the things at the Delaware Conference, which was great. ... I got to know so many people. ... Then, in 1975-76, Marquis put out a *Who's Who in Religion*. This is before I was ordained, and I was in the first two ... editions. That pleases me very much. Now, apparently I'm also in ... *Who's Who in American Women* for ... 2006 and '07, and in the 2007 *Who's Who in America*. ... I am especially proud of my *Who's Who in Religion*. [laughter] ...

SH: What are you most proud of that you have accomplished since you were a young girl at NJC?

DF: Aside from my children, I am a member of the Douglass Society. ... Again, that was because of the social concerns that I was involved in. ... I am pleased with that. At the induction, I was asked to ... talk a little bit about liberal arts education, and I'm firmly convinced

that liberal arts is the way to go. ... So many places, if they hire you, want to train you the way they want. ... So, take a lot of technical courses, obviously if you're going to be a scientist or a mathematician, ... but even so, I think liberal arts are wonderful. My husband went to Worcester Tech in Massachusetts. There, ... at that point ... I don't know whether they still do, the engineers had a lot of liberal arts courses as well. ... I think they're the basis for a lot of stuff. [laughter]

MF: All this while have you kept in contact with friends that you made at NJC?

DF: Yes, mostly now through Christmas cards and things like that. ... One of the women who was in my house freshman year is living not far from my brother and sister-in-law down in Williamsburg, so occasionally I see her down there. ... I was secretary of the class for ten years. Last time we met, and we will be meeting again this year, I passed it on to a woman in the class. ... She had been good about sending me material, so I asked her one time, "Would you do this?" She said she would, fortunately, because it's not always easy to get that passed on. ... We have been corresponding on the Internet, and I've got three or four [emails] on there now from her. We both see alike politically. She's from New York City. Her son is a cantor and she has a daughter who ... has written a book. She's a very interesting person. ... She just within the last year moved from her home in New York to a retirement community or life care, continuing care community, up in Connecticut, where her sister, also a graduate of Douglass, is. ... We still communicate every day. ...

MF: Have you continued to go to the reunions?

DF: The five-year ones, yes.

MF: Your son served in the Army from '72 through '75. Did he serve in Vietnam?

DF: No, no. He was too young. He served on the rifle team. They had a rifle team at the high school through the Marine base, which is not far from here. ... Three of my kids were crack shots. Jeffrey was one of them. Nancy got best score in the county, once or twice, and my son, Michael, was a champion, also. Susan was on the rifle team, too, but, like me, she's not a crack shot. ... Jeffrey didn't really know what he wanted to do past high school, ... so, he decided to go into the Army and take truck driving, so he could buy a truck and make money to do something else. ... The first year he was a truck driver but then they found out that he was a good shot. ... He was [put] on the rifle team and they went around from one place to another and put on exhibitions and did teaching and stuff, fortunately. ... Like me, he was outspoken. He said he was sure they were glad at the end of three years to get rid of him. [laughter] ... He never ended up in jail or was ushered out with dishonorable discharge, but he too was glad at the end of the three years.

MF: Was there ever any fear of being drafted for Vietnam?

DF: My kids, they were too young, yes, my boys were too young. I guess Nancy probably would have been old enough, had she been a boy.

MF: Do you have any opinions on the current plans for the consolidation of Douglass College as part of the Rutgers School of Arts and Sciences?

DF: Well, I signed the petition not to. Miriam, the woman I was talking about, ... she is really upset about it. I wish, I wish they had left Douglass alone, even with the Douglass Residential College. I don't know exactly what that's going to mean. ... I don't know, but then we fought changing the name, you know, and here we are, we've survived.

SH: When did they change it from NJC to Douglass?

DF: I can't remember but it was quite a while after I graduated.

SH: Was it really?

DF: I think so, I mean, a period of years, and then we thought that was terrible.

SH: Are there any areas that we have not covered that we should put on tape?

DF: I don't think of any.

SH: Or questions that we have forgotten to ask? Well, we thank you very much for spending a delightful afternoon with us.

DF: Well, you're welcome. Oh, I say, I cannot thank Douglass enough for having given me so much. I'm sure that it has made a great difference in my life. I'm grateful that I had the opportunity to be exposed to the college, to the people who were there, the faculty and the students, and I just think it's a great place.

SH: All right, thank you very much.

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Reviewed by Melissa Falk 5/2/06

Reviewed by Charles Edmonds 9/19/06

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 11/24/06

Reviewed by Dorothy M. Field 5/30/07