

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH FLOYD H. BRAGG

FOR THE

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INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Sandra Stewart Holyoak: This begins an interview with Floyd Bragg on April 28, 2003, in Winants Hall in New Brunswick, New Jersey, on the Rutgers University campus. Mr. Bragg, thank you for coming in and participating in the Rutgers Oral History Archives project. To begin the interview, I would like to ask you where and when you were born, and then, a little bit about your father, if you would, to start.

Floyd Bragg: Sure, I was born in Newark, New Jersey at St. Michael's Hospital, in 1915. My family didn't live in Newark at that time, I think they lived in Hilton [New Jersey], and, not too long after that, moved to East Orange, and I grew up in East Orange, went to Columbian Grammar School and went through grammar school there. My father was in the insurance business. He was in the casualty insurance business in charge of plate glass claims and he traveled a fair amount, whenever there was a hurricane, or something like that, he would have to go to Florida and work with the glaziers to replace glass in stores, and so forth.

SH: Was it primarily for businesses like stores?

FB: It was primarily major pieces of glass.

SH: Had his family been in this country for some time?

FB: Oh, yes. His family went back a long time. We traced his, I guess his great, great grandfather to being born in Connecticut. That's as far back as I've gotten so far.

SH: That is quite a ways.

FB: And his name was Horatio Bragg.

SH: Was he born and raised in the New Jersey area?

FB: Yes. My father was born in High Bridge, New Jersey and raised there and went to school and, finally, got through high school. I think he finally got through when he was an adult, you know, in those days.

SH: I know High Bridge is more of a rural area. Was he a farmer in that part of the world or was his father's family?

FB: His father was a sort of an itinerant carpenter, a jack-of-all-trades, I would say.

SH: Please tell me about your mother.

FB: My mother came from a German family. Her father and mother were born in Germany, but she was born in Newark, New Jersey, and she went through grammar school. I don't believe she had any high school.

SH: Did your mother and father ever talk about how they met?

FB: Yes, I think they met at a mixer of some sort, a party of some sort. My mother came from a relatively large family. My father had one brother. I'm an only child.

SH: Did you interact with your uncles and aunts and whatever, as a young boy?

FB: Oh, yes, particularly my mother's family. My grandfather made wine and we used to go up to the country to pick elderberries, I remember that vividly, and his basement had wine presses in it and, of course, wine, the odor of wine, permeated the house. This was a German family and my grandmother and grandfather, for whatever reason, and I think it must have been my mother's doing, were not permitted to speak German in my presence. At that time, there was a large German section in Newark and they were integrating into the American way of doing things and there was concern that you shouldn't be identified as being a German.

SH: Even that long after World War I?

FB: Yes. Well, this was my grandfather, it was before World War I that he came to this country. He came to this country to avoid the draft and, as a matter-of-fact, I did find his Declaration of Intention to become a Citizen, his papers, and he had to, in this, he had to renounce the Kaiser. This is a statement signed by him renouncing the Kaiser.

SH: Oh, really?

FB: Yes.

SH: Did your mother's family leave their family back in Germany or did any of them come with them?

FB: Yes. Well, as far as my grandfather was concerned, he left his family completely. Cut his ties with them. There was a story and I don't have any documentation of this, that when his father died, he didn't leave anything to him. He left it to his younger brother and he was very resentful of the fact that as the oldest, he should have left it to him. Those were the ways you did things in those days.

SH: That is interesting to hear because I know the war would have been over by the time they would have been talking where you would have recognized the German I would think.

FB: Yes.

SH: Was your family involved with the church at all? What was your religious affiliation?

FB: My mother's family was Roman Catholic. My father was Protestant, but, when he married, he converted to the Catholic religion, so, I was brought up Catholic.

SH: I wondered if being born in St. Michael's ...

FB: Well, yes, that was probably part of it. So, I've never known another religion personally, you know.

SH: Were you involved in the church as a young man?

FB: Well, I was president of the Newman Club here in college and, sure, I was involved.

SH: Were you an altar boy?

FB: No, I was not an altar boy.

SH: Did your mother work outside of the home at all?

FB: Not to the best of my knowledge. In those days, wives didn't work, you know.

SH: That brings me up to the next part. What do you remember about the Depression and how that affected your family?

FB: Well, let me start first by saying that my father's family was of British heritage, on his father's side, but on his mother's side they were Apgars. That was a German, very extensive German family all through parts of New Jersey, rural New Jersey primarily, so, there was, really, German on both sides, although my grandmother on his side never spoke German. I don't think she ever understood German.

SH: Did they talk about World War I at all? Do you remember? Were there family members that were involved?

FB: Yes, well, sure, two of my uncles were in the service. My father's brother and one of my mother's brothers were in the service in World War I and one, my mother's brother, Dan, suffered after the war because he had been gassed during the war.

SH: Was he able to live at home?

FB: Oh, yes. He was well enough. He ran, in those days, a vegetable business. He had, I guess, a small van to deliver vegetables throughout the neighborhood in Newark and, later, had his own farm, and so forth.

SH: You said you went to the Columbian Elementary School.

FB: Yes, I went to the Columbian Elementary School and got a very good, very sound education. I can remember, in particular, a teacher who taught English who was exceptionally good.

SH: Do you remember the name?

FB: Yes, Powers was her name, Mrs. Powers. [laughter] They didn't have first names in those days.

SH: I was going to gamble that it was in fact a woman and then I thought perhaps I shouldn't do that.

FB: In those days, I remember I skipped a grade in those days. So, I was very young, moving along through the school system, and then my mother had problems with asthma and where we were living in East Orange the doctor felt wasn't conducive to her health. So, when I graduated from grammar school, we moved to Irvington and I went to Irvington High School for one year while we were building a house in Verona. Verona is up very high and then at the end of that first year, I went to Verona High School for three years. It was a small high school and a very good school.

SH: Is the Columbian School a private school?

FB: No, that's a grammar school, public grammar school.

SH: What were your interests as a young man, before high school? What had kept you busy in the summers and after school?

FB: I was a great baseball enthusiast and in those days we figured the averages, the batting averages, and everything else. We knew all the players and I remember when I was in grammar school I had a buddy in East Orange and we'd get up in the morning on weekends or major holidays and decide we were going to go to New York City to see the Brooklyn Dodgers or the New York Giants at the Polo Grounds and we'd look out and it'd be raining and I'd say to my mother, "It's clearing in the West." So, we'd pack a lunch and go to the games. In those days there's no problem to get on the train and go. There was no concern about terrorism, or kids being molested, or whatever, and my mother was very protective, so I was amazed, thinking back about it, that she let me do this, but I had a buddy and we traveled together, you know.

SH: It is amazing that you could do something like that.

FB: I grew up with him and we formed our own baseball team. We had our own football team. We had a quasi-basketball team. We played roller skate hockey, in the street, using the manhole covers as the goals. We had bicycles and we had what we called marathon races around the block, you know, all kinds of things like this.

SH: What was your favorite baseball team?

FB: In those days, it was the New York Giants.

SH: That was your team.

FB: Yes.

SH: Did you collect any memorabilia from these sports?

FB: No. The only thing I ever got involved from a collecting standpoint was collecting stamps.

SH: Did you start that in grammar school?

FB: Yes, yes, which was great from the standpoint of learning the foreign countries, which is of no value today because those countries have all changed their names.

SH: This is true, very true. Now tell me, you said just before high school that you moved to Irvington?

FB: Irvington High School, for one year, yes.

SH: For just one year and then you went to Verona.

FB: Just one year.

SH: What was that like to have to switch schools and having to leave your buddy?

FB: I think it was traumatic, but I adjusted fairly well. It's a big school. It wasn't personal like it was at Columbian Grammar School, or, subsequently, at Verona High School.

SH: Now Verona was the smaller of the two schools?

FB: Yes, yes.

SH: What were your interests in high school? What did you do?

FB: I tried to play on the baseball team and I was made the third base coach. I wasn't really good enough to play baseball, at that level, but I knew baseball through and through. I think that one of the biggest events of my life, at that time, was as a senior, out of the blue, when they had the ceremonies to give out the letters, and so forth, I was given a letter for baseball. You know, even though I wasn't a player, really, although I got in as a sub, once in a while, but I was really the third base coach. In the yearbook, they said baseball was my crowning glory and said as my proposed occupation, I was going to be high school coach of the Swedesboro High School baseball team, or something like that.

SH: Have you kept up your interest in baseball?

FB: Yes.

SH: I wondered if you did.

FB: All sports, really.

SH: In high school, other than being third base coach, what other activities were you involved in?

FB: Oh, I got involved. I can't sing, as a matter-of-fact I think I have a tin ear, but I remember one time when I was in grammar school in first or second grade and I came home crying and my mother said to me, "What's your problem?" and I said, "The teacher says I can't carry a tune." So, those things you remember, you know, but because it was a very small school, they put on plays and semi-musical productions and so forth. Everybody had to do something, so, I was in the chorus. Told not to sing and move my mouth. [laughter]

SH: Maybe you were a better dancer.

FB: Well, I wasn't even a good dancer. I was supposed to be in the chorus line, and so forth, they hid me in the back. But, also, I was a very good student and they were putting on a play called the *Magistrate* and they had cast a senior to play the Magistrate and I think two weeks to go, or less than two weeks to go, they decided he just couldn't handle it. So, a teacher came to me and said, "We'd like you to take his place." I said, "How in the devil can I learn a part like that?" It was a long part. Well, they said, "Well, part of the time you're sitting in back of the bench, the judge's bench, and you can have the text up there and you can use the text." Well, I did fine, very fine where I knew the part, but I was very nervous when I had to depend on what was on the paper in front of me, you know. That was an interesting experience.

SH: Trial by fire?

FB: Yes. So, I was involved. I think I was a cheerleader. I was manager of the basketball team, whatever, you know. It was a great school for giving you the opportunity to participate.

SH: Even as a young person, were you geared mentally to go to college or did you have an idea that you would finish your high school and go to work? What were you thinking at that time?

FB: I think my family wanted me to go to college. I would be the first member of my family, my extended family, to go to college, so, this was important and, as I said, I was a very good student. As a matter-of-fact, and I'll tell you more about that story later, the teachers there said I should go on to chemistry as a field, but I only applied to one college.

SH: Really?

FB: I didn't know any different in those days.

SH: Before we talk about that and your choice in that, what did you do in the summers?

FB: Oh, in the summers, as I said we had our own baseball team and my buddy and I managed the team, raised the money to buy the uniforms, the baseballs, and sold chances, whatever we could, you know, so, we played baseball in the summer. My family liked to go to Vermont, or New Hampshire, or someplace like that, for one week usually, and stay at a hotel, semi-hotel I guess, bed and breakfast type of thing, so, we did that.

SH: You talked earlier that your father was in the casualty insurance business and he would have to travel where there were storms.

FB: Yes, but the summers were good!

SH: I wondered if you ever had an opportunity to travel with him?

FB: No, no, but he would come back and talk of his experiences.

SH: When you went to Vermont for the summers, did you go usually to the same place over and over again?

FB: Well, we went to a couple of different places, which was good I think.

SH: How long would you usually stay on vacation?

FB: Usually a week, but certainly no more than two weeks.

SH: We've interviewed people who would go for a month, or to the shore for the summer, and the father would commute and I wondered if you had that experience?

FB: No.

SH: Did you belong to the Boy Scouts or any organizations?

FB: I belonged to Hi-Y [YMCA program to build leadership and character in youths]. I guess, I got to be president of that in high school. No, I never belonged to the Boy Scouts.

SH: Were there other activities involved with Hi-Y?

FB: Yes. I remember, we met in Summit for a regional meeting of presidents of various groups.

SH: In high school, were you involved at all in student government?

FB: Probably in some way, but I don't have any clear recollection of this. I was involved in helping to produce the yearbook and things like that. I remember that.

SH: Were you part of the debate team or anything like that?

FB: No, I wasn't involved in debating. I don't think we had a debating team.

SH: Then tell us the story about your application to Rutgers and how you knew about Rutgers.

FB: Well, money was an important factor in those days. This was 1932 and already the Depression was hitting and I know my father's pay was cut, and things like this were going on,

so the only place we thought I could afford to go to was Rutgers. The tuition was quite reasonable in those days so I applied here, and I was accepted.

SH: Did you make any visits prior to that, or were you part of the State Scholarship program?

FB: No. I didn't know anything about these things. I wasn't all that sharp.

SH: Were your high school teachers important in forming that idea, along with your parents, that you should go on to higher education?

FB: Yes, yes. I think they were. In high school, I had male teachers as well as female teachers, which I think was good, too.

SH: What was your favorite subject in high school?

FB: Well, I was very good in English and math and the sciences. I think at that time they called it something like a college preparatory program. History I remember well. I took whatever courses that I needed to take and, as I said, I did well in them.

SH: Describe for us what the Rutgers campus was like in 1932 when you came as a freshman. Where were you housed?

FB: I came here and moved into Leupp Hall as a freshman. In those days the freshman, during the first weeks, had to wear a dinky. You carried a shopping bag with your books. You had, I think, a green tie. You had white socks and you tucked your pant legs into the white socks and when you saw an upperclassman, as you came across the campus, you said, "Bow-wow-wow." That was, I guess, a mild form of hazing in those days.

SH: Did you also wear a jacket?

FB: I think we did wear jackets, at least in the beginning, you know, because we had a green tie on, you know, that meant we had a shirt on.

SH: During your first semester, the courses were pretty well set for you?

FB: I was very, very heavy in the sciences, chemistry, physics, calculus, English.

SH: Were all your courses right here in the Voorhees Mall area?

FB: Yes, it was, pretty much. The chemistry building was right across from the Ford [Residence Hall] for example and the building next to it was where they had the physics.

SH: Which is now Van Dyke.

FB: Van Dyke, yes. Well, at any rate, practically anything in the library was right there at, I guess, where the [Zimmerli] art museum is now. The interesting story about all of this was I

started out in chemistry. I had very serious sinus problems and I used to go over to the infirmary and the doctor in the infirmary was Dr. Claire, that's Marjorie Freeman's father and after I got over there a few times, he said to me, "We don't seem to be making any headway. Tell me about the courses you're taking." As soon as I said "chemistry", he said, "That laboratory is very poorly ventilated." He probably said something like, "Young man, if I were you I'd think about a different career path." So, as a result of that, I was struggling I think in chemistry and physics, anyway, I changed my course, which changed my life, really, and decided to major in business administration. About the same time, my father got another cut in pay and money was getting tougher and tougher. I went to see Dean Fraser Metzger, who was the Dean of Men at that time, and I told him I was having some money problems and he asked me where I was from, I told him, "Verona, Essex County." He says, "I think there is an Essex County scholarship available, fifty dollars a semester," and he got that scholarship for me. So, that's part of my story, as my obligation to the university goes back a long ways.

SH: Can you tell other Fraser Metzger stories?

FB: Well, I can tell you one. I stayed a neutral for the first two years and became a fraternity member in my junior year and Fraser Metzger at the parties used to travel around to the fraternities to see what was going on and he came to the Theta Chi house after he'd been at the Delta Upsilon (DU) house and he said, "Oh, they're having a nice party at the DU house," he said, "The boys and girls are playing leap frog." "Ha!" I thought to myself, "How naïve can he be?" [laughter] But he was sort of an imposing [man]; most people thought he was a forbidding figure. I never found him that way.

SH: That may be one of the best Fraser Metzger stories I've heard. Was there mandatory ROTC when you were here?

FB: Yes, two years. The first two years were mandatory. You drilled on what was then Nielson Field, which is kind of where Brower Common is, but a little more toward the river and that's where we drilled. Then we had classes in the Barn [College Avenue gymnasium]. That was the year that was dedicated, 1932, the year I came here. 1932 was the year that Clothier came in as president, so there were a lot of events that went on. The classrooms, for map reading and courses like this, were in the upstairs rooms of the "Barn."

SH: Did you ever think of going into the advanced ROTC?

FB: No, I didn't. I had no interest in that. Several members of the class did and, of course, got their commissions, and so forth.

SH: What about the mandatory chapel?

FB: Catholics were excused from mandatory chapel, so I didn't go to mandatory chapel, I guess, we went to St. Peter's.

SH: Did you go to St. Peter's?

FB: Yes, I did. I was very faithful. I told you I was president of Newman Club, you know.

SH: I have heard stories where they were excused and kind of made a big deal.

FB: Really? No, I never did. I was faithful. I guess I was brought up in that school. [laughter]

SH: Well, tell us about the first two years, before you got involved with the fraternity. Was there a reason that you chose to remain independent or you were just not sure that was what you wanted to do?

FB: Money was part of the factor and I was enjoying life in the dormitory. I had different roommates, you know, and there was a camaraderie that built up. At that time, there was Neutral Council and I was active in the Neutral Council. I was enjoying that, plus, I was very active in the *Targum*. I started in the sports department and my time was very heavily devoted to going out to the various sports and seeing what was going on there and it wasn't until, I guess, my junior year, that I was really seriously looked at by fraternities.

SH: Do you remember who was the editor of the *Targum* your first two years?

FB: The editor before me was Kempf, [Roy] Kempf [RC '35]. In those days, you have to remember that the fraternities had about six hundred members and the college, as a whole, was maybe 1,200 or 1,250, something like that. So, the fraternities were the power structure, controlled virtually everything. There was great competition among the fraternities to get people who they thought they could promote and get to run something. Also, I was close to "Soup Campbell" [Ralph Norton Campbell RC '32] who was a Theta Chi who was on the staff at that time and a couple of other Theta Chi's, who had been active in *Targum*. They apparently saw some potential for me in *Targum*, so, I think that's really why they recruited me, to make a long story short. [Editor's Note: "Soup" Campbell refers to Ralph Norton Campbell, RC '32, who as a student was a member of Theta Zeta, the precursor to Theta Chi, and a member of the *Targum* staff. In *The Scarlet Letter* of 1936, the Theta Chi section lists Ralph Norton Campbell as one of the "Fratres in Facultate."]

SH: Talk a little bit about football at Rutgers. I understand that the football games were almost mandatory for freshmen to attend?

FB: Well, I would have gone anyway, so, if it was mandatory that didn't make any difference! I eventually made some of my college expenses out of that because, based on what I was doing at the *Targum*, I finally got a job with the *Home News*. In those days, there were correspondents to all metropolitan newspapers and, I think, I had the *Star-Ledger*, and the *Herald Tribune* for sports. Also, they paid you ten cents an inch in those days. Well, you didn't get very much in the Newark or New York newspapers, but the *Home News*, as I worked my way up, I was finally covering all sports, including football, that I could write. You know, they'd send me to the away games, and so forth, and I could write two or three columns, you know, about that, so I began to make pretty good money on the side.

SH: If you were covering the sports for the *Targum*, how close were you with the team, the team members? Are you part of the locker room?

FB: We weren't in those days, but you had fraternity brothers who are on the team so you knew what was going. I had a few stories to tell about that too.

SH: Please do.

FH: I remember, I guess, it was in our senior year, those of us who were covering the newspapers, Bud Ross [Mr. Clifford B. Ross] was one, [Isadore] Glaser was another. I was the third. I think, there's someone else, but, at any rate, we came down for pre-season August football, watched the team and we got talking over a beer, or something, I'll tell you about Prohibition later, and we said, "There's no way we can ever promote somebody to be an All-American," you know, we thought. But the more we talked about it, we said, "Maybe there's a possibility. We've got an end, who's got some real promise," name was Walt Winika and, "he's playing alongside the best player on the team, a tackle, and, this tackle is going to make him look good." In those days, they played both ways. So, we made a pact that, somehow, in every game that we covered, Walt Winika [Walter Winika RC '36] would be the star.

SH: Power of the media.

FB: The power of the media, and I remember, for example, the *Home News* sent me up to Boston to cover the Boston University game a couple of days in advance. Then I went to all the newspapers up there, told them what a great player Walt Winika was. I'll be doggoned, if he doesn't catch the winning touchdown pass in the game and the headlines are all about Winika, you know, and, sure enough, he made all these, got honorable mention All-American. We still thought that the tackle was the best player on the team. That shows you how ...

SH: Do you remember the tackle's name, for the record?

FB: The tackle was Mike [Maurice] Bullard [RC '36].

SH: At least we have his name on record.

FB: Yes, Mike [Maurice] Bullard. So, that was an interesting story. Then in the senior year, the opening game of the season, we were playing, I forget which team, one of the teams we were supposed to beat and the team played very poorly. I got the word, through my sources, that the night before, some of the players were out at the Outside Inn, or one of those famous places, and they were living life a little too high. I wrote about this in the paper. The Director of Athletics at that time, George Little, had a fit. He went in to see the owner of the *Home News*, Hugh Boyd. He wanted me fired and Boyd would have no part of it. So, sometime later he wrote a letter, George Little wrote a letter to Boyd and said that I had turned out to be a very good sports reporter.

SH: Your name was cleared.

FB: My name was cleared, I guess, but those were exciting and interesting. I don't know how I had time for college in those days! The story on the *Targum*, I started it while belonging to the fraternity, was that it came down to a competition between Bud Ross, who was a DU, and me. We're both in sports, [and in consideration] to be editor-in-chief. The head of the *Targum* Council, at that time, made the decision. We counted up the votes beforehand and it was clear that he was going to be the editor-in-chief. However it was also clear that if there should be a tie, I would be the editor-in-chief because the president of the *Targum* Council was Lou Cudlin [Louis Cudlin RC '35], who was president of the Neutrals, whom I had worked very closely with. These stories kind of get involved and integrated, you know, this sort of thing, and doggone if that day, one of the fraternity-at-large members of the *Targum* Council slept through the meeting, so, the vote, instead of being won in favor of Ross, was a tie and Lou Cudlin, cast the deciding vote so I became editor-in-chief. Would you believe stories like that?

SH: At any point in all of these events did you ever consider journalism as a major?

FB: No. When I graduated, it was hard to find a job. This may be a little ahead of the story, but the *Home News* offered me a job at thirty-five dollars a week to start in the Fall. In the meantime, I had applications at various places. It wasn't until, I think it was August the 24th that The Prudential offered me a job at seventy-five dollars a month and I took the seventy-five dollars a month rather than the thirty-five dollars [a week]. They said that they had delayed hiring me because they thought I had printer's ink in my blood and I wouldn't stay with them, but I was persistent you know in following up.

SH: Interesting. I'd like to ask about the dances and all the social activities for freshmen and sophomores, do you remember what some of those were? How did you become acquainted with the Coop or Douglass, NJC, at that time?

FB: I was not. I was shy. I didn't know about women. When I came to college I was sixteen and to show you what was going on, I mentioned Prohibition. Prohibition was on and there was a speakeasy down here near The Frog and the Peach. It was run by Norm, I forget his last name. He had a great piano player. My roommate as a freshman, he was also about my age, a little older, maybe a year older, because I skipped a grade, he loved piano playing, wrote music himself.

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SH: Please continue.

FB: They would sell drinks which allegedly had alcohol in them, and I think they did because I sometimes had to take care of my roommate when he came back! But at any rate, here we were, just kids, drinking. Of course, when Roosevelt came in, one of the first things he did was lift Prohibition. So, conditions changed from when we started college, until later, and liquor was forbidden in the dormitories and in the fraternities, "Forbidden." [laughter]

SH: I suspect there are more stories here.

FB: When I became a fraternity member I found that it was common to either spike the punch or to have a bottle stashed in the furnace room, in the furnace, or somewhere like that. So, even though Fraser Metzger was making his tour, he didn't know about that "leapfrog."

SH: Tell me about the military balls and the Soph Hops.

FB: Yes, there were all kinds of dances and I remember I did invite a girl from Long Island whom I had met up in Vermont at one of these places we stayed in. Her family was staying there, too. I invited her to one of the dances and I also invited a girl that I knew in high school who I had never dated who went to--what's the name of the college? It's down the road here, in Pennsylvania. At any rate, I invited her to a dance, but I was not a dater, you know.

SH: Please go ahead.

FB: When I joined the fraternity, I think, my social life picked up. I also found out about NJC because somebody would get you a blind date sort of thing and so I had a few dates there, but not very many. But in the fraternities what you did was, the men had to clear out of the fraternity on a weekend dance party and the girls would arrive, I guess, on a Friday and they would stay overnight, two nights usually, and there would be the major dance and there would be sort of a fraternity party one night and sometimes you wound up down at the shore, or whatever. So, this was kind of a nice time.

SH: If you were in New Brunswick, if Prohibition was in effect and there was a speakeasy, as you say.

FB: Well, there were others, too. I think the Outside Inn that I mentioned with the football team and places like that.

SH: Was the Corner Tavern and places like that in existence at that time?

FB: Sure, Corner Tavern existed. There was a great hamburger place right down near the bridge going over to Highland Park, Andy's, great hamburger place, I remember that clearly and there were a lot of little restaurants along here, mostly Jewish or Greek, or something like this and a lot of the people worked in there for their meals, and so forth. This, of course, was a dormitory on the third floor.

SH: Winants Hall.

FB: Winants, where the assembly room is now the Board Room, that was the cafeteria and you bought a ticket for \$5.00 and it would have punches for \$5.50, that would cover your meals for the week. I remember between my freshman and sophomore year, three other fellows and I bought an old car, this was three fellows from Verona, and traveled the country.

SH: Oh, did you?

FB: Yes, we built a box on the side so we could carry cans of food and stuff like this and we would eat in the Chinese restaurants for a full meal for twenty-five cents, twenty-five cents. Well, that's a different story I guess, but, you know ...

SH: No, please go ahead, it is important to know what young people could do. Where did you all go?

FB: Oh, we went out, we knew somebody in Chicago. We had a tent, you know, we slept most times in the tent, or in the car, and we went to Colorado Springs because we knew some people out there and I said to myself, "This is where I'm going to live." Never did. Then we went to the national parks, you know like Yellowstone, made the swing all the way around. The car froze up one night, you know, we had all kinds of adventures. I remember we got back to, I think it was Georgia and we burned out the bearings in the car and we didn't have any money. We didn't know how we were going to get home. We talked, it was a small town, we talked to the people and they bought the car for the bus fare for the four of us, and we got home.

SH: End of trip.

FB: End of trip, but, you know, it was a spectacular summer. So, if I get off on tangents ...

SH: No, no. This is what we wanted to know. Did anyone travel to Europe?

FB: Nobody did anything like that! We hardly knew that Europe was there.

SH: As a freshman going into your sophomore year, how often did you go home to see your family, or did they come here, or what?

FB: Years afterward, I was told the story, I guess my mother must have, or my father must have told the story to my wife, Helen, because I never heard this story, that my mother would drive down from Verona, park the car to watch for me to come out of the dormitory, to make sure that I was all right. So, only son, see? When I told you the story about her letting me go to the baseball games and now this story, you know, you can understand it.

SH: Just like she let you take off across the country. The time at home gets less and less.

FB: My roommate in the fraternity, who has been my friend for all these years, A. Leonard/"Len" Vreeland [RC '36], had a place up in Macopin I guess it is, outside of Butler, New Jersey, and his family had a farm, boarding house place and we would go up there on weekends. We had a couple of other fellows, fraternity brothers, who usually went with us and we would ice skate, or play tennis, or do something, you know, and they had this big table, they fed us with everybody else, you know, and we would go to my house occasionally and so forth. As a matter-of-fact, I came across a letter when my father died, that Len wrote, in which he talked about how we would take our dates to dinner at our house. So, we did this kind of, off and on, and the other two fellows lived in South Jersey so we'd go down to visit them. So, we got home occasionally, but not too often.

SH: Now between your sophomore and junior years, what did you do?

FB: I think we reorganized the baseball team that we'd had and we played baseball that summer.

SH: Did you ever have a job selling newspapers, or magazine subscriptions, or any of that?

FB: Oh, yes, as a kid I worked for a vegetable store. I had a little wagon and I delivered vegetables to people and I got tips. I'd get a nickel or ten pennies maybe, that sort of thing.

SH: Did you have to work at all when you were in college?

FB: Well, I worked, as I said, for the newspapers.

SH: That sustained you then?

FB: Yes, yes.

SH: Tell about your initiation into Theta Chi and how that came to be?

FB: Well, as I said, they recruited me and, I suspect, because they wanted a candidate for the *Targum*, because I came in as a junior, I didn't go through any of the hazing. I don't recall any hazing while I was involved in the fraternity, but I think they gave them projects to do, go collect something or other, that sort of thing. As a result of coming in as a junior, I was just inducted in, you know, so I didn't go through any real hazing, I did get some training on the background of the fraternity, and so forth.

SH: As a freshman, what do you remember about Dr. Clothier as president and his visibility in the four years that you were here?

FB: My recollection was that he was a distant person, very nice, genteel type of person. He didn't seem to be deeply involved with the students. That's my recollection. I knew more about the coaches and the athletic director and some of the professors.

SH: Did the coaches change often the four years that you were here? Was it pretty static?

FB: Well, the football coach came from William and Mary and he was there all the time I was here. The basketball coach was a real character, Frank Hill, who coached both Seton Hall and Rutgers, if you could believe this, and a couple of other schools, as well. But we would go up to the Barn to watch him coach because he would have all kinds of techniques. He'd have a child's broom. If the player wasn't moving fast enough, he'd whack him on the fanny, you know, and he talked, too, he'd be out, hanging around the foul line somewhere and he'd be talking to players, how important it is to shoot with your fingers, and he'd throw up a ball and it'd go through the basket, and he was a show, just for practice, and the basketball team was pretty good.

SH: What about the swim team?

FB: Oh, the swim team, that's another story I can tell you. In physical education, one of the things you had to do to graduate was to swim the length of the pool. Well, I could swim the width of the pool. [laughter] I was afraid of the water. I don't know why, but I was. I took lessons at the YMCA as a boy and nothing did me any good, and Jim Riley was the swimming coach. He had a leg that he had to wear a thick boot on. He was a great coach. We had great swimming teams. However, somehow, I got passed. [laughter]

SH: Maybe you'd covered one of the teams well or something.

FB: I don't know, something happened, these are the kind of things that went on.

SH: What other stories do you remember?

FB: Well, I think I put down as my favorite professors three names and one of them, I think, had a great effect on me and that was Richard Reager. He was the public speaking coach and he worked us hard and we learned the techniques of speech making from him. He had a very simple formula. He said, "When you're talking to a group, tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them, and then tell them what you told them," and that's a very great formula. I used it many, many times. Keep it simple. So, he was very interesting and I had Professor George in political science and he was another character and he was very good, and I had Peabody for economics of labor. We had, I think, like ten or eleven in the class and we might meet in the fraternity, or we might meet at a bowling alley, or somewhere else, so, it was a very congenial type of lecture and learning, you know. So, those are some of them, and there were others, too.

SH: You were involved in student government?

FB: Yes, I was on the student council. I should tell you a little about my *Targum* experiences, I guess. After I became editor, I began writing a series of editorials challenging various groups, or organizations, on campus for not completely fulfilling their obligations. The then, I guess he was the PR person for the University, Earl Reed Silvers, Sr., he thought that was great, until ... after I had run some of these, I, then, went to work on the administration, on what they could be doing better. Well, he called me over after that and he said, "When we made you editor, we didn't think you'd be doing things like this," and I said, "If you don't like what I'm doing, I'll be happy to give you my resignation." "Oh, no," he said, "Oh, no," but I was at the point, of ...

SH: Did you continue the series?

FB: I guess, I had probably about worn it out at that point, you know. In those days, the newspaper published twice a week and we spent a lot of our time writing the stories and putting them together and then we went to Thatcher-Anderson [Co.], which had their printing plant and we'd go there till the wee hours of the morning setting it up and making sure the headlines fit and all that kind of stuff, you know. It was quite an adventure. How did I get off on that tact?

SH: You were going to tell me some of the stories that revolved around the *Targum*.

FB: Yes, well, I think that was probably ... Oh, I was going to say that the news in the *Targum* was campus news. It wasn't, today it's the world, you know, and the editorials talk more about, or as much about, what's going on in the world as they do about Rutgers, but we talked about Rutgers. So, it was a different paper from that standpoint.

SH: How inclusive did you find that the *Targum* was for things like the Ag college, which at that point was all part of Rutgers? It was not a separate college.

FB: I don't think we knew they were separate. They were the Ag School. Cook wasn't Cook. The Ag School was a part of Rutgers. A lot of the students at Cook, as I've discovered in recent years, worked at Cook. They stoked the fires in those days, the furnaces were coal burning, and they raised chickens. They sold eggs to make their tuition. All kinds of jobs like this and those people have an extremely close affinity as a result.

SH: In reviewing some of the *Targum* issues, there seem to be quite a bit of coverage of what was going on at the Ag School. There seemed to be reports of the different discoveries and research that was going on.

FB: My recollection was that they were treated like everybody else was.

SH: What about the cars on campus or how did people travel?

FB: In our fraternity, in our junior and senior year, we had two cars. Nobody had a car on campus. You walked everywhere. You walked to NJC and, of course, your classes were all close together. You walked downtown. There were movie houses at that time. We went to the movies a lot. I remember that as a freshman, particularly. There was the State Theater and the Albany Theater and the Opera House. I think, there was a fourth theater, but at any rate ...

SH: What about on campus, were there speakers or large concerts or things like that?

FB: Oh, concerts were big. The concerts were big and we talked earlier about dances, and so forth. This was the age of the big bands, so we had all the big bands. So, there was something going on all the time.

SH: How often would a student like yourself go into say New York City?

FB: For some reason I think a few times I went to Jersey City, Hoboken, New York, Philadelphia to go to burlesque shows. [laughter] I remember that as very occasionally, but, rarely, did you go to any of these places.

SH: That would be with your fraternity brothers or who else?

FB: Well, I think this was the people in Leupp Hall.

SH: The Independent Council, how many different dorms did that entail at that point?

FB: Well, at that time, Leupp was part of the quadrangle, I think four dormitories there, and Ford Hall and Winants. Anybody who was not a fraternity member was eligible to be a neutral, could be a commuter, or whatever.

SH: When did the term Scarlet Barbs come into being? Do you remember? Did that evolve out of being neutral or independent?

FB: I guess that came along later.

SH: Did it?

FB: I think so. It was called the Neutral Council, as I recall. I do remember that at some point we changed the mascot. The mascot was the chanticleer and the football players got sick and tired of the other teams calling them "chicken." [laughter] So, that's when the Knight came into being. I don't remember what year that was.

SH: Was there a vote taken?

FB: I don't have any recollection. I think there was a competition for names.

SH: Of the football games that you covered, at that point, who was the big rival in '32 to '36?

FB: In '32 to '36, well, we were still playing Princeton at that time. I remember I told you about Winika-making. He scored, I think Princeton was unscored upon, and he scored a touchdown, caught a pass and scored a touchdown against them and that was a big event to score against Princeton. We never beat them, but, you know, to score against them. The Middle Three was the conference, we tried hardest in, I think it was Lehigh, Lafayette and Rutgers. We played them and we played Colgate regularly. That was always a big game. We played NYU; they had big teams in those years, before they gave up football.

SH: We talked about the Depression and how your father's salary had been cut, did you see other effects of it here at Rutgers?

FB: Well, I think that the attrition rate was high, partially academic, but also financial and also students might drop out for a year or so and then come back. Nobody had any money. I mean, there was one, I remember--who was it now? I'll think of his name later, whose father was a tailor in East Orange, and had a great business. He made suits for New York bankers and brokers. When the crash hit, they didn't pay their bills and he lost his business, it just went up the flue. So, I remember his story, you know, and how he would be happy to have a quarter to live on for a day, sort of thing.

SH: You also were involved here with the *Scarlet Letter*, the yearbook.

FB: Yes, but I think just writing some of the stuff, but I wasn't deeply involved. I wasn't editor or anything like that.

SH: What about the Philosophy Club? How did that work here on campus?

FB: The Philosophian? Well, that was more connected with the writing groups of the university. I was a good writer, probably why I got into *Targum* and so forth, going back to grammar school, I think. So, it didn't meet very often.

SH: What were some of the activities the Newman Club was involved in?

FB: Well, it was more, I think, of an effort to get the Catholics together, to meet each other, know each other and we had a moderator from St. Peter's Church here. I recall some of the members, but I don't recall ever having a, you know, any extensive program.

SH: I wondered if they were involved in any kind of civic activities, or anything like that?

FB: I don't remember anything of that nature.

SH: As the Depression is going on and you're getting nearer to graduation, you talked about making an application to Prudential. What else? Were there others?

FB: Well, I interviewed at a chemistry company, a Japanese company, up around Paterson, Passaic, up that way, and they gave me tests and so on. They finally said to me, they had a sales job open, and they finally said to me, "You're an only child, we don't think you'd work out here."

SH: Really? Did they explain?

FB: Yes. I guess, in the Japanese system they think only children are spoiled. Also, I was spoiled! I did apply somewhere else where they gave me all kinds of tests, in New York City, and I don't think they had many opportunities, I just didn't make it, or whatever that was. Barely made it at the Prudential. I think the fact that the Depression was on and jobs were hard to get and I had been able to observe the lifestyle of some of the newspaper people in the sports field, in particular, who seemed to love the races, and bet on the races and also seemed to like to drink a little bit and I remember the sports editor used to come in and sleep on the desk at night, on the top of the desk, and I decided that this wasn't the lifestyle that I wanted and I didn't know whether it would be a job that might go up the flue pretty quickly. So, I took the job at Prudential for much less money, but a very stable situation.

SH: We talked about Franklin Roosevelt being elected. Please talk about your parents and their political affiliations, if they were involved and what you remember, about politics in that era?

FB: Well, my father was a very strong Republican, didn't like Roosevelt, and I think my mother just did whatever he said. That's my recollection. My father was pretty outspoken about his views.

SH: Was he involved at all in politics?

FB: I don't think so. I don't think so.

SH: Did your mother talk at all about the women's right to vote and all of that?

FB: No, no.

SH: Was she involved in clubs and things like that, women's clubs?

FB: I don't think so. She did play bridge, I know, but I don't remember that she was, we were not members of a club. My father was in the Elks and he was a very good bowler. The Elks clubs, including New Brunswick, had very good bowling teams and they competed in a league against each other and I used to go with him. He also played baseball with his company team. He was a catcher. He was much smaller than I am and he was, I would say, a cocky ball player, fiery. So, I was the bat boy for that team.

SH: You were immersed in baseball.

FB: Immersed in it, yes.

SH: You talked about your mom driving down to campus. Were women usually driving? I thought women rarely drove.

FB: She drove.

SH: Did she?

FB: Sure, she drove. She was independent. She was mild and retiring and I could do no wrong. [laughter]

SH: Tell me about your first car.

FB: My first car. I don't have too clear a recollection of my first car.

SH: You were part owner of the car that wound up being sold in Georgia.

FB: That might have been my first car, I guess. I guess so, I didn't have a car. I was still in college, first year.

SH: When you graduated from college would you have had to have a car to go on to work?

FB: No.

SH: Or at that point would you have been able to commute by train?

FB: In those days, the trolley cars ran from Verona to Newark and in the summer they had open air cars, open air with a fringe-on-top sort of thing, trolley cars, and that's the way I commuted when I first went to work.

SH: So, after you graduated in '36 you went back home?

FB: I went back home and I lived at home until I was drafted.

SH: Tell me about that, if you would, being drafted and what time ...

FB: Well, I have got a story to go with that, too.

SH: Please.

FB: It was 1941; we were not in the war yet. Let's see, I was twenty-six, I guess, and we got our draft numbers and a friend of mine at The Prudential, who was older than I was, got a draft number which was much higher than mine and we decided we wanted to go on a cruise. So, we had to apply to our draft board to get an exemption to go on a cruise and they said, "No problem, your number won't come up this quickly," sort of thing, and we signed up for a cruise on a United Fruit Line, which was going to go to places like Colombia and Panama, places like this. We had a going-away party on the boat for our friends, had a few cocktails, and so forth, and my father, unbeknownst to me, which I discovered in later years, went down to the Maître d' and said, "These two young men are going to be going into the military service. This is their vacation and if there are any young ladies on board, would you please seat them with a couple of them," and he apparently slipped the Maître d' a few bucks, I guess, and so, my friend and I, after the party and everybody had left, we go down to the dining room. You had to cross the dining room to get to the tables, and I think we each had a little glow on, you know. We may have weaved a little as we came across the dance floor. Also, the Maître d' took us to this table with two young, attractive ladies. Well, I'll try to shorten the story, but it's a fascinating, romantic story.

SH: Good, I want to hear it.

FB: We learned, later, that the two girls were from Philadelphia and worked in the same company together and they had signed up to go on a cruise and their cruise was cancelled because of the war and they debated, they could get a refund, or they could switch to another cruise. Well, they switched. They decided, "We've saved the money, we're going to go on the cruise," so they switched to this cruise. So, you can see how fate plays a big part in your life. Well, at any rate, we had a romantic, couple of weeks, cruise and to make a long story short, I married one, still my wife, and he, about a year after we were married, married the other one. He has since died, but we've been friendly all these years. Isn't that a romantic story?

SH: Yes. Were the girls originally going to Europe?

FB: No, no. They were going down to the islands somewhere, but at that time, there was a U-boat scare and even the United Fruit Liner had a small gun on the back of it.

SH: Did it really?

FB: Oh, yes.

SH: Now this is before Pearl Harbor?

FB: Oh, yes, but, of course, Germany was in the war so the U-boats were being sighted all over, everybody said. Whether they were or not, I don't know and when we got to a place like Panama, my friend had a friend, someone he had known for years, who was living there, so, we visited him and his wife there. She was the most unhappy person I've ever run across. She didn't like Panama. The houses were built on stilts and it was damp, and it was not a great place.

SH: Was it fascinating, though, to see how the Canal worked or did you get to do that?

FB: Oh, yes, yes, sure. So, we didn't go all the way through, but we went partway and came back, you know. So, we remember the places vaguely. [laughter] I remember, you know, for example in Colombia we went to some special hotel. They served hotdogs because they thought they would be good, a special deal for us, you know, sort of thing. But the United Fruit Line was great because you had all kinds of fruit, all the time, and if a banana got a speck on it, they threw it overboard, you know. It was a great cruise.

SH: When you came back then, what did you do?

FB: When we came back, my friend's name was Stober and his girlfriend's name was (Sadley?). My name was Bragg and Helen's name was Condie and we were delayed coming off the boat because Helen was born in Scotland and they had to go through all her papers to make sure that she should be let back in. So, we all waited, you know, and sat in on the discussions and whatever, but Charlie Stober's family agreed to meet us at the boat and bring us home with our baggage, and all that sort of stuff, the two boys. So, they were waiting for us to come off and when you came off the boat, at that time, they directed you to where your baggage was and it was alphabetically. So, Helen and I went to "B-C" and Sadley and Stober were together. So, Charlie's, he was older, as I said, and Charlie's mother was always hoping he would marry, so she wondered if we got married on the boat! So, at any rate ...

SH: Did you propose on the boat?

FB: No.

SH: Okay.

FB: No, no, but I had agreed to take the girls to the airport because they were going to fly to Philadelphia, Charlie would go home and drop off my baggage and go on to his home with his parents and, of course, Charlie's mother was a joker of the first order, so she told my mother that I'd gotten married on the boat, [laughter] but, I guess, broke down and finally told her it wasn't so. But, at any rate, I took them to the airport and they flew back to Philadelphia and, right away, I began courting Helen in Philadelphia. While I was gone my number had been passed by so when I came back the first thing they said, "Get ready." So, I guess, I was drafted on June the 3rd, I think, we got back in May sometime.

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

SH: This begins tape two of the interview with Floyd Bragg on April 28, 2003. Please continue. You were telling me about ...

FB: Yes. I went to Camp Dix and my fifth reunion was coming up here at Rutgers on the weekend, I can't remember now whether it was right after I went, or whether it was the following weekend. So, I convinced them that my grandmother was sick [laughter] and they gave me a weekend pass, probably would have given it to me anyway, they've heard that story so many times anyway. So, I made my fifth reunion. I'd gone to all the reunions and I wanted to go to the fifth one, of course, and Helen met me. So, we visited the fraternity house and she met all my fraternity brothers and so that was part of her indoctrination, and met my family.

SH: Oh, really?

FB: I think that was when she first met my family, yes. So, that was the beginning. From Dix, they gave me a lot of tests there. My last job at The Prudential, before going into service, I was in the Methods Division and my job was building a manual for letter-writing. In the way the military does things, they look up "methods" and "methods" connotes engineering. So, they gave me a lot of tests on how pulleys work and all that kind of stuff. I apparently did very well on those, which is probably due to conceptual ability, but I am absolutely a klutz when it comes to mechanical things, fixing things, or anything like that. So, of course they sent me to Camp Belvoir, Virginia which is the engineer's basic training base and I went into a company, which came in at the same time I did. Everything was brand new, building companies, and so on, which was largely made up of hillbillies from Tennessee and they were having some basic problems with shoes and other things, you know, and here we were out building roads, and drilling. Fort Belvoir, at that time, was hot and humid and people would drop on the fields, and so on. But it wasn't long before I'd been there that the supply sergeant, who was a regular army supply sergeant spotted me and moved me into the supply room with him which cut down considerably, didn't cut down on the drilling much, but it did cut down on the road-building, because what I did was, would be to load the picks and the shovels, and all of the stuff in the truck and go out on the truck and be responsible, make sure that I got it all back again, that sort of thing, you know. But that turned out to be a fortuitous assignment, as a lot of things, I think, in my life have been, you know. As our basic training neared an end, the classification office called me over and said that they were thinking of assigning me to Camp Claiborne, Louisiana to run a roundhouse and I said, "Well, first, you got to explain to me what a roundhouse is!" "Well, this is where the engines, locomotives, are repaired and we think with your methods background you could handle this," and I said, "You don't understand that I was improving letter-writing!" [laughter] This didn't sound very exciting to me and when I went back to the Italian, the major, who had already talked to me a couple of times about going to OCS at the engineering program, said to me, "Well, I think I can handle that." He said, "I'm going to ship the supply sergeant out." He had a few problems, like drinking hair tonic and anything that had alcohol in it, and I think the major was fed up with him and he said, "I'm going to make you the supply sergeant and then we'll work on you to go to OCS." So, I was never a corporal. I was made a sergeant, running the

supply room, which was interesting. In those days, there were all kinds of signs around, "OHIO" - "Over the Hill In October." Everybody figured that their one year enlistment would be up in October, you know. Of course, this never came to materialize, but I didn't have any great desire to stay in the army and we weren't in the war, you know, and so on, so, I kind of put off this effort to get me in the engineers. Besides I wasn't very enthusiastic about being an officer, building roads and airports and highways and all kinds of stuff you know, and so I did a little research on the side and I discovered there was an Adjutant General's Department at school, Officer Candidate School, so when Pearl Harbor came along, I was home that weekend, and I was in, as a matter-of-fact, I was in Verona and we were all called back. Of course, we got on the trains to come back, jammed to the windows, and when I got back the major called me in and said, "This is it." So, I filled out the application forms and applied to Adjutant General's School as my first choice and they had a board hearing and the board said, "We'll send him to engineering." The Adjutant General of the post said, "Sorry," he said, "Here's a regulation," whatever the heck it was, "that the Adjutant General's Department will have first choice;" so, again, fortuitous. So, I go to the Adjutant General's School at Fort Washington, Maryland and became an officer there. In the meantime, I had been courting Helen and I've told you about my love for baseball. She had never been to a baseball game and I thought the appropriate thing was to take her to a Philadelphia Phillies baseball game and they had a player, called Harry "The Hat" Walker, that she kind of fastened on. He was always fiddling with his hat and taking it off and putting it on, and so forth. So, that was kind of a good part of my courting in those days and I could get on the train and come up from Washington to Philadelphia with no problem, or we could both go up to Verona, or something, you know. So, we became engaged and the day I ...

SH: Did you propose at the baseball field?

FB: No. I proposed, I think, either at her house or in the car outside her house, as I recall, and we bought an engagement ring and, you know, all that kind of stuff.

SH: You talked about Pearl Harbor and hearing the news, were you in your home listening to the radio? Is that how you know?

FB: I think so. I think so, and, of course, everybody was talking about it, you know.

SH: Were people worried that the coast would be attacked, or what was the conversation as you're taking the train back down to Virginia?

FB: I think that the people going on the train were all wondering where they were going to go, you know, that was the big talk. "Are they going to send us to Europe? Are they going to send us to fight the Japanese or what's going to happen?"

SH: You have the unique hindsight of having been working in the industry, Prudential, before the war. What was the assumption, that we would go to war, would we get out of it, would we stay isolationist, prior to Pearl Harbor?

FB: I think at that time, I think there was a feeling that we would, there would be isolation to a fair degree, and, I think, there was doubt that we would go to war against Germany and, I think, that Pearl Harbor, you know, was the catalyst.

SH: We talked about your father's dislike of Roosevelt. We didn't talk about the WPA and the different New Deal programs that Roosevelt had. Was there any discussion about say, the Lend-Lease and Roosevelt or people thought that he was pushing us into war? Was this discussed at home?

FB: There was concern that he would push us into war, I would say, yes.

SH: At your work was that talk the same or was it different?

FB: Well, I think there were hawks and doves at work, you know, so, there'd be lively discussions.

SH: Most of the people that we interview were students here at that time, but you were already working and in the work force. Was Helen's family also Republicans?

FB: I would say Democrats. Oh, I don't really know. I don't think I ever talked to ... her father had a very Scottish accent and I used to go out, he belonged to a club where they played pool, I'd go out there with him and have a couple of drinks with him and play a little pool with him. I was a terrible pool player. He was very good and he was, I would say, a master machinist, so, he worked in a tool company place.

SH: I wondered if they had a different perspective of the war, being from Scotland, and the fact that the British Isles were under attack.

FB: I don't remember any discussion with him at the time.

SH: Please then continue about your careers in the military.

FB: Well, we knew when we graduated from the Adjutant General's School that we'd get a ten-day leave, as well as our next assignment and the speculation was that some would go overseas and some would be assigned domestically and whatever, you know. Nobody knew. The night before, there was a ball. Of course, Helen came down for the ball. My father and my friend, Leonard [A. Leonard Vreeland RC '36], came down for the graduation on Saturday and they did the town the night before and Leonard tells us stories about that, but, at any rate, Helen and I went to the ball. I was graduated in the morning, commissioned, and then we got in my car and drove from Fort Washington, Maryland to Philadelphia and we were married in the afternoon, which Helen had done all the planning, you know, they had a country club and the church, and so forth. We were married in the afternoon, stayed overnight at a hotel in Philadelphia, went the next day to New York City where my classmates at the OCS, those who were in that area, were all going to a hotel in New York City. We met them and had a party. I think we stayed overnight there. We drove to Lake Mohonk. My parents felt that we should have a couple of days there, we had a brief honeymoon.

SH: Lake Mohonk, New Jersey?

FB: Lake Mohonk, New York and it happens to be where this year the alumni, Rutgers Alumni College is going to have an affair in June, the Alumni College.

SH: You're going to go, right?

FB: Of course, but at any rate, we drove back to, I guess, my house, packed the car, oh, I forgot to tell you, I was assigned to the base. So, somehow we quick got an apartment, brand new apartment, furnished, very close to the base, which had just been built probably for this purpose, I don't know. So, when my ten days were up, I was on the base and I had some very different assignments. I was an assistant quartermaster officer, I was an assistant recreation officer for the first few months and then I was moved into their research group and here was the methods coming back and I had some great assignments there. I designed and built a field desk, a simple concept. You know how the drawers on a desk are? Well, forget about the rest of the desk; just think of those as a desk with three or four drawers in it, you know, and I came up with the idea of having a desk and putting in the front of it and in the back of it, shelves that would clip onto the side of this and so if you had another one of these, you'd have a desk with two sides or if it was just one, there'd be legs, as well. At any rate, I designed this and some company produced a proto-type for us. I have it at home today. It got adopted and it became a field desk, because you know, all of their records could be stored, and packed, moved and they'd have a desk wherever they got to, so, that was one project I worked on. The other project which I worked with a small group on, was the morning report for the military, which was their beginning, their first movement into use of IBM punch cards. I had had some experience in connection with my methods and letter-writing at The Prudential in designing forms, and so, I worked on that. It was a multiple part form so that they would send it in to their headquarters, and one would go to the computer room, and so forth, and that's how the army worked and they adopted that. But while all this was going on, I didn't realize this, but there was a rivalry between the Adjutant General of the US Army and the adjutant in charge of the Officer Candidate School and the Adjutant General of the Army saw the guy at the Adjutant General School as a rival, I'm sure, and at any rate, they sent in a team of Inspector General people and decided that the general at the school was overusing his organization chart. He was overstaffing. He was acquiring people to do research and other things which the Adjutant General in Washington thought was his responsibility. Even though he'd come up with a couple of very good projects, he got sat on and we all got shipped out [laughter], all the overage got shipped out, and I was sent to the Air Transport Command, which was another big switch. I think I've got to run, so, that's a good place to break.

SH: That's right. We'll catch this later. Thank you so much.

FB: Okay.

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Reviewed by Jessica Ardis 2/17/04

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 2/20/04

Reviewed by Jessica Ardis 3/2/04

Reviewed by Janice Bragg 7/16/19

Reviewed by Zach Batista 8/6/19