

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
NEW BRUNSWICK
AN INTERVIEW WITH MARGARET HARRIET WAUGH
FOR THE
RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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Margaret Harriet Waugh: ... And, that was the only casualty ... amongst my acquaintances, and he was only a slight acquaintance.

Barbara Tomblin: So, you really did not lose anyone else?

MHW: And, the other boys all came home. They all ... did something, and came home, but, ... they didn't talk about their experiences. Except one, who was in the Navy, and ended up in Reykjavik, Iceland, and ... that's what he talked about, mostly. He was there a long time and that was considered very good duty. It was in the Navy, but, way beyond combat, ... no real hands-on anything, you know? I had a cousin who was in the Army. He was in Europe. He ... ended up as a, ... what do you call the police part of the Army?

Laura Micheletti: An MP.

MHW: MPs, that's it. He was in an MP unit and he remembered guarding German prisoners at a camp, someplace in Missouri. They brought the prisoners here and ... I guess it was a fairly large camp. ... I don't remember anything about it, except, he called it Camp "Misery," because it was Missouri. He thought that was funny. I don't know, I guess that, ... maybe, a lot of the soldiers called it that, but, it was all kind of flippant talk. I didn't really learn anything about what they were like and why they were there. I don't even know if he knew.

LM: What do you remember about Pearl Harbor?

MHW: Yes, I remember that, yes, yes. It was just, you know, very shocking in my mind. Dad got all upset and we were all upset. ... He knew right away, we would go to war, or were in war. ... We were Roosevelt supporters. They had voted for him. ... It really didn't affect us, because, you know, there were two girls. We were not likely to be drafted ... and ... my father was, well, he would've been too old by then, and they didn't take family men, if they could avoid it. He had a younger brother, seven years younger than he, who did not go to war. I don't know why not, but, he didn't. He was, I guess, ... deferred for some reason or other, but, as I said, the one cousin, in fact, two cousins, ... went to war. One, the second one, ... was stationed someplace either in the Caribbean or South America and it was all rum and Coca-Cola. It was nothing like a war. ... Then, there was another friend, ... I just thought of this one. He was sort of a beau of my cousin's. ... He was stationed in Alaska, in the Army, and he died there because some boiler in his building ... blew up, and killed the whole bunch of them, and he was not in a combat zone, but, he was, you know, stationed in, like, a forward area, just in case, and he died that way, and he was like twenty-four, or something, ... young.

LM: Did you notice any changes at NJC after the war?

MHW: ... Can't really say. For the first year, after I finished, after I got my degree, I worked ... in the Bacteriology Department. That was what it was called then, no

microbiology. That got to be microbiology later. We called it bac-T and I worked as a ... research assistant to the professor. ... She was the whole department ...

[Break in the tape for an unknown period]

MHW: ... A year after I finished school. That was before I got into the Navy. When I got into the Navy, the war in Europe was already over ... and the war with Japan ended two months after I got in. So, I was in just a year.

LM: Did you notice any change in the attitude toward women in science during the war?

MHW: No.

LM: No?

MHW: No. ... As I said, there were rival professors who tried to recruit ... students for their courses. I remember, ... the head of the Chemistry Department was ... [a] somewhat cantankerous kind of personality and he definitely was a rival of the other, like, the bio, and ... the other “soft sciences,” or whatever they were called, “soft sciences” then. ... But, ... I think, ... the more interest you had in your courses, the more money you got for your department. That was kind of how it worked. ... I don't think, you know, the attitude, there was any change, not [at] all. I was there for three years, you know, during the war, and the one year after. ... I don't think there was any big, big change in encouraging women, you know. ... All the professors I had were, I thought, very encouraging. I took physics in college. ... I took a little of this, a little of that. ... I liked physics, I did well in it. ... I remember, the ... professor asked me, was I going to, you know, go further. Well, they only had the one course at NJC. It was ... a year long. Pretty good grounding course, but, ... you couldn't get any kind of advanced work. ... I would have had, ... you know, to go to graduate school. ... I just ... took what interested me at the time, and, mostly, I liked what I took. ... I think the course that I liked least ... was American History, 'cause I hated the questions, “Trace, ... Show the relationship,” ... and I ... don't think that way. Girls could write three blue books, and I would write half of one, and I couldn't imagine what they were saying, you know, and I ended up with a C. He thought I didn't have anything to say either, and I didn't, you know. ... But, the other courses I could, you know, put ... stuff down, ... and feel confident that I knew what I was doing, what I was talking about. ... But, as far as any big change, either it happened and I didn't observe it, or it didn't happen, but, I don't think it happened. I have two friends, I don't know if you would want me to give you their names, but, they were botany majors, and they stayed at Rutgers for about thirty years afterwards, and they would know all about that. They got fellowships, or grants, or whatever the term was in those days. They both got advanced degrees. ... First, they worked at what ... used to be called the Ag School, and then, I don't know, it got to be something else. Cook College, I guess it's called now. ... But, they were there for a real long time, and they would know all about, whether or not [a change occurred]. ... I don't know, you probably sent letters to them, too. I don't know if they responded or not.

LM: We sent letters to everyone between '42 and '48.

MHW: Okay.

LM: I might have their surveys. May I have their names?

MHW: Do the names Brennan or Leone strike you as anything you remember?

LM: I remember a Leone, yes.

MHW: Ida Leone?

LM: Yes, I do remember a Leone.

MHW: Okay, she would know, and Eileen Brennan is the other. They were kind of like, ...close friends, and had, you know, twin ... interests, and they worked as, more or less, ... a team when they went to the Ag School. They went there as employees, and then, they got integrated, somehow, into the ... course work, and they actually took courses while they worked. I don't know how it was all worked out, but, they did end up with ... research grants, and whatever, and ... they became experts in what their field was, soil something or other. But, ... I am sure they would know. I know there was some, ... I wouldn't say opposition, but, they did have a hard time ... staying where they were. There were, ... you know, some antithesis to having them there. I think ... they may have been maneuvered around a bit to, you know, leave, or whatever, but, they did not, and I don't know if that had anything to do with men coming back from the Army, or whatever, or, maybe, a shortness of money, don't know. I still see them once a year.

LM: Do you?

MHW: Yes.

LM: That is great.

MHW: Yes, we've exchanged Christmas cards all these years, yes.

BT: Did you take any classes at Rutgers with the men or did they come over to NJC?

MHW: No. ... Some of the classes that I had at NJC, men came over for.

BT: That is what I thought I remembered.

MHW: Yes, they did. Yes, I remember, let's see, ... anatomy, I know ... men came for that. There were two or three in the class. One young man always made jokes about ... learning anatomy at a blind school. He loved that idea. He said that joke at least once a

week. ... I didn't like him. ... [laughter] It was minimal, ... but, I did have classes, and there were courses given at Rutgers, of course, and we could go there, but, I didn't. ... It just turned out that way, but, sometimes, similar courses were given in alternate years, and ... if the course you wanted [was available at NJC], when you wanted it, [it] was okay, but, if you couldn't wait, or fit it in the next year, you could go to Rutgers and get it. ... They had, ... I can't think of the word for newspaper training. Anyway, ... those courses were all given at Rutgers. ... I remember, I had an acquaintance ... who used to bicycle over to Rutgers for that. She ended up being Mrs. Hughes, the wife of the governor. ... Her name was Elizabeth Sullivan, who we used to call Sully. She took newspaper training over at Rutgers, and I don't know if she ever worked on a newspaper or not.

BT: It might have been interesting to see how men were treated at NJC in the scientific courses or how the women were treated at Rutgers.

MHW: Yes, yes. ...

BT: If there was any difference.

LM: Definitely.

MHW: There wasn't, except for me not liking that one boy, ... maybe other ones, other people. ... No one ever said anything to me about him. ... We had a really, really good ... teacher ... who was a no-nonsense kind of a teacher, ... very competent, very knowledgeable, and she was kind of a "one-of-the-boys" ... person. She ... always dressed in very tailored suits, she wore her hair in a bun, but, she had long, bleached blond hair. Really handsome woman, ... and she told us once that, ... the summer before, or maybe several summers back, she had cooked ... for an outdoor expedition, someplace out in the West. ... I don't know if it was a geology expedition, or what it was, but, she went along as the cook. , ... you know, skillet over a campfire, I guess. ... I understood she was the only woman there, you know, and, ... in those days, women didn't wear slacks, although, I guess, they ... started to, then. The women who worked in war factories did. ... I can't remember ever going to school in slacks. I'm sure I didn't. I don't think I even owned any, ... although, there were girls who wore them. ... She was like a ... neutral, you know, but, she had a boyfriend, we found that out, and she treated the boys, or the young men, just ...

BT: ... The same as the women.

MHW: Yes, ... there was nothing. She would not put up with anything like that. I'm sure there was no ... attitude at all.

LM: You mentioned that you took a drafting course.

MHW: Yes.

LM: Could you talk a little bit about that? Was it connected to the war?

MHW: Yes, it was some sort of a government program and it was free, you know. You ... had to agree, ... if it was needed, and you passed the course successfully, ... there was some stipulation that you could be called upon, you know, to go wherever they would like you to go. ... Everything, you know, died before ... I needed to be called. [laughter] Anyway, ... it was, I think, one or two nights a week. ... I liked that, too.

LM: Were they popular?

MHW: It was a fair amount of girls in the class, yes. ... My guess is about twenty, which is a fairly big class, you know, for, you know, after hours, and whatever. ... I don't know how many of those girls, ... if they took drafting jobs after school. It was mixed, you know, all classes, and you just came if you wanted, if you were interested, and I don't remember what year I was in then, if it was my junior or senior year. I can't recall now. If there were seniors there, ... they may have gone from there right into some sort of a war job, someplace.

LM: What were the relationships like between commuters and resident students?

MHW: ... Not mixed. ... You didn't ... really know anybody on campus, or rarely. ... Sometimes, ... friendships were started in classes, and there would be girls, you know, who lived on or off campus, and I ... had friends who lived on the campus, but, not close friends. ... I only saw them during class hours. ... It wasn't an anti-feeling at all, you know, it was just you didn't see them a lot. So, you didn't know them well, so, ... that was how that was. You were more friendly with girls you saw all the time. There were girls who met on the train, took the same train back and forth everyday. You liked those, ... you knew those better than other girls who came at different hours than you did, or took different trains, or, some girls drove to school. Some came on local buses. [It] depended on where you lived, and the girls that I was most friendly with, and stayed friends with, were girls who commuted on the Pennsylvania Railroad, most of whom I'm still friendly with, who I still am in touch with.

BT: During the years that you were at NJC, did you ever go home and visit them, or was it just that you went back and forth on the train? Did you do things with them or go to their houses?

MHW: No. It was just back and forth on the train, yes.

BT: That was what we found, talking to some other people who commuted, that there was that kind of socializing.

MHW: No, ... it was only until, let me think, maybe two or three years ago that I ever was in Ida Leone's house, and it was not her parent's house, it's hers. It's where she lives now.

BT: Not where she lived then.

MHW: Right, and I've never been to Eileen Brennan's house. I don't know anything about her family or anything. I've never seen her parents or whatever. ... My college roommate, let me think, I've been to her house. I can't remember if she's ever been to mine. I don't think she's ever been to mine. ... I had another friend who lived in Metuchen, ... I visited her house, and I stayed overnight with her, several times. She's never been to my house. I still am in touch with her. She now lives in Hershey, Pennsylvania, and ... we still write. ...

LM: I was going to ask you, what were your impressions of the NJC administration, Dean Corwin, Dean Boddie?

MHW: Liked Dean Corwin, didn't like Dean Boddie. Dean Corwin was, ... I thought, very shy, ... pushing herself to be outgoing and ... friendly. She was basically ... an introverted person who didn't mix well, but, made herself ... mix well, or tried to mix. ... She seemed to be very tense, ... kind of walking on eggshells all the time. That was how I thought of her. Dean Boddie was very self-confident, ... kind of aggressive, ... very different from Dean Corwin. ... She had a loud voice and she had lots of hair piled up on her head. Dean Corwin had gray hair, in a ... bun in the back, and it was a little flat bun, right, you know, in the back of her head, and they were different. Dean Boddie wore loud prints, ... big prints. She dressed well. It suited her. ... Dean Corwin always seemed to have, I can't remember, ... excuse me, Navy blue blazer over something, you know. No, you don't resemble her in the least. [laughter] But, I kind of liked her. I remember, we had chapel twice a week, and Tuesday chapel was religious, and Friday chapel, ... we had a guest speaker. ... Maybe it was the other way around, I don't remember, but, they did more announcements and whatever, and ... both were secular, in a way, but, on Tuesday chapel, Dean Corwin always read passages from the Bible, and I can remember those so vividly. ... I don't know what the other students felt, never talked to them about it, but, it was those, you know, you could hear a pin-drop silence, and she read them very well, and I remember some of them. I could almost recite some of them. She had favorites that popped up from time to time, that she would re-read. ... She didn't preach at all, but, that was part of the ... service, and then, there was choir singing and the organ. ... They had a marvelous organist, I thought. ... I forget what I was going to say. That was it. I think I got off the track there. But, ...trying to remember, the (Bursar?) was very business-like, he was nice. ... The lady, I can't remember her name, who was in charge of, you know, registration, and courses, and all that stuff, I remember, she was harried, you know, trying to do nine things at once. I can remember that, ... when you registered for courses, you lined up outside of College Hall, and the line, you know, extended and extended, and then, you got in there, and you find out you hadn't done something right. ... Then, you'd, you know, go out, and do it, and come back on the line again. ... I can remember the day I

went to register and ... I had never had any advice from anybody about how you do anything. I never even thought to ask anybody. So, [I] got on the, [I] think I went on the bus. I don't even remember if I knew about the train then, but, I got on the bus, and I went to New Brunswick, and I got to the college, and I went to the registrar, and she said, "Oh, where is your receipt from the Bursar?" "Oh, what receipt?" Then, I went to the Bursar's office and he said, "Ah, that'll be," ... I can't remember how much money. I didn't have that money. I didn't know I needed that money, that day, that time, and he said, "Well, ... you can't register until you ... pay the fee," and I said, "Oh, all right, I'll come back tomorrow," and he said, "Oh, no, oh, no. Today is the last day you can do it, by four o'clock," or whatever the time was. So, I thought, and I said out loud, "Okay, I'll go home and get it." ... He was all upset and ... I did go home. I went home, ... I got the money, I got back on the bus, and I came back that same afternoon. ... That just shows you how unplanned I was. [laughter] I had no idea how you did anything, but, I ... just went and did it. Then, I got back, eventually, to the registrar, and it all got straightened out. But, ... I didn't know anyone who ... had gone to college. Although, if I had thought, the girl across the street from me went to Ithaca College, not Cornell, but, Ithaca College, and ... she would've been in college already by then, 'cause she was a couple of years older than I. I didn't think to go and ask her how you did anything. I have never thought that way. I don't know why it is. I still don't. ... I always think, "Well, I'll find it," or "I'll do it," or "It'll be all right," you know, whatever.

LM: As a commuter, were you able to participate in some of the social activities at the campus?

MHW: Actually, there were not very many. There were a couple of big dances, like there was a sophomore dance, a junior dance, and a senior dance. I didn't go to any of them. I was on ... the Food Committee for one of the dances, because I ... was friends with a girl who was in one of my classes, and she was on the committee, and they asked her, did she know a "Bee," that would be, you know, a commuter, who they could include in the committee, and she named me. So, that's how I got to be on that committee. ... We, you know, planned the menu, the food, and all that stuff. ... I can't remember, it was a South Pacific theme, Hawaiian Islands, or something or other. ... I stayed after school, or after classes, the day that they were ... decorating ... for the dance, and I think they held it in the Bee Hive, if I'm not mistaken, 'cause that was a nice big room for that sort of thing, but, I didn't go.

LM: Were you ever on campus when Eleanor Roosevelt came?

MHW: Yes.

LM: Did you get to see her?

MHW: Yes. Yes, ... we had a special chapel. She spoke in the evening. ... That was one of the occasions when I decided I didn't like Dean Boddie, 'cause Eleanor, [laughter] you know, Mrs. Roosevelt, spoke, and, ... you know, I've tried to remember her topic and ...

nothing, it's blank, but, I remember, you know, sitting there. "Oh, great," we all loved her, and ... I was sitting in a pew, someplace, either in front or next to Dean Boddie, and someone asked her what Mrs. Roosevelt was like, and Dean Boddie was Southern, and she had a little kind of a drawl, and I can remember her saying, "Just as comfortable as an old shoe." [Speaks in a Southern accent] ... Boy, did I bristle. I thought, you know, she couldn't say that about Mrs. Roosevelt, you know, but, I guess she was comfortable as an old shoe. She was, you know, easy going, and ... very democratic, in the two meanings of the word. ... She was, you know, easy. She smiled easily, she talked to anybody, you know, but, I can remember Dean Boddie saying that, ... and then, there were jokes ... afterwards, ... some. I guess, right after ... Mrs. Roosevelt made her speech, she wanted to use the ladies room, and I guess she was in rather a hurry. So, she, you know, tore out, and found out where it was, and went in, and came out, and there were jokes around campus for days afterwards, about touching ... the door handle ... where Mrs. Roosevelt went, you know, and all that silly stuff, but that, that was good for a laugh for about a week. [laughter] As far as I know, she came only at that one time, or, at least, the only one I remember. We had a lot of famous New York ministers come, who I really ate up. I loved their... talks. They were more philosophical than spiritual, and I liked them quite a bit, and I was always annoyed. We always had Methodists, Baptists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and I was so dumb at the time. I didn't know Catholic priests would not come to a secular or non-denominational chapel, and I used to wonder, "Why don't they ever invite a Father So-and-So?" you know. [laughter] ... I didn't know that it was the rule of the Church, not the rule of the school. ... I think, once or twice, they had a rabbi, but, not very often. They were mostly ... Protestant speakers, and I sometimes would read their name in the Sunday paper, and ... I used to tell my dad, "I heard him. ... He was very good, you know." My dad was not interested. My father went to ... Sunday school every Sunday of his life, twice, for as far back as he could remember. They had ... two sessions ... a Sunday for ... young men, and he had ... a bookcase shelf full of books inscribed for perfect attendance, ... whatever year it was, and he got the book, it was usually a Bible, or whatever, like that. ... He said he told himself that, ... when he got big, he would never go to church again, and he didn't, and so, he wasn't interested [in] ministers, or anybody's opinion like that, not at all.

LM: How did the presence of Camp Kilmer change? Did it affect your school at all?

MHW: ... Somewhat. I think there were dances at Camp Kilmer, or dances to which soldiers were allowed, or invited, or whatever, and I remember, ... during commuting, there were lots of soldiers on the train. We sat, once, next to Red Skelton. He was in the Army at the time, and, you know, in his soldier's uniform, and I remember ... sitting with Ida Leone, and she had a package she was going to mail to her brother, one of her brothers, who was in Europe, and she got Red Skelton to autograph the package. I remember that was a big thing, and he was ... very pleased to be recognized, and he wanted, ... you know, to autograph, and I knew who he was, but, I didn't have anything for him to autograph, and I didn't even think to ask him. He could've autographed, you know, my notebook, or something, but, I didn't think of it at the time, but, Ida thought of

it. ... [I] don't remember anybody else famous, though, but, he was at Camp Kilmer for a while. ...

BT: So, did you talk to the fellows on the train?

MHW: Oh, sure.

BT: I mean ...

MHW: Oh, yes, they were, talk, you couldn't get rid of them. [laughter] They were trying to pick up girls all the time. [laughter] Yes, they were open and friendly. ... They talked to any girl who looked half-way friendly, and, of course, the trains were almost always, you know, standing room only. They were full. You sat where you could and with whoever was there. ... Sure, I could've gotten married several times, you know, if I had been dumb enough. [laughter] ... Well, you know, they were just so young, and so naïve, and, ... you know, ... they just thought all you had to was, you know, ... have a few minutes of friendly conversation, and it would lead to the inevitable, wedlock, you know. [laughter] Funny, ... yes.

BT: I always get the impression, and maybe this was after the war, but, that soldiers were soldiers, and if you were a proper young lady, you would try to avoid them. [laughter] However, I do not think that was the feeling during the war.

MHW: No, during the war, it was right. You didn't, you know...

BT: They were just the fellas ...

MHW: Yes, you talked to everybody, and you were friendly with everybody, and they were friendly, and ... there was no ... double-meaning to anything. They never said, no, you know, "Let's slip off to the nearest motel." ... Then, there weren't even any motels, but, it was all open, and above board, and it was all, like, ... very naïve.

BT: Just fun.

MHW: Yes, yes. Yes, ... and I finished school when I was twenty. So, I was no ... older person, but, I felt older than they were, and they must've been pretty close to my age. I mean, you could be drafted at eighteen, and most of them were probably draftees, they probably had been in the Army maybe six months, or whatever. ... But, I thought they were quite young, you know, compared to me.

BT: Your parents would not have had any objections to your ...

MHW: I don't know. ...

BT: ... Going to the dances ...

MHW: Oh, no, no, no.

BT: ... And whatever?

MHW: Oh, no, I'm sure not, no, no. ... I could have, if I had a way to get there. ... Newark was not exactly, you know, nearby anything. ... I remember, ... there was an anti-aircraft battery stationed in the park near my home, and I remember, ... the neighborhood people took turns inviting the men from there to dinner, and we had this one young man come one time for dinner. ... Can't remember, ... he and my dad got into a terrific argument. Not really a fight, but, a heated discussion, a big, long thing. ... I can't remember what the topic was, but, we ... didn't invite him back. [laughter] It was, you know, some kind of a philosophical point of view about something, maybe politics, maybe something. ... He, I thought, took advantage. He came, you know, to our house, we fed him, we were, you know, friendly, and he was arguing with my father, and ... trying to make my father a fool, and I didn't like that.

BT: Do you think that the battery that was in the park was to defend Newark Airport or just because you were near New York?

MHW: Probably both. I don't know how much military traffic came in and out of Newark. I don't think a lot.

BT: There was some. It is interesting. The Army took it over.

MHW: Yes, I didn't know that.

BT: Yes.

MHW: Well, I know they didn't extend the runways until long after the war. ... But, I don't really know how long a runway they needed at that time. I don't think they could've taken big bombers or anything like that. Maybe they could've, I don't know.

BT: I just did not realize there were any anti-aircraft batteries in Newark.

MHW: Yes ...

BT: This is the first I have heard of it.

MHW: Yes, it was in ... Weequahic Park. ...

BT: I think that is very interesting. ...

MHW: Yes, I'm pretty sure that was what it was. Yes. I didn't see it, but, I know it was over there.

BT: You knew it was over there.

MHW: Yes.

LM: So, why did you decide to enlist in the Navy?

MHW: I don't know. I think it was a billboard, you know, one of those ones with a picture of a girl in a ... WAVE uniform. I don't really know. I didn't know anyone who was in the Navy. I don't know. I thought, when I had to answer the questionnaire, ... "I don't know why." I thought of it on my own. ... Wondering later why I thought of doing it, ... I don't know. I don't even know how ... I found out where to go. We had to go to, I can't remember the name of the street, I think it was Pine Street, or was it Pine Street? ... The Naval headquarters in New York. ...

BT: Yes, it seems to me, yes. I think it was.

MHW: Anyway ...

BT: In New York, right? You went to New York?

MHW: Yes.

BT: So, it was Pine Street.

MHW: I took myself over there, and ... found the building, and got to the right floor, and talked to the right people, and then, I think I had to come back another time for a physical exam. ... Then, I had to wait some days, you know, for notification, whether I was or wasn't accepted, and I was. ... I remember getting the letter, and being pleased, and then, ... pretty soon after that, they called, they said, you know, "Report," ... and I did. ... At that time, they were not taking officer's candidate people. ... The officers' school was closed, 'cause it was post the European war. It was over. It ended in, I think, April, and I reported in July of that year. ... When we finished basic training, there were only two further schools open ... for further training, and it was either control tower operator or Hospital Corps, and I took Hospital Corps, partly 'cause, control tower operator, you could be sent anywhere, [any]place in the country. You had no choice of where to go, but, with the Hospital Corps, you could ... serve at local hospitals, and you could either go to Brooklyn, or ... lost the name of the other place, it was in Queens, anyway. ... That's gone, they're both gone, as a matter-of-fact, but, ... I had a person who I ... became best friends with in basic training, and she and I both chose Hospital Corps, and we thought we'd like to go to the same hospital. So, we went to visit both of them. ... We picked the Brooklyn one, 'cause it was on a ... trolley line, ... and a good subway line, and we thought, "We'll go to Manhattan a lot." Well, we didn't, ... but, we thought we would. ... We got ... quartered in, I guess it was a hotel, called Manhattan Towers, and it was on Upper Broadway, someplace around 168th Street, or whatever. It was far. ... We went, ...

from there to ... the hospital, by bus. A Naval bus picked us up, and we went, brought us back at night, ... and then, for a while, we lived in ... Brooklyn, quite close to the Navy Yard, in what would've been, I guess, garden apartments, at the time. They were two-story buildings, and where they moved the poor people, I don't know, but, they just commandeered them, and all the people got pushed out, and we lived in their little apartments. You know, I never heard how that happened, but, I guess they gave them back to them after the war, but, probably, the same people didn't get them back, and from there, we went to, can't remember, I guess we went ... to the hospital on a trolley car. I don't remember that too well either, but, that was on Myrtle Avenue, in Brooklyn, and it was just a whole bunch of WAVES, ... nobody knew anybody. I shared a bunk with a ... chief petty officer and I didn't know anything about her except her name. I slept up, she slept down.

BT: You never really ...

MHW: No ...

BT: Got to talk to her?

MHW: No, she had been in, you know, ... two or three years by then, and I was new. ... She was a chief by then and I don't know even what she did. ... I don't even think my best friend and I lived in that same apartment. She lived in another one, but, we used to spend ... off time together, liberty time. Although, it ... worked out that we often didn't have the same days, or afternoons, or evenings, off, the way it worked out.

BT: What do you remember about boot camp and Hunter College? You really came at the very ...

MHW: At the tail end. We were the last class, believe or not.

BT: You were the last class.

MHW: I was in the last class, yes.

BT: So, they must have really had the system worked out very well by then. [laughter]

MHW: Yes, it was, ... yes. That was kind of fun.

BT: Yes, tell me about that.

MHW: ... It was a lot of marching, really, you know. ... We learned songs, we sang songs, marching. ... We were divided into the usual, you know, platoons, and companies, and whatever, and I remember, my company commander was a really, really nice looking woman, who was probably two years older than I was. ... Fair hair, tall, really ... nice looking girl. ... [I] can't remember what the lower ranks were called. I don't know, but,

... they were akin to sergeant, but, that's not what they were called, and I remember two or three of those. ... We were addressed as seamen, "Seamen," ... whatever. ... I remember one terrible time, it was time to ... fall in, to go to the dining hall for supper. ... Classes were over, and we were waiting, you know, to go to supper, and it was pouring rain, really, really, really. It was horrendous. So, we all were standing out there, you know, couple of hundred girls, standing out there in the street, in formation, pouring down rain, and I remember the ... commander, ... whatever her title was, coming out. Normally, she would not appear when we were marching, only on parade occasions. She didn't participate. The sergeants led us to and from buildings, ... and called out the cadence, and all that kind of stuff, and she ... showed up in the rain, and ... that was really impressive, because it was ... awful, you know. But, we had excellent raincoats, and we wore things ... over our hats called (havelocks?), which were waterproof and ugly, but, you ... put them over your hat, and then, they tucked under the brim, and then, they hung down in the back, and you buttoned them under your chin, and, boy, I wish I knew where to get one now. I would love to have one. [laughter] I thought of that the other day, when I was out in some hard rain, but, we marched and ... we didn't get wet. Our feet got wet, but, ... of course, you went in to the dining hall, and you sat, and you ate in your clothes. You didn't hang your coats up or anything. You marched in, you filed down a long bench, and sat. You know, there were like spaces for ten or fifteen girls, and you sat. After going through the ...

BT: Chow line?

MHW: ... Chow line, you picked up the stuff. ... You got whatever there was.

BT: A tray. [laughter]

MHW: You know, the gravy on the cherry pie, just like in the movies, it was like that. [laughter] ... We had eighteen minutes to eat it all. It was timed, because they had so many people to feed in such and such a time, and the food had to be kept hot, and ... there was so much, and then, ... I don't remember now if the crew was ... all male. The cooks and the people who put the food out were men, and I think they were Naval personnel, but, I am not sure. They may have been civilians. ...

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

MHW: ... My mother had a Polish word for the way I ate, but, I don't recall what it was. ... Everybody else was finished, and I was still eating, and that's how I eat now. I regard everyone else in the world as a fast eater.

BT: So, you lived in a high-rise?

MHW: Yes.

BT: When they took over the Hunter College ...

MHW: That was the same ...

BT: ... Buildings, and then, they added more bunks, as I recall. They took over the existing college.

MHW: ... Well, we didn't eat on the college campus, that I think. ... Where we lived were apartments, and that was the same thing, they moved the civilians out. They were ... fairly new, and I can't remember how many floors there were, but, they were little apartments. ... I shared an apartment with four girls. Well, there was a bathroom, and then, rooms on either side. There were girls in that room, and girls in this room, and we all shared the bathroom. ... I took a shower with three or four girls almost every night. We would stand in the bathtub, and soap up, and then, rotate to get under the shower, to rinse off. [laughter] 'Cause, ... by a certain time, you had to have the lights out, and ... I shared a room, which was probably someone's living room, with three other girls. We had, ... you know, double bunks. A girl from Montana, one from Alabama, and I'm not sure where the other one was from. Lucy was the girl from Alabama. She slept over me or I slept over her. No, she slept over me, and Helen, who was from Montana, slept across the room with Louise Arteby.

BT: Had you met people from all over the country before? Was that a new experience, to meet people in camp?

MHW: That was new. That was new, yes, but, there was no difference. ... I think the girl from Montana, ... she lived on a ranch or a farm. ... Lucy, I'm pretty sure, was what we would call "a hick." She came from a tiny place ... and she had this really horrendous drawl. ... She had corn yellow hair, like a chicken, like a baby chick, that kind of hair. She was very plain looking, but, we all ... became ... very affectionate. ... I don't know how it was, you know, that we were all very different, ... but, there was some bond there, somehow. ... When we finished, I can't remember where Lucy went. I think Lucy took ... control tower stuff, and they were going to send her, I don't where, California, or some place like that. ... We almost cried, , ... you know, when we left each other, and we had only known each other something like six or eight weeks, but, we did everything together, all the time. We slept, ate, washed, whatever. We washed our dresses, which were ... a very good grade of seersucker, which could drip dry. We washed ...

[Break in tape for unknown period]

LM: This begins an interview with Ms. Margaret Harriet Waugh on January 28, 1999, at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Laura Micheletti. I would like to begin by asking you how your parents met.

MHW: Blind date.

LM: Really?

MHW: Yes. Yes, other than that, I'm not sure.

LM: You do not know? [laughter]

MHW: ... No. ...Let me think, I should know that. I haven't thought about it for a ... long time.

LM: Were they in the United States at that time?

MHW: Yes, yes, they were.

LM: Okay.

MHW: My father ... was brought here as a ... toddler, two or so years old. My mother came when she was, I think, fourteen.

LM: He was from Scotland?

MHW: Yes, he was born in Glasgow. She was born in a village in Poland. I don't know, I'm not even sure of the name of it, but, it's a little farm village, very tiny.

LM: Do you know why their families came to the United States?

MHW: ... He came with his family, she came alone. She came ... following an older sister and a brother who were already here. Don't know [how] they came to come here. I think, as nearly as I can piece together from what I know myself, ... there was a German steamship line ... which ... sailed from a Baltic port, I don't remember which one. If I think of it, I'll tell you, but, anyway, I think they just used to go through rural areas in Poland, and neighboring places to Germany, recruiting passengers. ... They, you know, talked [about] ... going to America. ... Most farm families had many children. My mother was one of eight, and, in those places, the first born, or the older brother, would inherit the land or share it with other brothers. The girls would have nothing, and I think it was to their advantage, if not the girls, to ship them off, if they could. Now, why the older son came, he was the first born, and the oldest, and he had grown pretty much to manhood when he left. He had become a blacksmith or he was a blacksmith's apprentice. I'm not sure, and he came here, ... and how he settled in Newark, I don't know. The next, the second eldest girl, came, and then, my mother, who was, I don't know, someplace down the line, but, there were only two boys in the family and the rest were girls. So, she came, and ... she, at first, lived with the older brother, who had a wife, had acquired a wife by that time.

LM: How old was she when she married?

MHW: My mother?

LM: Yes.

MHW: ... Twenty-two.

LM: Okay.

MHW: My father was twenty-two, also. They were born, believe it or not, on exactly the same day of the same year.

LM: Really?

MHW: Yes. June 10, 1899.

LM: Wow, that is really interesting.

MHW: Yes. I always thought it was odd.

LM: Wow, great.

MHW: My mother, I think, was born several hours before my father. So, we always used to tease that she was older. [laughter]

LM: That is funny. So, what did your father do for a living?

MHW: Various things. He ended up as a ... tool and die-maker, but, not through having gone to school. I don't think there were tool and die-maker schools. I'm not even sure there are, but, ... in those days, it was all apprentice. You worked in a machine shop under someone who knew how to do these things, and you learn how to use the various machines, like lathes, and grinders, and all those things that you need to. Do you know what a die is?

LM: I think it is used for shaping tools. Is that what it is?

MHW: Yes, ... or for shaping objects of one kind or another, you know. They make, ... for example, ... you would need a die to put in a stamping machine, so that you would stamp out metal shapes of one kind or another. Helmets, kid's toys, ... fittings of various kinds for other machinery, and that's what you do with [them]. ... It's incomprehensible to me, 'cause I cannot think that way, you know. You have to have the shape in your head, and what you're given is a block of steel, a shape and a size roughly the size that you have to end up with for the die, and it's just [a] plain chunk of metal. Then, you start cutting it out with the various machines, to make it the shape you want in the end, and it's all, you know, spatial thinking, and I cannot think that way. ...

LM: That is okay.

MHW: That's all right. ... I heard that ... men and women do not think alike that way, they say. ... Men's brains are better suited to that sort of thing than women's are. I breathed a huge sigh of relief when I heard that. I don't know if it's true or not. [laughter] But, I thought, "Well, good, it's just not me, or not just me." ... To get back to your question, I do think they met on a blind date, but, I don't remember how. Who introduced who, ... but, that was how it was, right, you know.

LM: Did your mother work?

MHW: Yes, no. My mother started out, ... I think she briefly worked in a ... factory where they made buffers, and I don't know what they were either, except that they were ... some sort of ... polishing things. They made them out of ... throw away pieces of cloth, like rags, remnants, whatever, ... from manufacturers that were, you know, left over from, maybe, cutting out dresses, or cutting out upholstery, fabrics, or whatever, and they had all this shredded stuff that was too small to be used for anything else. So, somehow, they were all put together and sewn together in some fashion to make like flat wheels, which would be used to polish, ... I had no idea what, but, things that were manufactured, to clean them off, to clean the surfaces off fast, you know. They put them on a ... wheel of some sort, which would make them spin around. Then, they'd buff the surfaces. ... I think she lasted at that only weeks.

LM: Oh, really?

MHW: Yes, she didn't like it. ... She spent most of her life as a ... housekeeper.

LM: Oh, I see.

MHW: She hired out and lived with various families. There were, ... maybe, three that she talked about a lot, that I remember the names.

LM: So, she was not home when she lived with other families?

MHW: Yes, ... she was living, I think, at the time she was introduced to my father, ... with a family. ... She left when they got married, ... I think, or a brief time after they were married. Well, number one, when they met, my father did not have his job. He was between jobs.

LM: I see.

MHW: He ... had worked as a chauffeur for awhile, and when they first married, he and she were hired ... by the same family. She as the indoor help, and he as the chauffeur, and didn't last very long. He didn't like that. ... He only took it 'cause he loved cars, and he loved to drive, and ... he was also twenty-two, and ... just like ... young men are now, everything's cars. [laughter] ... They worked at that for a while, I don't know for how

long. My ... guess is, less than a year, but, I don't know, and then, ... what his first job was after that, I don't know, but, ... her older sister, who was here still, was married then, and her husband had a job, I think, in a company that made plating ... solutions for ... plating large pieces of metal, and that was what her husband [did]. ... He got my dad a job in that place. Exactly what he [did] there, I don't know. I don't know how long that job lasted, but, I know that was one of the early ones. For a while, he worked on a railroad, but, not on the tracks. He worked in the railroad yard, doing I don't know what there, either, except, ... I remember him talking about, it was really excruciatingly heavy work, very difficult. ... The old fashioned term for it was buggy-lugging. I don't know if you've ever heard that word before.

LM: No, I have not.

MHW: But, it's, ... essentially, brute force lifting by men, you know. ... There were no, nothing like, you know, ... what do they call those things now? ... Machines that run around on four wheels? ... forklifts, those things.

LM: Oh, right.

MHW: There was nothing remotely resembling anything like that. Everything was done, you know, out of sheer back strength. ... My dad told terrible stories of how bad it was, and, you know, no sympathy. It was all outdoor work, what you call yard work, and you know, in any weather, ... and no lunch places, you know, no place to go. ... It was all pretty primitive. ...

LM: Excuse me for one second.

MHW: Yes, of course.

[Break in tape for unknown period of time]

LM: So, after your mother had children, she still worked?

MHW: No.

LM: No, she did not?

MHW: No, no.

LM: She stayed home then.

MHW: Yes.

LM: Okay, I see, and your father continued to work?

MHW: Yes.

LM: Okay. How did you end up in Newark? How did your family end up in Newark?

MHW: My ... mother followed the older brother and sister.

LM: Oh, okay.

MHW: That was how they came here, I don't know how. ... Well, my mom ... landed at Ellis Island, and I presumed the brother and sister did, also. ... Quite a lot of people, ... you know, stayed in New York City, but, a lot of them, somehow, got across the river. I don't know how they knew about coming to Newark. ...

LM: Your father had been in Newark also?

MHW: No, ... he ended up in Newark after marrying my mother. He had lived all over. ... His father was a ... chief engineer on a Standard Oil tanker, which was registered in Britain, and it continued to be registered in Britain, even after he and his wife moved here. ... He still sailed for them under the British flag, and most of the year, he was not at home, he was gone. ... I think the ... ship he was on regularly went to the Far East.

LM: Oh.

MHW: ... He went to China a lot, I remember that, and ... my grandma had two thousand sets of Chinese china. Really ... pretty stuff that he brought home every time he came back, new set of china. ... Why they moved to this country, I don't know, but, they did, and ... I don't know where they initially settled when they got here, but, my grandmother was a great mover. They lived in Albany, Poughkeepsie, ... I can't remember. All up and down the Hudson River they lived, in many little towns. ... They ended up in, most of my ... time growing up, my grandmother lived in Kearny, but, ... that was after my grandfather died. He died rather young. He was fifty-six when he died.

LM: That is young.

MHW: ... My grandma continued to move. She also lived in Port Richmond, Staten Island, for a while. She lived in Elizabeth for a while, Elizabeth, New Jersey. She ... just moved. ... They never bought a house. She always rented flats, or apartments, parts of other people's houses, and my father went to six or eight different grammar schools, you know.

LM: Wow.

MHW: So, ... that was upsetting, but, ... my grandmother pretty well ruled things, because of the absence of my grandfather. ... Where he lived at the time they met, I think he was living by himself, but, I don't know where.

LM: I see. So, what was growing up in Newark like? What did you do for fun?

MHW: Nice. ... I still live in the same house.

LM: Oh, really?

MHW: Yes. ... It's a half a block from a public park, and we spent a lot of time, in the summer, in that park, my sister and I. ... Mostly we just wandered. It was like semi-rural, fairly wild. ... I didn't see deer or anything like that, but, you know, there were ducks on the lake. ... As they say, we knew the park like the back of our hand, you know, we knew all the places. ... We also played street games with neighborhood kids, mixed girls and boys. Hide and Seek, Red Rover, Ring Around the Rosey, lot of games. I guess kids don't play [those] anymore. They were all semi-rough games. We went over fences, up and down people's alleys, through backyards, running, and yelling, and whatever.

LM: That is the fun stuff. [laughter]

MHW: Oh, yes, it was neat, yes. I could go over a fence fast, you know. No more. I can still go over a fence, but, it isn't fast. ... [laughter]

LM: So, you had a lot of autonomy?

MHW: Yes, pretty much, yes. My mom was always home, but, ... we got up, we had breakfast, and were out, and that was it, you know. ... If we were going to be gone in the park all day, she'd pack lunch. She used to put ... orangeade in ... a glass milk bottle. ... We took that. I don't remember how we drank. I can't remember paper cups. I don't think there were any. We must've taken turns drinking out of the bottle and she'd make sandwiches. ... We would come back late in the afternoon, when starting, you know. ... We were tired, and whatever, we'd go back home, but, mostly, ... it was extremely safe in those days. ... When we were very small and we would be still in bed in the morning, my mom would come, I remember her saying, "I'm going out for a while, I'll be back," and that was all, and she'd go, and we'd go back to sleep. ... We'd get up if she hadn't come back, and we were hungry, we'd go in the kitchen and get out cold cereal. ... But, mostly, we'd probably still be in bed when she came back, and ...no one ever locked doors or windows. No, ... we didn't have a dog at that time of our lives, ... even any kind of an alarm dog, or watchdog, or guard dog. No one had guard dogs. ... A few people had dogs. The people next door had a ... Boston terrier, I remember, ... and she was yappy, but, she was in the house most of the time. ... [Life] was very simple, ... almost unbelievable, compared to how things are now, you know. I have a double ... door on my front, and ...the door cost a lot of money, and ... it weighs a ton. ... You need a blowtorch and I don't know whatever else to get by it, but, that was only after I'd been ... robbed a couple of times, and, you know, a push-in robbery, and the whole thing.

LM: Wow, that is really scary.

MHW: ... Yes, it was fairly scary. ... In the last five years, I'd say, before I got the door, I'd been robbed three times.

LM: Wow, that is a lot.

MHW: Twice when I wasn't at home and once when I was at home. ... Anyway, I have a dog. I had a dog at the time of the robbery, but, he's just a big, old sweetheart. ... He thinks anybody I'm talking to is okay and that was how the push-in happened. I answered the doorbell, and got ... conned into believing they were people searching for an address, and my dog came up behind them on the porch, and wanted to come in the house. So, I opened the door to let him in and they ... came in.

LM: That is horrible.

MHW: Yes, it was. I was, ... you know, more it was kind of a mixed feeling time. I was annoyed with myself for having been so gullible. ... I was afraid that they were afraid of the dog. I was reassuring them, "No, he won't hurt you," ... and they were not afraid of that dog. They were, you know, trying to get me to open the front door, which I did, like a dope. ... After they came in, ... he came in, too, you know, and he just stood there looking, and he didn't know what was happening, you know. ... But, he thought they were someone I knew, because I talked to them.

LM: So, you have really seen Newark change?

MHW: Oh, yes. It's very different, yes. ... But, I have friends who live elsewhere, ... similar things have happened to them, maybe not as often as I have had it happen. ...

LM: Robberies occur all over.

MHW: I know. I have cousins, ... one husband of my cousin lives in South Orange, in a house that they've lived in a long time and that house was robbed several times.

LM: Yes, it happens all over.

MHW: And, his neighbors, you know, two houses down, four houses down, same thing, you know.

LM: What was your schooling like in Newark, when you were younger?

MHW: Good.

LM: You liked it?

MHW: ... First one was odd. ... We walked to school everyday. ...

LM: You attended public school?

MHW: Yes, public school. ... We went to ... a grammar school, which, ... when ... I first started, had only four grades, first, second, third, fourth. First and second were taught by one teacher on the ground floor, third and fourth by another teacher on the second floor, and it was a white, clapboard building with a belfry on the top, and a long rope ran down, through a hole in the ceiling into the vestibule on the inside. ... If you were very good, you got to pull the rope to ring the school bell. [laughter] ... They rang it every morning, you know, and you could hear it for miles. ... We walked, as I said, we walked. ...

LM: Did you get to ring it?

MHW: Oh, yes, I had a chance to ring it, big, thick rope with a knot on the end. ... I can't remember [how] small it was, you know. ... She might've had maybe thirty or forty kids, but, that was three grades. ... One row of seats was kindergarten, and several rows were first grade, and then, the rest were second grade. ... The kids were very well behaved. She didn't have unruly kids with behavior problems. ... As far as I can remember now, things went very smoothly for her. She didn't seem rattled at all to me. Now, I don't know if that ... would be her opinion or not, but, ... we had a couple of ... boys who kind of sassed back, now and then, or said things out of turn, you know. ... I remember, we started off, we said ... the Pledge of Allegiance every day. ... I think we might've sung, she played the piano, and there was one there, and we also said the Lord's Prayer, then, we started. ... I can remember reciting ... the multiplication tables out loud, over and over, and I can still do it. [laughter] I don't remember learning to read, but, I did learn. I think everybody did.

LM: Great.

MHW: ... Then, we went upstairs to Miss Yallowly. She was a sweetheart. ... The way I remember her, ... she looked like Eleanor Roosevelt, like that, you know, that kind of a lady, and she was ... really ... nice. Everybody loved her. All the mothers loved her, all the children, you know, the ... pupils loved her. Except, by then, she was getting, in the fourth grade, ... big boys, who ... didn't come to school everyday, who ... had been left back a grade or two, and she had trouble with them. ... But, she ... really was not afraid of them, and I can remember, they ... never tried to hit her or anything, but, I remember, there was a big boy who she once hit with a yardstick. She hit him over his back, and the yardstick broke, and I remember that picture. I don't know what he did wrong, but, he would not do something she wanted him to do, and he was as big as she, and I remember, he just sort of cowered down, and he let her hit him, and I don't remember anymore after that. As far as I know, he never came back to school, but, he may have and I just don't remember that. I skipped the fourth grade. Then, ... they had built an annex in the back, another one story building in which they housed the fifth and sixth grades, also in one room taught by one teacher. ... There was an empty room in the building, presumably for

the seventh and eighth grades, but, they never put seats or a teacher in that, and ... I went to another school on the trolley car to get the seventh and eighth grades.

LM: What about high school?

MHW: I went to South Side High. ... Same thing, on the bus, trolley car, or, I guess, it was buses by then. ... Also, very good school. I had very good teachers, I thought. ... Very nice principal, who was ... partly responsible for me ending up at NJC.

LM: Oh, really?

MHW: Yes, he called me to his office one time and he asked, "Had I ...

[Knocking at the door.]

LM: One moment. Come in.

[Break in tape for unknown period of time]

MHW: High school was good, I liked it. [laughter]

LM: ... You mentioned the principal.

MHW: Oh, yes, Arthur W. Belcher his name was, and he ... called me to his office one time to ask, you know, if I had further plans, and I did not. We didn't have money and I didn't even think of college. I don't know what I thought. I thought nothing. ... He said that there were two good girls schools that he would recommend, St. Elizabeth at Convent Station and NJC. ... There was no way I could get to Convent Station from Newark, but, I could get to ... NJC on the train, which is how I ended up there, in New Brunswick. I commuted, as I said, for the first three years. ...

LM: ... Sorry, go on.

MHW: That was it. That's how I ended up at NJC.

LM: I was going to ask you, did a lot of the other women from your high school attend college also?

MHW: ... Well, I have no idea why, but, I was in the college preparatory course. ... I don't even recall choosing it, but, that was the one that I took ... through school, and a lot of the girls who were in my class came to NJC. ... I can think of three or four offhand, you know.

LM: I see.

MHW: In my class, and the one behind mine, they ... came, too. ... Like me, most of them commuted, but, not all, some stayed on campus.

LM: So, how did your parents react to your decision?

MHW: Oh, I think they were pleased. Yes, my mom [and] my dad were very proud. ... My mother, about anything I did was great, you know. She was always, "What do you want to do," you know, "Do you want to do this?" "Do you want to do that?" ... I remember, when I finished, she said, "Did I want to go further," you know, "to graduate school?" ... Even now, I'm not a planner. I'm a day-to-day-er and ... she was a planner. ... But, she would not push me to be like her. ... She did ask me, did I want to go further to school? and I, ... in about a thirty second, you know, burst, ... whatever I said, ... "No, I don't think so," and that was the end of that, you know. She didn't bring it up again and I don't even know if I thought about it again. I don't think I did. I thought, "Well, you know, I'll find something to do," and I planned, ever since I was, you know, three years old, when people said, "What are you going to be when you grow up?" "Teacher," that was what I thought I would do. ... I took education courses at NJC. ... Searching around, the summer that I graduated, for a place to do my practice teaching, and I had a couple of interviews. ... The principals were negative. They thought I looked too young, they thought I wasn't forceful enough. ... I looked very young, ... then. For a ... long time in my twenties, I always looked quite a bit younger than I was. ... The one I remember, I think, was in Plainfield. ... The principal, he almost laughed at me, you know. [laughter] ... I remember walking through the hall, and all the boys were bigger than me, and ... I thought, "Maybe ... he's right," you know, and I was not, ... you know, latched onto it enough to ... pursue it. ... Then, I started writing letters to drug companies, chemistry companies, and whatever, and I ended up again in New Brunswick. That was the last place I told myself I would go and I ended up at E.R. Squibb & Sons. ...

LM: What made you decide to major in the sciences?

MHW: I was just curious. I liked them. I did well in high school. I took physics, biology, ... math. ... I did well in biology, I liked it, and the teacher was an old NJC girl. I don't remember her name now. I tried hard to remember it this week, so I could tell you what her name was, but, I don't remember, ... and it was, again, no big, ... you know, planning, or whatever. It was just curiosity.

LM: Right.

MHW: ... It was easy for me, you know, which was another thing. Everything was easy for me in grammar school and high school. I didn't have any trouble with anything. ... Then, when I got to college, ... it didn't get to be so easy, because you had to study. I'm not a good studier. I'm ... kind of a magpie information gatherer. Little bits here and there, and sometimes it gets all put together, and I sound like I know better, or more than I do, but, I know I don't. I'm not a deep thinker. ... I know, ... like the song, or maybe

you'll remember the song, "I Know a Little Bit About a Lot of Things." You know that song?

BT: Yes.

MHW: That's what I do, or what I know I think, but, I always loved school. That was a big thing. I could hardly wait till summer was over and I could go back to school.

LM: So, what were your first impressions of NJC?

MHW: Oh, I thought it was great. I liked the campus, it was really, really pretty, really nice. I liked every girl I looked at. I liked every professor. I never had, you know, an antipathy to anybody, anything. Except one, the ... botany head, a Dr. Small. He and I did not see eye to eye. ... That was unfortunate, because I had a botany/zoology major split, and he was, you know, my department head, more or less, along with the head of the zoology department, which ... consisted of two professors and about six students. It was very tiny, and botany was bigger, and had more space, and more of this, more of that. ... I didn't know, at that time, that there was, and maybe there still is, rivalry, ... you know, between departments for numbers of students, etc., etc., and ... they were not friends, but, I didn't know that then, and I loved the ... man, who ran the zoology department, a Doctor Hausman. ... He was, you know, the quintessential professor. He wore a black silk bow tie and ... tweed jackets, although he didn't smoke a pipe, but, he ... wore metal rim glasses, and he was kind of forgetful. ... Talked a blue streak about everything he loved. He was interested in everything, ... birds, mostly. ... I took ornithology with him. ... There were three people in the class. ... We went on field trips, Friday afternoons. He ... took us in his big old car, and he was near-sighted, and we had these wild rides, but, he could spot a hawk, you know, like a half a mile away and jam on the brakes. Then, he would point, and everybody else behind us, too bad, you know. [laughter] But, ... they were fun. We always ... stopped someplace for lunch, outdoor lunch, we sat on the grass someplace. He knew the name of every little weed that we were sitting on. ... We ate most of them. He'd ... pick a pinch of something and he'd say, "Here, taste this. This is good for that or the other," and I ate a lot of wild asparagus, wild this, wild that, but, he knew all of those things. His wife was a ... botanist and she knew all the things. I think he got a lot of stuff from her. ... He was, you know, like a ... professor in a book. Doctor Small was very different. He was autocratic.

[Break in tape for unknown period of time]

LM: Oh, getting back to NJC.

MHW: Yes.

LM: When you first came to campus, what did you know about what was going on in Europe and the war?

MHW: Nothing.

LM: Nothing?

MHW: Nothing, ... nothing. I don't remember. ... I'm sure my parents listened. ... I remember when Hitler invaded Poland, my mother just about went mad. ... I can remember her sitting by the radio, all kind of crouched over, mostly crying. ... I think she thought any minute they would announce her ... hometown name, or whatever, but, I don't really know if Hitler, ... or his forces, ever went anywhere near that town. ... I think there was fighting in or near it, because it was very near the border of the Ukraine, and my mother grew up speaking Polish and Ukrainian. ... In fact, it was kind of mixed. Sometimes, ... the two languages ran together. They would use the word for whatever it was in one language and it would be in the sentence with the rest of the language. ... I think it was very close, something like eight or twelve miles away from the Ukrainian border. ... In fact, that part of Poland is now in the Ukraine. ... When they settled ... the borders after World War II, they moved Poland further to the west. So, a good chunk of land was given to Russia, which was part of eastern Poland, and Poland took some of Germany, and my ... relatives now live in a place that used to be German. They were moved out of the old place when the Russians took it. I don't know whether willingly, or, you know, they were just told to go. I didn't find that out. My mother used to get mail from, ... well, they would've been our nieces, ... but, it was in Polish, and she wrote back in Polish, and she didn't talk much about what they said, and it was mostly day-to-day stuff, ... you know. They were short letters, and it was mostly about what was happening now, and I used to ask her sometime, you know, about things like that. She ... knew only a limited amount about it, but, she knew that her mother had been ill in bed, and I don't know how close to dying, but, I think, maybe, she was dying. ... When the family moved, they left her, and I don't know what ... happened to her. That was another source of unhappiness for my mother, you know. ... I don't know whether she thought Russian soldiers would have killed her, or what, but, they might have, I don't know.

LM: I see. I understand that at NJC, in the late thirties, or in the very early forties, there were peace groups and "Aid to the Allies" groups. It is hard to tell how dominant they were on campus or how widespread they were. Did they play a big role?

MHW: Well, you know, as I said, for the first three years, I commuted, so, ... they may have been active, and I would not have known about it, 'cause I was not there after hours, you know, when they would have their meetings. I ... was there for, you know, school time. ... I did take a course in drafting and that was given in the evening. I stayed late a couple of nights a week ... to do that. I am pretty sure there was a "Bundles for Britain" group. I kind of remember that. ... There were girls who were more political, or I don't even know if that's the right word, but, who knew more about current events than most of us, and I do remember a couple of them. ... But, exactly what they did, I don't know. You know, ... how involved they got, I'm not sure. ... I was, you know, the ivory tower stuff. We went to school, and, ... you know, you paid attention to classes, and your academic career, or whatever. ... I tried to read. Now, when I read things about, you

know, what happened in 1943, ... I'll think, "Well, what was I doing then?" ... I know what I was doing then, but, I don't remember what was happening then. I mean, I knew ... about Pearl Harbor. That was a big thing. I was a sophomore, then. ... I knew about D-Day, big things, but, all the intervening stuff, I didn't know. I mean, ... I have no concrete memory of it now, and, now, when I read about it, I don't know what I remember and what I have learned since then. ... I don't think I was conscious then of what was going on and ... I took American History, that was one of the courses that was an elective. ... We didn't talk about the war at all. I mean, not even, you know, comparing, say the Revolutionary, whatever, ... the Civil War. I know we did not. It was all about past events.

BT: What about newsreels? Did you go to the movies during those years?

MHW: ... Yes, I guess I did.

BT: Newsreels, maybe at the beginning or the end?

MHW: Yes, yes, yes. The (Pathway?) News, I remember that.

BT: ... About what was going on in the war?

MHW: Yes, yes, but, it was like the movie, you know.

BT: You do not remember that?

MHW: Well, I ... saw some. ... Can't remember going to the movies. I remember going to the movies a lot when I was little, but, I don't remember then. Occasionally, I think we went to the movies. I remember war pictures. They were made. ... I can remember one with Irene Dunn, I think, and Spencer Tracy, and I ... have this vague memory that she bombed some sort of an island somewhere in the Pacific, but, that was all I remember about the ... thing. It was all about ... low level strafing, bombing some place, you know, with a two engine propeller driven plane. ... It was all, you know, just too fantastic, 'cause women weren't even in the war, or they didn't fly, certainly, and not in combat, but, that was the only war picture I really remember until after the war was over, and then, they had a lot of Van Johnson movies with, you know, stories about the war. But, they don't mesh with anything that I really remember, ... like reading newspapers at the time. We always had newspapers, only my dad read them, I did not.

BT: So, you did not really sit around at all, that you recall?

MHW: And, talked about what was going on?

BT: Talking to your parents, you know, since you did live at home?

MHW: No, no. Other than my mom's involvement, ... all I remember doing was kind of sympathize with her. ... I guess, at the time, I didn't fully understand how ... awful it was for her. ... I don't recall she and my dad talking about it. They may have, but, not when I was present.

BT: I was not here for earlier in the interview, but, maybe, if you had a brother in the service ...

MHW: I had a younger sister.

BT: Someone who was in the war effort, maybe, there would have been more interest in what they were doing.

MHW: Yes, that's right. That's right. Well, there were neighborhood boys, ... all of them were in it. I don't remember any boy who stayed home. ... One neighbor boy who I knew somewhat, ... he had three sisters, they were our friends, my sister's and my friends. There were two brothers. One was in the Navy and one in the Army. The Army boy disappeared on D-Day and that was the end of that. ... [He] was never ... heard from again.

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

BT: That was what you wore in the training phase, but, eventually, you would have like a plain uniform, I would imagine.

MHW: Yes, but, you didn't work in that.

BT: But, that was the kind?

MHW: Yes, no. Oh, well, it depended on what your duty was. If you ... worked in an office, you wore a suit, you know, a shirt, and a tie, and a regular jacket, and skirt, but, if you worked in a ward, which we did, ... you wore ... seersucker stuff, dresses, and you could ... get cover-ups on the ward. They had different things that you could cover up [with], depending on what you had to do. They were like, ... basically, hospital tieback things, you know. You used to put them on front-wards or backwards to cover your dresses, but, mostly, ... we did not do that.

BT: It seems like your experience in basic training, in boot camp in Hunter College, was more like most of our experiences of going to college.

MHW: Yes.

BT: Because you all lived together and you met people from all over.

MHW: That's right, that's right

BT: What did you think of boot camp?

MHW: ... I enjoyed it. ...

BT: You were not disappointed in the training of the volunteers?

MHW: No, no, no, nothing bothered me, no. ... I just ate it all up. After I finished that, I went to Hospital Corps School, given in the same place, under pretty much the same conditions, right, except the only thing was, we had (failures?) for instructors, for, you know, the different things, and we also had some practical ... experience, bandaging things, people, each other, mostly, learning how to give shots. We practiced on oranges, believe it or not, [laughter], yes, and that I enjoyed, too. We had a big workbook and a textbook. In fact, I probably still have that book ... home someplace, and ... the men who taught us were not ... MDs, they were not even what, you know, they would call paramedics, nowadays. They were just guys who had been in the Navy a while, and learned how to do things in a practical way, and I don't ... remember ... running into any situations that I didn't know how to do, once I got on war duty.

BT: Seems like the Navy training was pretty good.

MHW: I thought it was good, yes, for what we had to do.

BT: What were your jobs? How did you fit in the Navy hospital structure, in terms of the corpsmen versus nurses, the Navy nurses?

MHW: It's all mixed up. Navy nurses ran the wards, they were all women, and the ... corpsmen were men or women, depending. ... I worked on wards. I guess the only ward I ever worked on was a dependent ward, in which the personnel were all female, all the corpsmen were all corpsgirls, only we didn't say that. ... They were all girls and all the doctors were men. There were no women doctors that I ever saw

BT: There were so few that you probably would not see them. The WAVES who were working in the Hospital Corps were essentially doing the same jobs as corpsmen.

MHW: Yes.

BT: Except, maybe, heavy lifting. Were there any times when the corpsmen would do things that you did not do?

MHW: Not that I remember, no

BT: So, you really did everything.

MHW: Yes, you learned how to raise a patient in a bed to give him a bed bath, and it was a kind of hooking of arms, or something, and you got your hand behind his shoulder, and then, you could lift him up, and then, you had to roll them over to make the bed, and, you know, you rolled them over to one side, and then, roll them over to the other side, and it's all pretty common sense stuff, really, and you did it all the same. I remember the first patient I was ever assigned to. I had to give a bad bath to a guy who was in a body cast. There wasn't really much I could wash, you know, because the poor thing had a broken back. He'd ... fallen, somehow, and was in a cast, and he ... turned out all right, it was odd. ... I can't remember his name now, but, ... for a while, he was a council person, or whatever his title was, in New Brunswick. After the war, ... I remember seeing his name. I said, "Oh, I remember him, I gave him a bed bath," you know. [laughter] But, I ... used to think, "I'll see him sometime, and I'll, you know, ... remind him," and I did see him at a distance, now and then, but, I never reminded him. [laughter] ... But, I did remember, his first name was (Irving?), I remember that.

BT: What do you remember about the Navy nurses?

MHW: Very nice things, ... excellent, ... real ... ladies, very nice. Well, ... I can remember one who was a Dean Boddie-type, didn't like her. She was the chief nurse and I ran into her one time. I remember, ... my best friend and I were gonna go on liberty together, and I got off, somehow, earlier than she did. I don't remember why that was, and, rather than go back to the barracks and wait for her, I was gonna wait for her in the hospital, and ... the chief nurse came around, on some kind of an inspection, or whatever, and she became annoyed at something she saw, and she told me to do something, or blamed me for something, and ... I explained to her that I wasn't on duty, and ... that really set her off. She did not want me there if I wasn't on duty, so, she, you know ... kind of threw me out, and ... she said, you know, "What are you doing here?" ... I told her I was waiting for so-and-so, because we were gonna go to liberty together, and I don't know if she thought that was a good excuse or not, but, ... she was really annoyed, mostly because I had a reason that, you know, got me out of being blamed for something. She had red hair, I remember that, and she was about six feet tall, and ... she had been in the Navy, maybe, twenty years, so, she was, you know, an old timer.

BT: What did the nurses do?

MHW: Mostly, ... they went on rounds with the doctors. They ... took down whatever he said, all his orders, all his comments, they kept the books, ... and they wrote down whatever changes in medications there were. They kept all the charts and all we did was dispense the medications. She would tell you what it was, ... we took it around, and put it in their mouths, or watch them swallow it, or gave the shots, or whatever it was.

BT: But, you did gave them shots.

MHW: Yes.

BT: Were any of them on intravenous medicine?

MHW: No, no, I don't remember any of them, no. ... Those probably would have been on wards attached to the operating rooms and I didn't work in that part. I ... never got to work in the OR. ... I remember, I was on standby for OR, but, it just never happened that they needed me, so, I never went. I worked on an orthopedic ward, that was the first one, broken bones, or broken this or that, ... of one kind or another. I worked on SOQ, Sick Officers Quarters, and that was a mixture of diseases, and, I remember, one ensign had a brain tumor. We did not do anything much. There were two or three nurses attached to that ward, 'cause it was officers and they needed all those nurses. [laughter] ... I remember there were three nurses at any given time, ... and I think I was on part of that days and part of that nights, and nights were ... best. You gave out medications around the clock, but, at night, there wasn't much to do.

BT: Nothing really serious.

MHW: No, no, no

BT: None of these individuals were critically ill.

MHW: Well, the ensign, ... he died, but, everybody else recovered. There was, I remember, a ... woman, and ... she was in the Navy, but, what she did, ... I don't know. She had a ... rheumatic fever, and she was ... fairly ill, and I can't recall anybody else, specifically, but, ... most of them were ambulatory. They got up and they wore their uniforms during the day, but, they were required to sleep there at night, and they got treatment. But, ... quite a few of them were bed-ridden. The ... rheumatic fever person was, and the ... ensign, although he could walk around, and I was surprised when I heard ensign. I thought, ... "Poor thing," and he was forty-ish. He was not, you know, ... a twenty year old something, and then, there was another person who had, I think, ... leukemia, and he was a doctor, and he died. He was young, and he was a handful, because ... he did all his own diagnosing and all his own treatment before they ever got there, and he disagreed with everything. ... It was a fight to get him ... to do things. ... You didn't have to do everybody on a ward, you were assigned a certain number of beds, whatever, and those were yours, and, luckily, I was not assigned to him. I, occasionally, brought him medication, but, he was not my patient, and I remember ... the WAVE who was assigned to him, ... she really had terrible time with him, and he was really semi-wild. He ... thrashed about in his bed a lot, you know, flung his arms around, and if you were in the way, you got socked. It was not, you know, deliberate, but, he was, I think, in a panic. I think he knew he was dying, and ... it's the same, and it was the same then as it is with doctors now. Nobody looks at you and says, "You're gonna die." They say, "You're gonna be all right, we'll take care of you, ... don't worry about it," you know. ... They did the same with him, and ... he knew it was a lie, and none of ... the doctors dealt with him, you know. They didn't talk to him doctor to doctor, or whatever. They left it to the nurses and the WAVES, which was no comfort to him. He knew that we did not know

what he knew, and we were just obliged to make him take his medicine, or his treatments, or whatever.

BT: There would not have been a lot to do for him in that stage.

MHW: No, it was, you know, all palliative. I don't even know ... what they were giving him.

BT: There was no therapy at that point. I do not know what they did to these people.

MHW: Nope.

BT: Must have been blood transfusions, or something.

MHW: I don't recall any. He wasn't ... on any kind of IV drip. I know that much.

BT: How did you get along with the corpsmen?

MHW: Fine.

BT: At this point, women have been in the Navy for a long time. ...

MHW: Yes, yes, the few that I ... served with were ... really very nice. I ... had good luck to have, what I consider, you know, nice boys, whatever, and they were mixed. There was a boy from New York City, ... in fact, I think one from Brooklyn, you know, ... the classic, and then, a young man, from I don't know where. ... He and I were on SOQ together. ... At night, we weren't assigned individual beds, you had to give everybody medications, you just made the rounds, and so, ... deliberately, I would say, "You take the women, I'll take the men," and we divided it up like that, you know, just to ... shock the patients, ... if they expected. ... It would shock them, because, sometimes, what a man would need would be a urinal, and I would walk in with it very breezily, you know, and hand it to him, and, sometimes, they were shocked, you know. We didn't stand around to watch them use it, we just give it to them, and leave the room, and come back in a little bit, and take it away. ... I never found out ... how he managed with bed pans and the ladies, you know. ... We never talked about it, but, ... we thought it would be funny if, you know, so-and-so was expecting me and he showed up. That was our idea of fun. [laughter]

BT: You said you never got into New York much.

MHW: ... Not really, ... we ... did get in some. I should remember going to a few movies, and there was a place on 42nd Street where we went to play the jukebox, and I don't remember, I guess we drank Cokes, or whatever, there. I don't recall, but, we did a lot of walking. We used to walk ... about forty blocks, ... down to Manhattan and back up

again. We never took a train, or, I mean, not a train, but, a subway or a bus, we walked all over.

BT: That is a long walk.

MHW: It didn't seem at that time. We walked, and talked, and looked. ... That was our recreation. We would get down, get a bite of something somewhere, ... now and then, as I said, we would go to the movies. I remember, we ran into this one place that had a lot of Perry Como records, and that's what we played, I remember that. ... There was no place special. One thing we did do, you could get free tickets for almost anything in New York, Carnegie Hall, the Opera, any kind of musical. People bought the tickets, and sent them to some central location, and you could just walk in, ... in your uniform, and say, "What have you got?" ... I went to Carnegie Hall a couple of times. My best friend was a pianist. She was an advanced piano player, she could play Chopin and all that junk, and she loved classical music. So, ... we would go, and I remember seeing Vladimir Horowitz, and I can't remember who else, and I remember, once, I got tickets for ... an operetta, and I took one of the sailors that I got to know at the hospital, and he was, again, a real country boy. He had never been to anything like that, and he loved it, and he could not believe that we got these tickets for free, and he was a real yokel kind of a boy, nice, but, you know, a very ... unworldly, or otherworldly, whatever. Could have married that one. [laughter]

BT: Did you have friends or people that you were in training with who married men they met in the Navy?

MHW: Not that I know of, no, no. My best friend married a guy who was a paratrooper, but, she met him after she went [back home]. ... She was from Pittsburgh. She went back home to Pittsburgh and went back ... to school. I was already finished with school, but, she wasn't, so, she went back to, I guess, the University of Pittsburgh, and she met a guy in one of her classes who was a paratrooper, or had been, and she married him.

BT: Well, you could date corpsmen.

MHW: Oh, sure

BT: But, what about officers?

MHW: ... I think you could, yes. No, ... I don't think there was any restriction against it, or not that I remember, no.

BT: Maybe because it was after the war.

MHW: ... Quite possibly, that is entirely true, that is right. I was friends with a lieutenant ... whose wife was a patient on a ward I worked on. It was a dependents' ward, where they had children, and mothers, and wives of Navy personnel, and she was having a bad

pregnancy, one of those, I can't remember what they called, ... kind where something goes awry with ... your own systems, ... and you end up with ... blood pressure that goes out of control, so, you're essentially bed-ridden. Can't remember the name for it, but, she was waiting to have the baby, and ... she had been there months, and he came to see her a lot, and so, we got to know him, ... another WAVE and I. ... He would invite us out, the ... other WAVE and I, and, eventually, his wife, ... she got better enough to come out with us. ... She got so she could walk around, and we would go, I don't even recall where, but, we went to Manhattan, I remember. How we got there, I don't recall either, but, it was a ... foursome, like two WAVES, his wife, and him, but, that was as near to dating an officer as I ever got. [laughter]

BT: Before the microphone was on, you were speaking informally about the relationships between the officers, enlisted, women.

MHW: Well, ... officers, ... women to women, fine. I had very little contact with male ... officers, and in the Hospital Corps, the male officer would have mostly been MDs, ... and they were not strictly Navy. ... The whole setup was more relaxed and I think not just because it was after the war, this was just how a hospital was run. ... They ran that hospital pretty much like a civilian hospital would have been run. There was no saluting, there was ... [no] enforcement of strict Naval code, or anything like that. I never got asked out by anybody, and I don't know, none of the WAVES that I knew well dated officers, but, I'm sure there was dating, and the ... women officers I would have known would all have been nurses, and they would be close to, you know, ... corpsmen. All were involved in the same kind of work, ... in a close way, ... but, we didn't ... socialize with them either. I mean, you know, like go out dinner together, or lunches, or anything like that. ... Mostly, I think the way the nurses lived, I think there were nurses' quarters on the hospital grounds, and we did not sleep there overnight, we went back to our barracks, or hotels, or high-rises, or whatever ... it was where we lived. I don't know where the corpsmen lived either. I have no idea whether they had places for them, but, they did not sleep there.

BT: Did you work eight hour shifts at this point or twelve?

MHW: ... I don't remember. ... I think overnights were the longest. You went on duty at, like, early evening and you didn't get off till six the next morning, ... when the day crew came on, but, it was not really work. You just put time in, and, you know, sterilize syringes, and wrapped up instruments to ... go be autoclaved, and whatever, you know. That was like kind of busy work, stuff you filled in with, and the only thing you had to do was be there if a patient needed some help in the hurry, if they needed a bed pan, ... to give out medications, and there would be one nurse at night. The daytime, as I said, there were three and there were more corpsmen in the daytime, too. At night, there were only two and one nurse, ... but, we had a minimal amount of stuff to do.

BT: So, you do not remember any particular crisis?

MHW: I can't remember a crisis, no. Mostly crises would be on dependents wards. ... I remember, once, I ... worked on the ambulance for... a while, and I got sent out to ... someplace in Queens, I guess. ... The wife of a sailor was pregnant and bleeding, and they brought her in, and that was scary. ... I hadn't a clue about what to do for her. My only ... bit of knowledge was to ... keep her ... legs elevated, you know, so that was it, but, if she had had a hemorrhage, ... I don't know what I would have done, die on the spot. ... There was a corpsman who drove, ... and I was in the back ... with her, and they sent a female, because she was a female, ... but, I had no special knowledge, or training, or anything, and it was really ... frightening. ... Her husband came with us, too, and he was beside himself, and he ... didn't like me, because ... I'm sure he took one look at me and thought, "Oh, God, she is going to be no help," and he was right, and nothing bad came out of it. ... They took care of her and I don't really remember how it turned out, but, I don't think she aborted the baby, or whatever. ...

BT: It was a different world than it is now.

MHW: Oh, yes.

BT: Paramedics and everything that goes on with it, even volunteers.

MHW: Yes, yes.

BT: Are trained a lot. ...

LM: What about other situations? Was your training useful for the kind of things that you did?

MHW: That I actually did? Yes, pretty much. I didn't have to do anything very hard. It was all ... a lot of housekeeping, really, changing beds, ... going for laundry, going for supplies, ordering supplies, and picking them up. ... As I said, you know, giving out medications, ... none of it was very hard, ... but, it was busy. There was no slack time, ... every, you know, minute of your time was accounted for, pretty much. ... There were things you had to do or ... somebody had to take care of. ... We did everything. We polished the floors, ... you know, one of those ... electric polishers, you know. ... I was very good at that at one time. [laughter] I can't imagine now, but, ... I did that, clean the bathrooms and you did everything.

BT: Did you clean the bathrooms?

MHW: Oh, yes, I ... remember once, I ... had a date with a sailor, ... and the first time he took my hand, [laughter] he looked at it, and I had calluses ... all across, ... because, in one of the wards I worked, it was a ward of WAVE patients, and ... the chief nurse assigned me to do the head. ... You know, ... that's what they called it, and it was mostly, ... you know, cleaning the toilets, and mopping the floor, and I got the ... calluses mopping the floor. It was ... a huge mop with a big wooden handle, and I was no bigger

than ... I am now, and I ... got good at that, but, I did have calluses. I don't know why I did not get blisters, but, I didn't. I had blisters on my feet the whole time I ... was in the Navy.

LM: Oh, really?

MHW: Huge ones, absolutely huge blisters, and I can remember, I had a ... nurse who asked me a lot, "How are your feet," and I said "Well, I've got these bad blisters," and I don't know what she thought my feet looked like, but, one time, she made me show them to her, and they were huge, I mean, really huge, and I had them all the time, and she said, "Oh, gotta take care of those." She never did, you know. I don't know what she would have done. ... I think she thought, you know, ... she would, ... break them, or prick them, or whatever, and let the fluid out, ... but, I remember my mother saying, when I finally came home, "All that Navy did for you was ruin your feet!" [laughter]

BT: Do you think it was the shoes or just standing all the time?

MHW: I don't know, I think it was just standing, yes, the shoes were good, yes. We had two or three pairs, and they told us to ... rotate them, ... and they were well shaped, and they were, you know, well fitted, and ... they had ... the best leather. The clothing was excellent, ... fitted to you. You just didn't go in and they threw your size at you, they had tailors there. ...

BT: Oh, really?

MHW: Oh, yes, they fitted the coat, the jackets, they ... got the skirt length precisely right, and they were civilian tailors, and, obviously, men who knew what they were doing, and, ... maybe you know, or remember, that the ... suits were designed by a man, Mainbaucher, the ... designer. Only time I ever wore anything made by a designer, yes, but, they were ... really nice suits and they were beautiful fabric. I remember, afterwards, I sent all my stuff to Poland. I thought maybe they could [use it]. I took all the insignia and the buttons off. ...

BT: So, you do not have your uniform?

MHW: No, and I wish I still did. I don't know, ... they were in bad straits. They needed everything, we sent them anything we could think of, yes, and I wish I had my raincoat. I kept the handbag, I used that until it fell apart. That was a really neat handbag.

BT: What was the occasion for you leaving the Navy?

MHW: We were phased out, we were just told to go. ...

BT: It is time to go.

MHW: Yes, once the war was over, everybody was assigned points, and it was based on your age, and how many months you had served, and ... you could rejoin if you wanted to, but, I told them at the time, "I would like to stay another year." They laughed. ... I think it was ... either three or four years at that time. It said, if you want to stay, you had to stay for an enlistment period, a set period, and I did not want to stay for four years, but, I did want to stay more, and you could not, so, I basically was not there a whole calendar year. I was ... twenty-one when I joined, which was old for a WAVE. You could become a WAVE at twenty and most girls did. One of the girls in my class joined when she was twenty and she ended up being like a lieutenant, something or other. Lieutenant commander, I think she ended up as.

BT: She stayed in?

MHW: Yes, ... when she joined, she went to Officers' Candidate School, ... but, when I joined, it was gone. ... At twenty years old, you could join with your parents' permission and I guess they need permission. At twenty-one, which is what I ... was when I joined, ... you know, you were an adult and you could do what you liked, so, that was when I joined.

LM: How did your parents feel about that?

MHW: Okay, pleased. My sister became a nurse and they had a ... Nurse's Training Corps. Can't remember now what it was called, but, it was also under government auspices, and she joined that, so, technically, she was ... part of the military, and she had a uniform, too, which she wore on occasions, but, mostly didn't. ... But, if there were any costs entailed in her training, the government paid them, whatever they were. I don't know how it was when you went to Nurse's Training School, whether you had to pay a tuition. ... I suspect you might have, I don't know. She trained at Jersey City Medical Center, and ... she took a five year training course, ... partly at Jersey City State Teacher's College, which became some other name ... afterwards. ... So, she ended up with a BS ... nurse's certificate.

BT: So, she went to the Cadet Nursing School?

MHW: That's right, that's what it was called, and ... I remember my ... mother telling me that my dad said, you know, he would call ... my mother, "Kid," "Well, Kid, we didn't have boys," but, you know, both of his offspring were in the military, which I think pleased him.

BT: She did not fear for your safety? Well, the war was over

MHW: No, I don't ... think she thought we would, you know, ... and ... if I would have elected to stay, she would have been fine with that, you know, but, I did not want to stay for an enlistment period.

BT: When you were discharged, did they tell you about the GI Bill? Did you think about going to graduate school on it?

MHW: Yes, yes, ... I could have.

BT: You could have, but, did you really feel that you were pretty well informed about the benefits?

MHW: Yes.

BT: Your rights and the GI Bill?

MHW: Yes, yes, yes, was rather easy, actually. When you ... registered at any place, assuming, ... well, I took a couple of courses at Rutgers afterwards, and ... I did not understand this part. I thought, ... my length of service, I think, entitled me to two full scholastic years, ... full, you know, ... course [load] for each year. ... I thought, "Well, ... I can just divide it up. I'll take a course now and a course [later]." Well, what happened was, I took a course, one year, I took geology of all things, and another year, I took philosophy, and I found out that I used up my eligibility, that was it.

BT: That is interesting

MHW: ... I thought I could say, you were allowed three or four courses a year, I think, "Well, I have eight courses." ... It didn't work that way. It ... worked, I just used it up, and that was [the] end of that. ...

BT: So, in a way, you were not well informed.

MHW: Yes, I was informed, and, but, didn't understand, whatever. I guess if I had thought of graduate school, and signed up for a full load of courses, I ... would have found out that way, but, I didn't, you know. ...

BT: That is interesting

MHW: ... I remember, I took something else, assuming that ... it would be covered, and I remember getting a bill from Rutgers, and I, ... you know, contacted somebody, you know, and I said, "I think there's ... been some mistake. I have ... GI coverage." ... She said, "Oh, no, no. You don't have it anymore," and ... she gave me the name of somebody in the Navy, ... not the Navy, but, the ... Veterans' [Administration], and I did talk to somebody there, and he explained, "Oh, no, ... it's all used up," and he said, "So, you owe us," ... whatever it was, forty dollars, I don't recall now, and ... I never did pay it. [laughter] ... I essentially audited the course, since I wasn't taking it for the credit, ... you know. It wasn't gonna contribute to any sort of a degree, or whatever, so, ... I didn't pay, and nobody bothered me, and I used to think, "Sometime in the future, it's gonna pop up, you know, they're gonna send the government after me," but, nothing came of it. I truly

believed I was being, you know, flim flamed, that I took it under, you know, being honest, or what I thought was being honest, and that they pulled a fast one by saying, “Oh, no, ... you’re not eligible, or you can’t claim it,” whatever.

BT: So, what did you do when you left the Navy?

MHW: ... I took almost a half a year off. ... They had a 52/20 club, which ... meant you could collect twenty dollars a week for fifty-two weeks, as a veteran, while you were looking for work. So, I collected twenty dollars a week, for roughly half a year and I did look for work. I signed up at the unemployment [office]. ... I had no idea what I wanted to do. Then, ... I got serious, and I sent letters out to all the places in New Jersey that I [could] reach by public transportation, Merck, and Hoffman La Roche, and I can’t remember where else, several other places, and I did not apply at Squibb, because I told myself, I didn’t want to work in New Brunswick. [laughter] I’ve gone to school there and I thought, “I don’t want to go back to commuting to New Brunswick,” and I had several interviews. ... I got a good job offer from one, but, it was a ... very hard place to get to. It required two buses and exquisite timing and I thought, “Oh, boy, you know, the first snow storm, I’m not gonna get here,” but, it would have been a nice place. They made yeast cultures. It would have been a cinch job and it was a nice place. ... It was old fashioned, little, factory-kind of a place, and ... it was essentially huge, huge ... fermentation vats, and all I would have had to do was take samples from the vats and check them for, you know, ... contaminants, and I knew how to do that, ‘cause ... it was ... basic bacteriology, and, ... you know, anybody could do that, and I did not take that job. ... I interviewed at Hoffman La Roche, or someplace like that, for what ... would have been a routine chemistry job, ... and he asked me some sort of questions, in chemistry, which I ... was not able to answer, ... and he did not want me, and I remember, it ... probably was something I should have known, zip, you know, like that, but, I didn’t, and ... I got the job at Squibb, through an employment agency. My cousin was aware of it, it was in downtown Newark, and she said, “Why don’t you try there?” We went there, ... and I think the first job she had on her list that sounded like I could do was this job at Squibb, ... and I went down for an interview, on December the 8th, and the man said, “When can you start?” ... I said, “Tomorrow,” [laughter], and he said, “Come.” ... It was a Friday, and I worked there one day, and that was the end of that, and I was there for thirty-nine and a half years, ... not in that same job, but, in various ones.

BT: How do you think the Navy experience, even though it was less than a year, fits in all the rest of your life?

MHW: Yes, quite a bit. ... It gives you a lot of self-confidence, for some reason or other. As I said, ... I was not able to do, like, the ... experience on the ambulance was not exactly reassuring, but, ... I handled everything else pretty well, and I don’t know what it is, but, there is ... something about the whole thing. ... It was reassuring, in some way, to say, “Oh, I was in the Navy for a year.” I never said eleven months and some days, whatever it was, I always said a year, and not many women could say that. ... It was always a good thing to add to a resume, ... and people always wanted to ask you about it, “What was it

like, ... blah, blah, blah,” and you had a talking point, and I remember, lot of the ... first aid, common sense things, ... they still stick with me. ... You think ... you can help people. I don't know if I would really be good at it, but, I think I could, you know, that kind of a thing, yes. ... I always had some kind of self confidence that ... I could tackle almost anything, and I don't know if it was Navy, or if I always had it, or ... whatever. ...

BT: In terms of jobs and training, it did not really relate directly to what you ended up doing in the bacteriology lab.

MHW: No, no, but, eventually, there was a little bit of a tie-in, when I left, after I was in bacteriology, ... I guess around four years, and ... they were phasing in, not phasing in, but, expanding ... their antibiotic production, and I was working in vaccines, and vaccines were kind of being phased out. They thought, “Well, you don't need vaccines for a lot of stuff. If you got the disease, we give you a shot of penicillin, and you are okay,” so, a lot of ... the vaccines which we were making, were just let, you know, go. We didn't make them anymore. ... We made tetanus antitoxin, we made typhoid vaccine, ... we made ... diphtheria vaccine, ... Whooping Cough, ... I don't remember what else. ... The basic one, which was a combination of three, is still given today, because it's one of the ones they give babies when they are, you know, like two months old, or whatever. ... I had so many shots. ... We all were inoculated with everything, all of those things, except tetanus. Well, we got tetanus shots, ... one a year. ... Anyway, ... they were phasing it out, partly because ... our combination vaccine was not a good one. There were a lot of reactions to it, ... and they were having trouble selling it, so, they farmed out the ... production of it to some other ... pharmaceutical company, and we still sold it under our name, but, we no longer manufactured it. ... So, that whole part shut down, so, ... my lab, as it was, would have been closed down in a year or two, and the man who hired me realized that, and he ... saw a job opening on a bulletin board someplace, and he said, you know, ... “There is an opening.” He said, “Why don't you go interview for it?” and I did, and that was another thing. I was not following, ... you know, bulletin boards or anything, and I wasn't even thinking past [the closing]. ... I thought I would just stay, and then, I would do something when the lab closed, and the job was in pharmacology, and so, I switched, and I did not know any pharmacology, literally, you know, but, they ... took me.

BT: Do you think maybe the Navy experience helped you?

MHW: Well, I don't know, I don't know, I have no idea. ... I don't recall if they even asked. ... Everybody there, except, I guess, the department head, had been in ... the military. ... I'm sure that had nothing to do with it. At that time, the section heads in pharmacology, and there were four or five of them, were men, and almost everybody who worked as lab techs, or ... whatever, were women, and they were getting girls right out of college, and ... they wanted girls, because the men wanted more money, and, eventually, the longer I was there, ... half and half distribution occurred, because they were taking veterans ... who were looking for work, and young men also just out of college. By then, the pay scale had increased some, but, not a lot, and I didn't learn, until after I had been

there a long time, that they were still paying the women less than the men. ... [Break in the tape] I think it still may be in some places. ...

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

BT: I wonder, with veterans, that particular time that they were in service, is it an almost separate piece to their life or are there were some continuities?

MHW: I would say it was. In my case, I would say that ... it was like another world. You know, it was completely separate and different, and, in my case, enjoyable. I ... loved every minute of it.

BT: Did you keep contact with any other WAVES?

MHW: Just that one girl who ... followed me to Hospital Corps School and to Brooklyn Naval Hospital, and ... I haven't heard ... from her in quite a while, ... in recent years, say in the last half a dozen years, but, up until then, we were following each other. She, as I said, she married the ... paratrooper, and she had five children, and ... our lives were very different. He worked for RCA, or NBC, and he got to be vice-president of something or other. ... They made big bucks. ... I think ... they bought a farm out in ... Far Hills or some place like that in New Jersey, and I think they live, you know, a country squire kind of life. I don't know, I've never seen the farm, but, I know they have horses, and one of their daughters learned how to ride, and was, I guess, ... a competitive rider, and she ... became a veterinarian at the University of Pennsylvania, and she is ... my god-daughter. ...

BT: Oh, really?

MHW: Yes, yes, but, I haven't seen or heard from her in awhile. She ... also is married with children. ...

BT: Even though she was from New Jersey, you met her in boot camp?

MHW: Yes. No, she was from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

BT: Oh, she was from Pittsburgh.

MHW: Yes, yes, but, we are close enough. I visited her in Pittsburgh, and she was at my house in ... Newark, and ... the visiting back and forth was during the ... six months right after I left the Navy, ... when I was off. I was not working and had time, once I started to work and she finished school, and ... I don't know what she did, whether she got a job, or just got married and ... started raising a family, I really can't recall, but, ... I visited her once after she had her first baby, because I remember the little boy, ... and I don't know how her husband got started at NBC. I don't even know what he did exactly, but, I know, then, she wasn't working.

BT: But, it is interesting that they ended up back here, small world.

MHW: ... Yes, well, he worked in New York City. As far as I know, they never lived in New York, they lived in New Jersey all the time in different places. You know, as his pay went up, ... they moved to better houses, ... bigger, nicer houses, whatever, you know. ... She did the usual ... progression of, you know, children, and houses, and they, I think ... all went to ... college. Maybe the older boy didn't. He ... works for NBC. ... I am pretty sure his dad got him the job, and he was ... on a television crew, a mobile crew, you know, that went out to ... places to film TV events. That was the last job I knew he had. I don't know what he is doing now, if he is still with them, and I'm not sure about the rest, ... aside from the girl who became the vet.

BT: Well, nothing is coming to my mind, at this point

MHW: No, I ... can't think of anything else either, and now, I live by myself, and I have a lot of cats and one dog.

BT: You still live in Newark?

MHW: Yes, I do, ... in the same house my parents bought.

BT: Now, where is Emerson Place?

MHW: Oh, let's see.

BT: Relative to Clinton Hill.

MHW: ... You can't walk from Clinton Hill to Emerson Place easily.

BT: Newark is a big town.

MHW: Yes, it is big, let's see, ... Emerson Place is nearer to Elizabeth. ... I could walk to Elizabeth from where I live, it's near the Newark-Elizabeth city line, and you could, ... you know, go from one city to another and not even know you were in a different place, except for all the signs, "Welcome to Elizabeth," "Welcome to Union County," ... near the county line. Do you know where Weequahic Park is? Have you ever heard of Weequahic Park?

BT: Dimly. [laughter]

MHW: Okay, well, [laughter] ... [have] you ever heard of Frelinghuysen Avenue or Elizabeth Avenue?

BT: Yes, I heard of them.

MHW: Or (Meeker?) Avenue? Those are all big avenues. They ... roughly border the park.

BT: ... I have to look and see.

MHW: Yes, and Elizabeth Avenue runs from Hillside into Clinton Avenue in Newark, and ends in Clinton Avenue, and that Elizabeth Avenue is on the western border of the park.

BT: I have to look and see.

MHW: You know where Beth Israel Hospital is?

BT: Yes, I do know where the hospital is.

MHW: Okay, well, that's five minutes drive from where I live.

BT: I go in and help Trinity Methodist Church, which is on Clinton Avenue.

MHW: Okay, right, ... that's right, ... okay, right ... Osmond Terrace, that's right, yes.

BT: But, this is all the part of Newark I know, just three, four blocks around Trinity, basically.

MHW: ... Yes, yes. ...

BT: I can get there, and get back on 78, and that is all I can do.

MHW: Yes, that's kind of how it is with me, too, because, I ... think, sometimes, if I had to give people directions, ... I can't. I always say, "Where are you now?" and then, I'll tell them roughly how to get there, like, you tell them Bloomfield Avenue, ... or Springfield Avenue, or Clinton Avenue into Broad Street, Newark, and then, I can tell them which way to go from there, but, ... the neighborhoods, I don't know. ... When my parents first married, they lived on Belmont Avenue, ... which is all changed. It's not called Belmont Avenue anymore, and my high school has a new name, and so, many things are changed now in Newark. The hospital where ... I was born is either non-existent or has been melded into some other united hospital, which became University Medical Center, or whatever it is now, and it's all a big conglomerate, and it's all strange to me, and I have never gone to it. ... Couple of times I was hospitalized, I went to Beth Israel, because my doctor was attached to it. Now, I probably would go there now, if I needed to.

LM: Is that all? Is there anything you would like to contribute?

MHW: Nothing. ...

LM: Anything else you would like to contribute?

MHW: Boy, ... I didn't know I would rattle along this far or this much.

LM: No, thank you very much for contributing in our project

MHW: You are very welcome

[The very beginning of side one is replayed at the end of side two.]

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

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 9/19/99

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 9/28/99

Reviewed by Margaret Harriet Waugh 4/20/00