

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM G. HALLIDAY

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Kurt Piehler: This begins an interview with Mr. William G. Halliday on March 9, 1995 at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Kurt Piehler. I would like to begin by asking you a few questions about your parents. Your father worked as a sales manager and a machinist for Wright Aeronautical in Paterson.

William Halliday: Yes, correct.

KP: How did he come to work there?

WH: He came from Scotland at sixteen, and he came into a ... lace importing company that he'd worked for in Scotland and started selling for them, and he ended up [as] district manager for Club Aluminum, before the president of Club Aluminum absconded with all of the funds. ... My father was heavily invested in the stock of Club Aluminum, and he went bankrupt, and we were destitute for quite a few years, and he went into a few odd jobs and ended up, as the war, started with Wright, but, he was an avid gardener and this is what brought me ... into Rutgers. I liked to work with him in the garden. Our garden was the showplace of Ridgewood, at least the area where we lived. ... Somehow or ... other, I got an article, my dad showed it to me, on the hydroponics experiments at Rutgers, and reading a little on it, at five, I decided I was going to [go to] Rutgers and major in horticulture. I made my first money in horticulture. [I] went up to the local cigar store and got the wooden cigar boxes, took them back, and Dad showed me how to plant the seeds, and I planted vegetables and flowers in these cigar boxes, and put them on a card table on the corner of Hanks and Van Dean in Ridgewood, and sold them, my first income, and I never wavered from my idea of going to Rutgers and majoring in horticulture.

KP: Why did your father leave Scotland at such an early age?

WH: ... He had two brothers and a later sister, a younger sister, and the oldest brother was in the merchant marines and ended up in Australia, and he decided to stay there, and the second brother came to Detroit and settled there as a line worker at Ford. ... Well, the brother in Australia had two children. I know them both. The one in Detroit had none, and the sister in (Saden?), Scotland, ... worked at the Grouner Hotel, in Glasgow, as a hostess, and my dad came to the company that might have a job for him in New York. [He] went out to see his brother in Detroit, and he went on to see some people in [the] Seattle/Tacoma area and met my mother at a church meeting, Presbyterian church, and said [that] he was going to marry her, [and] came back to New York. When he had a job, he said, "Come to New York and we'll get married." [laughter] So, then, ... after their first son [was born], in 1918, they moved to Ridgewood, bought a house, and they owned that house for over thirty years.

KP: You mentioned that your father had a bit of hard luck. When did this happen? How old were you at the time?

WH: I was in second or third grade and Dad, just shortly after this fiasco with Club Aluminum, was coming back from a temporary job in New York, stepped on some ice getting off the bus on the corner of Ridgewood Avenue and Van Dean, and broke his hip. ... There was no hospitalization at those times, and he had lost all his money, and ... we rented the house in

Ridgewood and lived in our summer home at Lake Iosco for two years, and we went to school in Bloomingdale. ... Then, he finally got well enough that he could go to work and started these series of odd jobs. ... So, at an early age, I started doing odd jobs, and making money, and was able to stop having an allowance from my family, and [I] contributed to the family through junior high and high school.

KP: Your childhood must have been very strange, because you were born into relative affluence, but, then, you were thrust into almost a hand-to-mouth type of situation.

WH: It was, it was. ... There was no welfare, and we were living in our summer home, and a lot of our friends would come up for a weekend. We had a big house with a big, open space in the attic, ... right on the lake, and they would come up for a weekend, and they'd always bring food. They'd say, "We'll bring food," and they brought a lot. [laughter]

KP: Were these your neighbors in Ridgewood or your neighbors at the lake?

WH: Yeah. [We had] no neighbors up at Iosco. ...

KP: They really helped your family out.

WH: Yeah. ... I can remember getting Thanksgiving baskets and Christmas baskets of food, ... and so, I started working. [laughter]

KP: Your father only had an elementary school education.

WH: Back in those days, a sixth grade education was considered all a man needed in Scotland and England and that's one of the souvenirs I have from my dad, ... his diploma from his grade school.

KP: How much of a blow was the Club Aluminum fiasco to your father?

WH: I think it was a disaster, really. He never lost his spirit. He was never hard on us, other than discipline. Yes, we were disciplined, but, [we had] a loving father and mother, churchgoers, and we had a lot of support from the Presbyterian church there in Ridgewood. ...

KP: Was your father a Presbyterian?

WH: Yes, right.

KP: Was your mother also a Presbyterian?

WH: Yes. ... Then, in junior high school, some friends of mine sang in the Episcopal Church, Christ Church, in Ridgewood, and they received a dollar and a quarter a month for singing in the choir, and that was big money to me, and I asked my parents if I could sing in the choir, and I did, and I ended up lead soprano. ... That was a boys choir, and I decided I liked the Episcopal

service, and I wanted to join it, and my mother and Dad both said that I could join it and [that] they would approve of it, if I would go to church with them at times, and it worked out very nicely. I'm an Episcopalian still. ...

KP: With a ...

WH: ... Presbyterian background, right.

KP: How did your siblings deal with this blow to the family?

WH: I think we all took it, and until we were older, I don't think we really realized how bad it was. Dad was in bed for up to six months, I believe it was, with his hip, recuperating, and then, we moved up to the lake home. My brother went into the service early. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps in '39, right after graduating from high school, and he ended up a regular officer and retired about the same time I did, from the Air Force. [As for] my older sister, they were able to get enough money to get her through college in New York. I can never think of the name. ... When I filled that out, I couldn't think of it. ... [laughter] It's a fairly well known college in New York City, not residential, and she commuted, and my parents were able to send her to school. ... When I was ready to go to college, they said that my education was more important than my sister's and, ... if I needed them to help me, that they would take Betty out of college. I said, "No, I'll put myself through," and I did.

KP: They were willing to stop supporting your sister for your benefit.

WH: Yeah, yeah. So, she ended up with a bachelor's degree in home economics, and ended up as a food chemist for General Foods, and retired from General Foods five, six years ago.

KP: Did your older brother want to go to college?

WH: No. He was not a student 'til he got into the Air Force and he was able to become regular [Air Force]. He went from the enlisted ranks to a direct commission in the battlefield, ... I think it was in Guadalcanal, one of the places ... he had taken out on missions. ... The navigator was injured twice and he took over. He had studied piloting and navigation. He was an engineer on a B-17 Flying Fortress and he had ... studied piloting and navigation. ... When the navigator was (injured?) on two missions, he was able to take over and bring the plane back to Hawaii, and then, they were stationed out in the islands, and the navigator was killed on a flight, and he took over ... the navigation, and was given a battlefield commission, and became a regular officer at that time. So, we were both pilots in the Air Force for a long time.

KP: Were you always interested in the Air Force and aviation?

WH: I'm still a pilot, but, I've always been interested. ... If my family had money, I would have gone into the aviation training program at Rutgers. They had one here, and I wanted to do that, but, there was no way I could make enough money to afford that, and so, I enlisted in the Army Air Corps, ... well, right after Pearl Harbor, in ... early '42. ... I was supposed to be able to

continue in college, but, they called me into active duty in the Fall of '42. So, I finished three semesters and I got out, after the war, intending to stay with my horticulture. I came back to Rutgers, finished up, went to Michigan State, got a Masters, ... started teaching, and was recalled. I stayed active in the Reserves all the time I was out, and I was under the impression that, when I went back in ... [during] the Korean War, I'd just stay in, retire with a total of twenty years, but, then, I found out that the five years out didn't count. [They counted] only for pay. So, I stayed for the full twenty active, and, again, I was planning to go back to horticulture, and found out how much they were paying civilian pilots, and became a pilot, and ended up as a 747 captain for Japan Airlines.

KP: You had an interest in flying, however, you envisioned yourself as a horticulturist.

WH: Oh, yes, that was my primary goal, up until I got recalled in '51, and I still thought I would go back to the horticulture after that. I wanted to grow, commercially, carnations and chrysanthemums, probably just for wholesale. My thesis was written on temperature effects on carnations.

KP: Was your mother always a homemaker? Did she ever work outside of the home?

WH: ... Yes. She went to work in school cafeterias when my dad had his accident. Then, we moved back to Ridgewood, after two years at our lake [house]. She worked in the cafeteria at Ridgewood High, and she became a manager there, and then, she was offered a job in the YMCA in Paterson, and then, she took over the management of the cafeteria in the YMCA in Paterson.

KP: Because of what happened to your father, your mother had quite a career.

WH: Yes.

KP: How did your father feel about that?

WH: He didn't like it, but, he was very thankful that she was able and didn't mind working. ... By that time, ... I was in sixth grade and my younger sister was in fourth, so, we were all ... big enough to take care of ourselves. So, my mother was always home before we came home from school. ... We were two blocks from high school and junior high and [it was] four blocks to Kenilworth Elementary School. So, we always walked to school and back for lunch, and we went home and had our own lunch by ourselves, and ... Mother's home by the time we got home ... from school.

KP: By working in the high school cafeteria, she was able to follow your school days.

WH: Yeah, right.

KP: How old were you when she took the job at the YMCA in Paterson?

WH: ... I was either just in my last few years of high school or out of high school.

KP: All of her children were grown up.

WH: Yeah, right.

KP: Did your mother enjoy working?

WH: No, she didn't like it, but, it was necessary.

KP: She did not enjoy working.

WH: No, I don't think she did, no. She was strictly a homebody and, as I say, I had very loving parents [who] gave us all a good background in religion and in proper ethics. ... Even though they didn't have much money, they were always helping other people out. She'd make food for people who were ill in the neighborhood and Mother and Dad would go visit some of the elderly people ... from the church who couldn't get out, things of the sort.

KP: Were they active in the church?

WH: Yes.

KP: Did your father work for Curtiss-Wright during the war?

WH: Yes. That was at the time of the war and ... I can only remember one story. Both my brother and I were officers in the Air Force and pilots, or Army Air Corps at that time, and my dad was building parts for aircraft. He was a machinist, and he was very conscientious, and some of the ... other employees started riding him for not taking a little time off, and he said [that] he told them that, if their sons were flying the airplanes, they'd be working hard, too. [laughter]

KP: What kind of a reaction did that statement draw?

WH: ... I'm quite sure they left him alone from then on.

KP: Did your father enjoy working for Curtiss-Wright?

WH: He liked it, because it did give him a good income and he could then take care of ... the house and pay off the mortgage. Mother could stop working then and he felt that he was doing something for the war effort. He was ... eligible for World War I, but, because my brother had been born at that time, he was deferred, and then, the rest of the family came along, and the war was over. ...

KP: He never got a chance to serve.

WH: No.

KP: How did he feel about the coming of World War II? Did he have any sympathy for Scotland and England?

WH: ... [His] being a Scottish person never showed up until after he retired, and moved to Florida, and started being a guide at the Edison Estates. ... His brogue that had almost gone came back strong. [laughter]

KP: Do you know why?

WH: I don't know. He was working with some people of Scottish descent, and ... he had always imitated Harry Lauder, [the] famous ... Scottish singer, and he made many "last trips" to the United States, entertaining, and he had an outfit, a full Scottish outfit, and a Harry Lauder type cane, and he did a good job entertaining. [laughter]

KP: What kind of a neighborhood did you live in? What kind of a community was Ridgewood in the 1920s and 1930s?

WH: It was a wide open neighborhood. We didn't even have a key to the doors. It's a fairly large house. Van Dean had a lot of older houses. Our house was built in the '10s and we had a full basement. ... [When] we were younger, Dad furnished a room down there as a game room ... [with] a fireplace. We had a large living room, dining room, a butler's pantry. We had four bedrooms upstairs and a full attic [that was] full of stuff, but, the lots were mostly eighty by about 175, good sized lots. [We had] a big house [with] two porches, [one] ... on the lower and the upper level. You could get out and walk around and have a couple of chairs, a swing or something, out there. So, it was a good sized house and there were other houses with much larger lots. In fact, there was one right across from us. They owned the whole quarter of the block, from Ridgewood Avenue all the way to our block, Hanks. That's all been taken over by the church, the Presbyterian Church. ... Hamadi, he's a doctor from Lebanon, ... had two children and we played with them. They had an enormous house there, but, that whole block there is one block off from right off the high school, diagonally. [It] was all mansions, really.

KP: Most of your friends were well off.

WH: Yes, yes, and a lot of them helped Mother and Dad during our time [of need with] ... loans with no interest or little interest and let them pay it off leisurely. ... Again, many of them came out for weekends or for a night and brought food for the dinner, but, [there was] a lot left over. [laughter]

KP: They were understanding of your father's situation.

WH: Yeah, yeah. ...

KP: Did you ever feel uneasy about this whole situation?

WH: No. Mother and Dad took it so well that we never worried. Well, it's a lot worse when I look at it now than it was then, because Mother and Dad were very protective. My brother and I would go out and get meat for supper. We'd take a flashlight and a .22 and paddle along the shore, and we'd see the eyes of a frog, [Mr. Halliday imitates a gunshot] and we'd have bullfrog legs for dinner. [laughter]

KP: That sounds like a great adventure.

WH: Yeah.

KP: Were your parents able to keep your summer home? Did they sell it eventually?

WH: They kept it until we went back to Ridgewood, and then, they put it on the market, and I would guess it was within a year after we went back to live in the house in Ridgewood that they did sell it, because ... they needed the funds, at that time, to keep us all going.

KP: What kind of education did you receive in Ridgewood?

WH: As I recall it, the elementary school was an excellent one. The junior high, I don't remember anything about it, but, the high school, the mixture of people, ... the attitude of the teachers, ... they were excellent. However, I slipped by. [laughter] When ... we were living in the summer home, I went to Bloomingdale ... Grade School. They gave us IQ tests, and you should never tell a child that age his IQ, 'cause it was near genius, and I thought, "Gee, I don't have to work." ... My grades went down from fourth grade on. [laughter] It almost ruined my idea of going to Rutgers, because ... they didn't publish my name on the graduating list until two weeks before graduation, [laughter] and I was turned down at Rutgers, and I [said], "They can't do this. ... I've been planning this for fifteen years."

KP: Why was Rutgers so important to you?

WH: Well, the hydroponics had always ... interested me, and it was ... known for its Agricultural School, and, when they turned me down, my dad suggested [that] we go down and find somebody to talk to.

KP: Who did you talk to?

WH: Prof Thompson, from the Poultry Department, and there was an Ag Fair, and we went down, and he was the first official we ran into, and Dad told him my story, and I told him how I felt. ... He said, "Well, I'll talk to the Dean and we'll see what we can work out," and they sent me a letter, and they said, ... if both Helyar and Thompson agreed, that if I would take the entrance exams, which were not required, and I passed them, they would accept me on probation. I had a C-minus average in high school, and so, I was accepted on probation. ... I worked all the time in high school. I had all sorts of jobs. I came to Rutgers and I ended up with all sorts of jobs here. I ended up in Prof Helyar's Phelps House, cooperative house, and I worked four hours on the weekend for my board, for my room, rather. We paid our own board and did our own

cooking. I set up pins in the Elks' alley [on] Friday and Saturday nights. Every noon, I worked on the college switchboard to relieve the switchboard operator. It was a switchboard with two plugs and a bunch of holes and one person handled the whole college. I worked afternoons in the college print shop, I had a background in printing, and I jerked sodas at the campus spa. Every afternoon, I got my dinner [for] free and I was also the only one allowed on the girls campus after hours, because I was delivering their orders. [laughter] So, my grades went down. ... At the end of my freshman year, I was told that I was no longer acceptable and I couldn't use the Phelps House. So, I pleaded again, and Prof Helyar said, "Okay, you're on probation for a week," and, every Friday, I had to go in and see Prof Helyar.

KP: To discuss your grades?

WH: Yeah. He said [that] if it ever went down, I was out, and I ended up with one A, and three Bs, and a C, I think. So, I got through that first semester of my sophomore year, and then, I went in the Air Force. When I came back, I had all As and Bs, except for the freshman chemistry makeup that I had failed, I got a C in that, and, in graduate school, I had an A, A-minus grade point average, about a 3.8.

KP: Were you not doing well because you could not handle the school work or because you had to work to earn money?

WH: Well, I handled it well, but, I made the money so [that] I could go out on dates, and buy orchids for the girls for corsages, and keep up my 1932 Model A. So, ... besides the work, I had a lot of extracurricular activities. [laughter]

KP: Were many of your dates the result of your deliveries?

WH: Not most of them, a few of them were.

KP: Was it more because you had a Model A and you gave out corsages?

WH: That's hard to say. [In terms of] the work and the play, ... I did what I did in high school [for] the first year in college. I knew I was going to Rutgers and ... I talked them into it. [laughter] I did well on the entrance exam, undoubtedly. ...

KP: You mentioned several problems with your schooling in high school and at Rutgers. Did you always feel that you would become a horticulturist and that everything would work out? You mentioned earlier that knowing your IQ sort of ruined you.

WH: Yeah, right. My idea, always, was to ... have a greenhouse and grow flowers. This is what I wanted to do from the beginning. My job for my room ... at the Phelps House was working in the (Hort?) Greenhouses under Dr. Davidson, and so, that's where I put most of my time [in], other than all the other jobs I had. [laughter]

KP: What did you think of your classes during your first year at Rutgers? Did they live up to your expectations?

WH: Well, the Ag School did. The only other course I remember was physics, and [I had a] fantastic prof, I might think of his name later, but, it was right across from Winants, ... the last building on the right before you cross the street into Queens. ... I had a physics prof for lecture, and he amazed me, because he had a chart, ... after the first or second class, he'd have everybody read off their names, and he would look around, and he'd say, "Joe is missing," and he knew everybody's name. ... He actually was interesting to listen to, but, then, of course, the agricultural courses were my main interest, and they were all good.

KP: It sounds like you enjoyed the curriculum, but, you did not have time to study.

WH: Well, I didn't feel that I needed it, until I took tests. [laughter] Then, I soon forgot about it after that, [laughter] but, as I say, I put myself completely through school. A little side note, I entered the Ford Good Drivers League in my senior year in high school, they had it [for] two years in a row, and then, the war came along [and] they stopped it, to find the safest high school aged driver in the country. ... In the Summer of '41, I won for New Jersey, went to Detroit for the national finals, and, again, I was too interested in meeting all the girls I met out there and playing around to think too much. ... I messed up a couple of things, like parking in a garage from a right angle, and [I] had to maneuver twice instead of going right in, and I came in eighth in the national finals, and [I] had a one hundred dollar scholarship. ... At that time, one hundred dollars was the year's tuition for residence. ... So, I walked up and gave them my Ford check for one hundred dollars for my year, [laughter] and then, I had to work to keep up my other expenses.

KP: Do you think that having this tuition check cushioned your way into Rutgers?

WH: No, because ... that contest was after I had gone through my application [process]. You know, I am not positive. ... I think my parents probably would have helped me, and [then], I wouldn't have had the twenty-five dollars I needed to buy the car, [laughter] a ten-year-old car with a newly rebuilt engine in it.

KP: Very few Rutgers students had cars at that time.

WH: Right. Have you interviewed David Matthews? He was in [the Class of] '42, I believe.

KP: No.

WH: He was in the Phelps House and his car was a hearse. [laughter] He could carry more people in his hearse than I could carry in and on my Model A. We tried it [while going] to the football game one time.

KP: Did you enjoy living in the Phelps House?

WH: It was wonderful. It was a wonderful experience. I think the cooperative way is the way to go. We didn't have all the niceties that the ... present Helyar House has. I can remember one time when the plumbing was out and there was a cornfield there where the Sears Roebuck and all those other stores are now, the mall. ... The college, I guess, had the cornfield there, and, with the plumbing out, ... we each put our name on a row, and we used our own row for the toilet facilities. [laughter] Another story, we bought in bulk, and we had oatmeal, and Russ (Berosse?) cooked the oatmeal. He was our chief cook. ... Somebody else always helped him. ... When I was on duty, helping him, we opened the oatmeal and it was full of little rat droppings. So, we spread the oatmeal out ... on one of the tables and pulled the oatmeal this way and the rat droppings this way [laughter] and we had oatmeal. We were the only ones who didn't eat it. [laughter]

KP: What else about cooperative living made it so enjoyable for you? Was it the responsibility?

WH: Yeah, and the older students were very interested in new people, and they were ... always after me for studying, and I do remember that I did study, [laughter] because I can remember trying to stay awake with coffee. I'd have a couple [of] cups of coffee and fall asleep. ...

KP: It was not just the deans and professors telling you to study.

WH: Yeah. The older students in the Phelps House were very interested in keeping us all up, because it was fairly new. I don't know how many years they had it before '41, but, it was an experiment, and it wasn't just the Phelps House. They had ag ... cooperative quarters all over. The Poultry Building had two rooms up in the attic. ... There was one room above the greenhouse office. There were two rooms in the Ag Building, and so, we were scattered all over, but, we were all common ... in our associations and with the school. I think it was a wonderful learning experience. We did all our own cooking. ... We had an assessment each month for food and we stayed within it. Of course, the people in the dairy farm took eggs home, and ... in the meat cutting [department, there was] always extra meat there that they would throw away, we'd bring it home, and all I could bring was flowers. [laughter]

KP: The house was later renamed in honor of Professor Helyar.

WH: Yeah.

KP: What kind of influence did he have on the house?

WH: Well, this was all his idea, and, again, these older students, when I was first there, the only year I was there, were very interested in making a go of it, ... 'cause everybody loved Prof Helyar, ... even though he told me I couldn't come back and, finally, [he] let me. ... I saw him every week. [He was] a very understanding man, and everybody loved him, and he had an experiment there with the cooperative houses, and, as far as I'm concerned, it worked for a lot of people who never would have gotten to college without it.

KP: The cost would have prohibited them from going to college.

WH: Yes, right, yeah.

KP: How much did your board cost?

WH: It was in the very few dollars. I would hazard to guess right now, but, back in those days, if you figure [on] comparative salaries, people enlisting in the military got twenty-one dollars a month. So, you could live on twenty-one dollars a month, with your board and room, and that gave you all the expenses you needed. I know, because my brother went in and he was below that. He was [being paid] fourteen when he enlisted in '39, and, in '41, it was twenty-one dollars a month, ... to give you an idea of what the comparison [was]. Some of the people who were the cooks and this sort and did the buying would probably have a better idea, but, I couldn't even hazard a guess. It may be in the book on the Helyar experience. I haven't read it through, cover to cover, but, I've leafed through it.

KP: What was your attitude towards the coming of war in the 1930s and 1940s? Did you follow the events in Europe?

WH: I didn't follow it too much, I didn't like the idea of the Germans running over everybody, that part I was well aware of, ... until the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7th. ... I can remember that, because I was out washing my car and one of the roommates, or housemates, from the second floor yelled out and said, "Bill, they just bombed Pearl Harbor." That's where my brother was stationed, so, I was very aware of it at that time.

KP: You were probably very concerned about your brother at that time.

WH: Oh, yes, right. It was a couple weeks before we got any real word from him, because he had been in the hospital with pneumonia, and, as soon as the bombing started, they needed all the bed space, and he was kicked out and was running across the parade ground when a bomb dropped, and he claims that he was thrown about fifty feet. ... He was just shook up, and he got up, and there was nobody living around him. Everybody was dead in the area. It was just a miracle that he was able to live through this bomb in the middle of a parade ground, but, we didn't hear anything about any of this until after the war.

KP: Your brother was very lucky to be alive.

WH: Oh, yeah, right.

KP: What was your immediate reaction, besides worrying about your brother? Did you think about enlisting?

WH: Yeah, that was my first thing, to find out, because we had ROTC. That was compulsory, unless you were a conscientious objector. We had one of those in our class, I remember.  
[laughter]

KP: Really? Do you remember who it was?

WH: Yes, I do. I wouldn't [want to] say. [laughter]

KP: This was in the Class of 1945.

WH: He became a minister.

KP: Was he a conscientious objector on religious grounds?

WH: He claimed it was, but, knowing him and his personality, most of us just figured he was scared. He didn't want to do anything like that. [laughter] [I] could be wrong, but, again, ... the rest of us were all gung-ho to sign up, and go, and take our part, but, he didn't.

KP: Once the war began, he was the exception.

WH: Yeah. ... He stayed here at school, ... as far as I know, now, but, I know, in the monthly magazine, it's monthly or bimonthly, it has mentioned him in the past few years, that he ... had been a minister and was retired now or something.

KP: Before Pearl Harbor, did you think that the United States would get involved in the war?

WH: I don't think that we really thought we were going to get involved. ... Of course, we were sending expeditionary forces over, and there were some people that went up to Canada and enlisted in the Canadian forces who really wanted to get involved, and my only idea, as things went on, was to enlist in the ... Army Air Corps, because I felt it would be a lot healthier, sitting up in a plane, shooting at something, than to be walking through the mud and the rain, with a rifle on my shoulder, shooting at people. So it was and I was interested in aviation, so that the two of them went hand in hand, because, as I say, I did want to fly. I had been up in an aircraft, a little, light aircraft, twice in high school and that's another story. ... Back in the day, we called them "queers." A homosexual got three of us interested in flying, and then, we found out that he had ulterior motives, and I immediately left, and the other two stayed to find out for sure, and then, they left, and we got our airplane rides.

KP: He was ...

WH: ... An older man.

KP: Was he from Ridgewood?

WH: No. It was up near [the] Butler area. Oh, no, he was from the Ridgewood area. I remember the name Plumber, but, that's about all I know about him.

KP: How old were you when this happened?

WH: This was in, ... probably, seventh, eighth, and ninth [grades]. ...

KP: You were quite young.

WH: Yeah, still young, yeah, but, old enough to know better. My parents had briefed me well. As soon as he took us swimming and didn't go swimming himself, but, was in the locker room helping us change, I knew I wasn't going to get very close to him. [laughter]

KP: Did you join the Air Force because you did not like the thought of going into the infantry?

WH: Yeah. I think my interest in being a pilot was overpowering, but, I did consider the idea of not wanting to be walking through a war, and I picked the Air Force, the Army Air Corps, over the Navy, because all I could see was, you're on this ship, and you take off, and the ship says it's going to ... [sail] so many miles this direction and so many miles in this direction, and you're going to go out and do something, and meet it there. What happens if a submarine comes along and gets in front of it, and it goes the other way, and you're out there looking for a ship, and it's not there? This deterred me from the Navy. [laughter]

KP: What did you think of your ROTC training? Did you find it useful in your military service?

WH: To me, it was very useful only through the basic training. Because I had had the ROTC training, I was immediately taken out as a drill instructor and a squad leader. So, I was able to practice authority as a private in the Air Corps. When we went into Atlantic City, [we had] a big mess of people and all these hotels with nothing but Army cots in them. ... A room that had one or two people in them now had ten recruits in it and we didn't have enough clothing to go around. It was the middle of the winter, and I only had a light jacket, and we were out there on the boardwalk, parading around in our ... civilian clothes, ... [the] minimum that we brought down, because we figured [that] we would get uniforms. ... [I was] freezing on the boardwalk, trying to do military training, but, after that, ... I went to a training detachment in Burlington, Vermont, because, with the big influx of people, they were getting away from a corps of cadets that were college trained, and so, they wanted to bring them up to academic standards. ... Of course, the only things that I took up there were meteorology, electronics, where we built a radio, and health sciences, and, of course, the military training, ... stripping weapons and things of this sort, but, we did this all through the college training detachment in Burlington, Vermont.

KP: I spoke with an Air Corps veteran several years ago and he had very vivid memories of going to Atlantic City. He recalled seeing a group of recruits from the Midwest march through and, when they saw the Atlantic Ocean, they broke ranks and ran to stare at the surf for about ten minutes. Their sergeant let them do it. [laughter]

WH: Yeah.

KP: There was no stopping them. Did you have any similar experiences, in terms of meeting people from different parts of the country?

WH: No, because I was with a group from New Jersey. We went in as a group, we were all assigned [as] a group, and most of ... the group that I met ... on the train going down to Atlantic City and in the hotel in Atlantic City were in the group that went to Burlington, Vermont. That was a small group. They sent us all over the United States for these college training detachments, and so, we stayed ... quite a small group together for a while.

KP: How long were you stationed at Burlington, Vermont?

WH: I think it was three or four months. ... Because of my previous college [experience], I was one of the first ones that they took out to send through the cadet program. I didn't need any of the courses that they were giving, and they had some basic physics, and English, and a few things that I had already had at Rutgers, and so, they took me out of the group earlier.

KP: You mentioned that you sometimes had a hard time concentrating during your early college days. In the military, were you ever tempted to try to get off base?

WH: You couldn't, not through basic training. You couldn't. We were allowed time off for church at Burlington, and we went to a civilian church, and, frequently, almost every Sunday, somebody would come along and invite you home for dinner. ... My biggest thrill up there, there was an Army major general, retired, who had just retired after Pearl Harbor. He was stationed in Hawaii and [was] one of the ones blamed for the lack of [preparation], but, he was still all military, and, for a private to go into his home, and this big car picked us up at the church and took us over to his home, another big home up there, ... [it was] quite a thrill, as a private, [to meet] with a ... major general, even though he was retired.

KP: It sounds as if you liked the military from the very beginning. Is that an accurate assessment?

WH: I did. After I was recalled in '51, I became a little disillusioned in the Strategic Air Command, because they spoon-fed you everything. You didn't have to study, really. They spoon fed you everything in the initial training, and they demanded one hundred percent on tests, and it became a massive exchange of information during the tests. I got so disgusted with it at one time, because I had been teaching college for a year before that, and, as I say, it was a big difference at that point than it was going through cadets, ... the old thing with, "An officer's word was law and ... his bond." ... When I got recalled in '51, things had changed quite a bit. ...

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

KP: How was your training in Vermont?

WH: I thought it was excellent, the meteorology course, which ... I hadn't had anything in that area before, and the electronics, where we built a little, crystal radio and learned all of the codes, and all of the wiring, ... long before the computers, and the labels on each of the resistors, to show the value of the resistors. ... We had memory phrases ... to remember all of these different things. The one to remember the order of number in the color bands on the resistors, the memory

phrase, was, “Bad boys rape our young girls, but, Violet gives willingly,” black, brown, red, orange. [laughter] It’s amazing, some of those memory items. You never forget them. “The prepositions should never be used to end a sentence with.”

KP: How many people washed out of cadet training?

WH: They were very anxious to get as many through as possible, but, as I recall, there was pretty close to ten percent of every class [that washed out]. We had ... primary, basic, and advanced training. Each one was two months long. In each one of those, we lost about ten percent ... of the group that was left.

KP: What did you learn at each stage? You mentioned that there were three stages of cadet training.

WH: The basic differences between the three levels were the complexity of the aircraft. In primary, we had a Steerman open-cockpit biplane, and we had a needle in the ball, and an airspeed [indicator], and an altimeter, and a clock, and a turn and bank indicator, and that was about it, plus, a couple of engine instruments, and then, ... we were in advanced class, so, we went to twin engine basic. They gave us two weeks in ... a Vulti Vibrator, they called it. I’ve forgotten the designation, B-15 or something like that, and then, we went into a twin engine in the basic school, ... and then, from there, we went to B-25s for advanced. Where most of the places, at that time, were using a single engine or a twin engine, a real trainer, we got into B-25s, the Mitchell Bomber. ... I can say anything on your tape, can’t I?

KP: Sure.

WH: Okay. I’ll never forget the lecture that this colonel gave us, as new cadets, at this B-25 training school in Albany, Georgia. He said, I am not quoting word for word, except for the last phrase, ... “Gentlemen, you’ve been playing around with toys.” He says, “Now, you’re going into an aircraft that is a real Air Force bomber. It’s a hot aircraft. When you get down at the end of the runway and put that power forward, it’s gonna peel your foreskin back against your belly.” [laughter] There were no women in the class. [laughter]

KP: Did you have any flight training at Burlington?

WH: Yes. They had a Piper Cub there [or] a Taylor craft, one of the two, they’re very similar aircraft, ... a two-seated plane, tandem, and we got ten hours, and they ... eliminated people there who were habitually sick or something, or couldn’t even make a landing [while] being instructed from the back how to get it down. We didn’t solo there, we just got ten hours of basic flying, ... visual flying, in an aircraft. ...

KP: I found a letter that you wrote to a dean here in which you mentioned that you had encountered several Rutgers men during training, including Frank Seipert. Do you remember him?

WH: Yeah. I remember the name. ...

KP: It was while you were flying the B-25s.

WH: Advanced, yeah.

KP: You also mentioned Joseph L. McCarthy, Class of 1945, who was killed during training.

WH: I had forgotten about that one.

KP: Do you remember any of the Rutgers men from your training?

WH: No. The people that I enlisted with did not go in at the same time that I went. There were four of us, as I recall, and none of them ended up at the ... [same] training period with me. I had one friend who went in the Army, Jack Griggs, same class, and he was a private. ... We had corresponded all through [training], we were still friends, ... and he was in Florida at the time [that] I was graduating from Albany, Georgia, getting my commission, my wings, and he came up and pinned my wings on for me, but, he's the only one from Rutgers that I really maintained any contact with from that class, other than through the Phelps House. I get correspondence and meet people there.

KP: The Phelps House was a very tight-knit group.

WH: Oh, very, yeah, twelve people, I think.

KP: Have you stayed in touch with them over the years?

WH: With none of them individually, but, just through Phelps House, and meetings, and donations. ... I make my annual donation to the Phelps House Scholarship, the Helyar House Scholarship, now.

KP: I have been struck by how dangerous flying could be during the war, even during training. Do you remember any accidents or close calls?

WH: Yes. ... In training, I've seen several. ... The one that I remember most was when we were first flying C-46s, after I was an instructor in troop carrier. We had a plane go down, crash in a takeoff [at] one of our auxiliary fields, and I went over with another C-46 to bring back the bodies, and that really hit me hard, because [of] these two rubber bags laying on the ... wide open cargo area. Every time the plane moved, they sort of ... sloshed around. That hit me. Another one was, I was officer of the day, where you more or less drive around in a car, ... again, at Sedalia. The officer of the day would more or less be monitoring all activities, and someone took off, and went like that. ...

KP: He rolled over?

WH: Yeah, right into the ground. Everyone was killed and the rudder lock was in place on the tail. ... I never would leave the rudder lock on after that.

KP: What did you think of your pilot training? When you were an instructor, what did you draw on from your training experience and what did you discard?

WH: I think being a little more understanding of people and judging personalities. I had the wrong personality for my primary trainer. The primary trainer had a stick, and you move it in, and you hold it very lightly, and any time I made a mistake, he had the same stick in the back that moved mine, he would just take it and go, "Wham," like that, and I had these bruises all over my knee, and he'd holler so loud, I could hear him right over the wind noise and everything. ... The day ... I soloed, I couldn't move my knee very much, 'cause of all the knocks I got on it. ... We landed, and he told me to pull over, and he got out, and threw his stuff down on the ground, and sat there, and I waited [for] about five minutes, and he got up. He says, "Well, what are you waiting for?" and I says, "Well, what do you want me to do?" He says, "Well, don't you want to solo?" Well, I says, "Well, I didn't know I was ready." He says, "You don't think I'm gonna kill myself and go up with you again, do you?" [laughter] So, there, I'm shaking. ... [laughter] So, I didn't have that kind of an attitude, but, I never instructed basic. They were all pilots when I got them. It was just changing them over to a different aircraft, teaching them the tactics of troop carrier, towing gliders, dropping paratroopers, how to figure out when to signal to jump, and how long you could let a string go out before you stopped them, depending on [the] wind and the size of the area you were dropping them in, and how to go in and drop free falls ... on a target, supply [the ground troops] with equipment that didn't break. You just had a great big bundle of it, and you threw a light on, and the crew chief kicks it out the door, and you try to hit a spot on the ground.

KP: One of the men I interviewed recalled quite vividly that some of his men were killed by airdrops. The material that was being delivered landed on their heads and killed them, because there was no parachute on the bundle. What precautions did you take to prevent accidents like this?

WH: The free falls were generally low altitude and you'd throw them out in an open area. If you had something that might break, with a parachute, you'd let it out at a higher altitude, but, the stuff that you'd have, you'd throw it out at low altitude. You'd see it rolling along the ground for a while, so, it had to be something that isn't going to come apart or break too easily.

KP: Many of the Air Corps veterans I have interviewed have commented that, with each stage of training, they jumped to a larger aircraft and, sometimes, the plane was too large for them to handle. Did you ever feel that way?

WH: I found it was all very gradual and everything's the same. You had a couple more instruments here. [If] you have a single engine, you've got five engine instruments, [if] you got a twin engine, you've got ten, but, they're all lined up, one, two, three, [if] you got three engines, and I flew three engines, four engines, eight engines. ... You got the same basic five, or six, or seven instruments, and they just repeat them, and, ... on the modern planes, they're all set so that

all of the engine's instruments are normal when they're in a vertical position. ... So, if you see one, out of the whole twenty, thirty instruments, ... [that is] not even, you look at it and you figure out what's wrong.

KP: It sounds as if you enjoyed flying a great deal.

WH: I did. I still do.

KP: Yes, obviously.

WH: [laughter] Some people say, "Oh, you were a pilot." No, I am a pilot. [laughter]

KP: Did you ever get airsick?

WH: I did, once, in basic training, and that was in this open-cockpit Vulti Vibrator, we called it, and we had these little caps, and I just pulled the hat off. ... I didn't have to clean out the plane, because anybody who got sick had to clean the plane out, but, I put it all in my hat and I threw the hat away after I landed, [laughter] only once.

KP: You were stationed at a number of posts, such as Atlantic City, Vermont, Maxwell Field, Bainbridge ...

WH: Ocala, Florida, after Maxwell, ... Bainbridge, and Albany, Georgia.

KP: What did you think of all of these different places?

WH: ... I had a wonderful time. No, I hadn't traveled much. Of course, when I won the Ford Good Drivers League, I went to Detroit, and then, the following summer, just ... after my first year of college, I took a car from New York City to Seattle, Washington, for a Navy lieutenant. ... [He] thought he was going out on the sea with a ship in Bainbridge Island, ... the major ship building place there in the Puget Sound, across from Seattle and Bremerton. ... When he got there, they were just starting to build it. So, he wanted his car there, and a young man who was a year behind me knew him, and this man asked him to drive it out, and I had just won the Ford Good Drivers League the year before, so, ... his mother told him, "If you can get Bill Halliday to go with you, yes." So, he asked me if I would go out. So, the two of us drove the car across the continent.

KP: That must have been fun.

WH: It was, because he said, "I don't care how long it takes, up to two weeks, and I'll pay all your expenses," and we took a little over a week, but, we zig-zagged just a little bit and visited friends along the way, and then, he came back, and I stayed there with a cousin and an aunt in Tacoma and worked at ... what was it? They're building a power plant there, Bonneville Power Administration. I can't think of the name of it now, but, I got a job through the summer, and stayed there, and visited all these lonely girls out on Bainbridge Island, where this Navy

lieutenant lived, 'cause there were very few men around, boys, men, ... at the time. So, I had a good summer there, made enough money to get myself through my next semester at college.  
[laughter]

KP: Both before and during the war, what struck you about the different regions of the country?

WH: Well, ... during the war, I didn't travel quite as much, because I spent a little over two years at Sedalia, in Missouri. ... The air base was at Knobnoster, Missouri, and it now has another name, Whitman, I guess it is, yeah. Anyway, it's quite a ways from Sedalia. So, I stayed there for a long time, and then, I was transferred down to Little Rock, Arkansas. They were going to open another training base. Then, the war in Europe was over, so, they canceled that and sent us back to Sedalia, and then, I became club officer, 'cause we stopped training, and then, they sent me to Third Air Force Headquarters in South Carolina, and I was club officer there until I retired in '46, not retired, I got a release in '46, and went back to school.

KP: Did you want to serve overseas?

WH: I was glad I was made an instructor when I was, but, I got very tired of it, and I volunteered for every overseas assignment I could get, and I tried to get out, and then, it really killed me when some of my students were coming back to be instructors as first lieutenants and captains, people I had taught through carrier, and I was still a second lieutenant. We didn't get promotions. Then, I definitely wanted to go overseas, [laughter] but, there's no way. I volunteered for everything. ... "No, you're too valuable." "Well, why don't I get a promotion if I'm so valuable?" but, I didn't want to be a hero. I would have gone if they'd sent me. I was all ready to go when I finished my month of training, ... had a crew and everything, and I was all set to go. I was the aircraft commander, and then, they decided [that] they needed instructors for the invasion, and they took about a third of our class, and made us instructors, and increased the output from Sedalia.

KP: You did have a crew, correct?

WH: Oh, yeah. I was all set to go.

KP: At Sedalia, after your training?

WH: Yeah, all set to go to Europe.

KP: What were your crew members like?

WH: I still correspond with the co-pilot, who then became a first pilot himself. ...

KP: Did he take over the crew?

WH: ... He didn't, no. They took somebody else who had just finished training as a first pilot, and he went as a co-pilot, but, he wasn't a co-pilot [for] very long. He was a good pilot, Chris Georgeff, lives in Ohio, now.

KP: Did he also make a career of the military?

WH: Yes, he did, too, yeah, and then, he retired about the same time I did, and he went to a jet charter company in Columbus, Ohio, and flew with them, ... I guess, until he retired at ... age sixty-five.

KP: Do you recall anything about any of the other members of your crew?

WH: No. [I] don't remember the others at all. It was only a crew of three. It was the navigator, the co-pilot, and the aircraft commander.

KP: Troop carriers are unarmed, correct?

WH: The plane wasn't. The individuals, all officers, carried a .45 at that time, a Colt .45.

KP: However, you had no protection from enemy aircraft.

WH: No, no. The C-47 was the same as a DC-3, a transport plane, and the C-46, the Curtiss Commando, was about twice the size. ... It was the largest plane of its kind in the Air Force, in the world, at the time we started flying it [at the] ... end of '45, I think it was [that] it came out, [the] Curtiss Commando. It was an enormous plane, twin engine. ... Sit up in the cockpit of that and you're looking down at everything. [laughter]

KP: Would you have preferred to fly a bomber or a fighter?

WH: I had applied for twin engine fighters, which was the P-38. I wanted to fly the fighters, yes. When I got through the B-25s, I knew I wanted to be a fighter pilot and my twin engine fighter was the C-47. [laughter]

KP: What did you think of the ground crews at your various assignments?

WH: We didn't have too much contact with the ground crews. We had a crew chief and, usually, a crew chief stayed with the plane. He flew with it, and we had a good association with the crew chief, and, also, in some areas, we had a radio operator, and they were all part of the crew. ... Any time I flew with a radio operator, for many times, I would make him get up in the co-pilot seat and make sure he knew how to take off and land and I did the same thing with the engineer, the crew chief.

KP: Was that common?

WH: Some people did it. ... I have no idea how common it was, but, I always made sure that, if something happened to the co-pilot or me, they could certainly help out in the cockpit.

KP: You are the third person who has mentioned that in an interview. I know that there was no regulation that mandated this, but, did it violate any regulations?

WH: There weren't any regulations that covered it, as far as I know, at the time.

KP: However, it was not encouraged through official channels.

WH: No, no. It wasn't in the ops manual. The one thing that they did have in those days, you could take your family up for a half-hour flight, twice a year.

KP: Did you do that?

WH: Oh, yes.

KP: Did your mother and father enjoy it?

WH: Well, my brother took my mother and father up. I never had a chance to, but, I took my wife up.

KP: What did she think?

WH: She loved it. [laughter]

KP: I have read about several pilots who took their planes on unauthorized escapades. One guy decided that he wanted to go home to North or South Dakota for the weekend, so, he flew his B-17 halfway across the country without permission.

WH: ... Well, as an instructor, we were allowed to take our students on cross-countries. Part of their requirements in this training, ... transitional and operational training in troop carrier, was to have so many landings at a strange field, and so, we could set up cross-country [flights]. This even went into SAC. We could do this training in SAC, when I was with the bombers, and we had to have training in different areas of the world, and so, we could make these cross-countries around the world, not very often, but, it was possible. ... In World War II, ... if I took two students, I could keep a plane for three days, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, and bring it back Monday, and I had met my wife up in Detroit, and I was in Missouri. I had many trips to Detroit. Detroit had Romulus Airfield. It was a wonderful place and Detroit City Airport was a wonderful place to take students into to practice strange field landings.

KP: It sounds like your involvement with the Detroit area stems largely from your experience in the Air Corps.

WH: Yeah, yeah. Well, no. I met my uncle in '41 when I came there for the Ford Good Drivers League. My mother and Dad came with me there, it was parents [included], and my expenses were all paid, so, they stayed with my uncle. ... When I went in the Air Force, I corresponded with my aunt and uncle. I sent them a picture and my wife was their niece. So, we weren't

cousins, though. She was the niece of my aunt and I was the nephew of my uncle, the Hallidays and the Wenzels. So, we weren't related at all, but, she had this picture of me, and she convinced my future wife that she should write to me, and, when I came up to visit her, she said that I should meet her niece, so, they got us together.

KP: It obviously clicked between you two.

WH: It did. We were separated in the end, after the kids were all away in school, and she ended up her life up in northern Michigan. I bought a home for her up there in [the] Traverse City area, because my daughter was going to Interlochen Arts Academy at the time, for the last two years of high school, and she decided that she could move out from Japan at that point without losing face, because her daughter needed somebody from the family there. ... Nancy was too young to be alone in the States by herself. My wife died of too much alcohol, and too many cigarettes, and no exercise. Toward the end, we had very little in common.

KP: You mentioned that some of the men you trained later came back from Europe and served alongside you.

WH: Yeah.

KP: Did they tell you about their combat experiences?

WH: Oh, yeah.

KP: Did you learn anything from them?

WH: Oh, yeah. There was good intelligence during that part of the war, ... not as good as during the Cold War, but, they would get these aerial photos, and they would get gun fighter photos from the wing cameras, when they were actually shooting at other planes, and bring them back, and show us the flashes of a plane going by, and we had to identify them. [They would] tell us how the fighters protected ... the bombers and the troop carrier planes, things of this sort, and some of the pilots did come back, and they were better instructors at that time, because they had all the experience of actually dropping paratroopers, towing gliders into combat areas, picking up gliders to bring them out, not with people [onboard], but, bring the gliders back out if they weren't crashed. So, they did help.

KP: I have read that glider operations were very risky.

WH: Yes.

KP: What do you remember about teaching people how to pilot gliders?

WH: Well, we only checked out in a glider, so that we would know what was going on. ... Our job as troop carrier instructors was to know what the glider pilot had to do and how he did it, so, we had to check out with a glider instructor, and the thing that they impressed on us was that no

matter what happens, you never cut the glider loose, because the bungee chord ... stretches, and you're going this way, and there's a great, big bolt, about this size, a ring, and a double hook that goes out the front of it that hooks on the back of the plane, and, also, on the nose. If you release the glider while still hooked up, this great, big, metal [bolt] goes right back through the windshield or over the wing and ties it up. So, they impressed us with that.

KP: They have to release the glider from their end.

WH: Yeah, and if they can't release, you land with them on. ... You just bring them back and land in tandem. [laughter] If something happens to their release, you never cut them lose.

KP: Do you remember any of the men who washed out of your training course? Do you remember why they washed out? You were instructing trained pilots at this point.

WH: Yeah. They were already trained. I don't recall that there were any that I couldn't pass on. There were some who were selected to be aircraft commanders who I recommended they move them back and get some experience as a co-pilot first, but, ... I don't think ... we had any wash out at all. There may have been some who couldn't hack it that I didn't know about, but, I don't recall any. (CC?) didn't have any.

KP: You were conducting an advanced level of training.

WH: Yeah. It was taking them from pilots to a specific mission and type of activity. We were teaching them how to tow the gliders, how to drop the free falls, how to drop paratroops, things of this sort. So, it was completely different. If they could fly a plane, they could do all the other things.

KP: I realize that you spent the war as an instructor in the United States, but, I would like to ask you about the airdrops which preceded the D-Day invasion. Many critics have said that they were not very accurate and that the pilots dropped the paratroopers too soon.

WH: Yeah.

KP: What did you know about the airborne operations for the Normandy campaign at the time? Were the misdrops seen as failures of instruction?

WH: Well, there wasn't too much in instructing there. It was the fact that the navigation charts were not good. We did have pathfinders who went out and dropped radio beacons in drop zones. ... As long as the troop carrier pilots could pick up these pathfinder beacons, then, there was no problem, but, where they couldn't find the pathfinder beacon, but, were sure they were there, then, they dropped them, and whether they were right or wrong, there were some errors. That's all we know.

KP: Did your knowledge of these problems influence your training program at all?

WH: No, no. We never got anything back, that I remember, that would aid in locating the right thing. Navigation was very primitive back in those days.

KP: I have also learned that it was quite easy to get lost. Did you ever get lost?

WH: Yeah, above a cloud, where it was supposed to have been visual [flying] and the weather told me it was going to be a clear area. ... I got over the area, and I'm above a cloud, and there's not a break in it anywhere. ... You can't pick up a radio beacon of any sort, or, if you do, it's so weak [that] you can only pick it up for a short while. It gives you an idea of where you are, but, you aren't sure unless you have a good homing device or you can see the ground.

KP: What was your opinion on night flying?

WH: Night flying, to me, is no different from day flying.

KP: You did not see a difference between the two.

WH: No.

KP: What about instrument flying versus visual flying?

WH: It's second nature.

KP: Did you feel that way at the time?

WH: Yeah. Well, I can remember, we had the instrument landing systems on the C-47s and C-46s and that would bring you right down to the end of the runway in almost no visibility. They weren't as accurate then as they are now. I wouldn't hesitate to take my own plane down with my ILS, instrument landing system, as long as I could see the ground when I was fifty feet from it. That'd be fine for me, because I know I'm going to be over the runway if I fly the instruments properly, and I usually do in my plane.

KP: It sounds like you really took to flying. You were very comfortable in the pilot's seat.

WH: We did some foolish things. ... We'd go out on formation practice with three students and three instructors, and we were right along the Missouri River, and I can remember many times when the lead plane would start going down. The planes were out here. ... He would start going below the treetops and the two ... wing planes are over the trees. So, somebody has to be looking out for the guy below [the] treetops. ... If you were flying [on] him, you'd run into the trees. ... A couple of things we used to do that were death threats, ... near the college in Lawrenceburg, Missouri, about fifteen miles to the west, there were a couple of lovers' lanes spots [that] we soon located. ... If you put all the lights on on the C-47, you got a bunch of light going out to the front. If you turn the battery switch off, everything runs, except the lights go off. So, on a moonlit night, we'd look for a couple of cars out in this area and we'd turn the battery switch off. We'd take a nice, long glide, so [that] we'd be going at a real high speed, head right for the lane,

and just as we got to it, we'd throw the battery switch on, on full power, or we'd dive on barges on the Missouri River, and you'd see the guys on the deck jumping up and down, shaking their fists at you. [laughter] So, we did some crazy things. ... One of my friends, (Deeparadol?), ... one of the instructors, he left for Europe after that, he got so low over the Lakes of the Ozarks that his wheels hit the water. They weren't retractable gear. They came up a little bit, but, they still were there, and he clipped the water, and I guess he got the prop, too, and he had to land on the water there, and he was chastised for that. So, we did foolish things, and nobody got killed doing the foolish things, as far as I know, but, [we] let a little steam off. [laughter] You have to remember, we were only twenty-one, twenty-two years old.

KP: How old was the oldest instructor when you were an instructor?

WH: About twenty-seven. When you're twenty-eight, you were too old to fly. They'd give you a desk job.

KP: How old was the youngest instructor?

WH: Well, I was an instructor before I was twenty-one, twenty. ... Legally, I couldn't [drink]. When I came home on ... leave, with my ... wings and commission, I went into a bar. In New Jersey, to get a drink, you had to be twenty-one.

KP: Did they serve you?

WH: Well, the guy said, "Let me see your license." I said, "What do you mean? How do you think I got this far if I wasn't twenty-one?" [laughter]

KP: I have also been told that civilians, particularly women, were very impressed by Air Corps wings.

WH: Yes.

KP: Was that a fact?

WH: Yes, that, or a bar of chocolate, or a pair of nylons. [laughter] They were high priority items in the '40s.

KP: I interviewed a man who was stationed in the Chicago-Great Lakes area for about a year. He said that there were many single women and very few single men around.

WH: Yeah.

KP: In the Midwest, there were fewer men because they all went into the service. Did you notice this pattern?

WH: Well, ... when I became club officer, and what they did before I was club officer at the end of the war, we would call up one of the personnel people over at this ... Southern Missouri State Teachers' College, I think it was. We'd call up and say, "We're having a dance Friday night and how many girls do you think would like to come?" They'd tell us, and we'd send over one, two, or three buses, pick up all these girls, bring them over to the club, [get] dates for all the guys there, and, at a certain time, they'd have to ... load their buses and go back home. [laughter]

KP: When you were stationed in Missouri, how much contact did you have with the civilian population?

WH: Yeah, very little while I was instructing. Sedalia was the nearest town of any size, and Warrensburg was a little closer, and Knobnoster, as I recall it, getting off the train back in 1944, it had a sign there, "Knobnoster: 582 People." [laughter]

KP: You were in small town America.

WH: Yeah, right, but, Warrensburg was fairly close, and ... Sedalia was the big city, but, we had very little contact with the people, other than the ones who worked ... in the air base. We had civilian employees. Again, when I was club officer there, after the war, I had a lot of contact, because I had to make bank runs every day, and ... hire cooks and waiters for the officers' club, and things of this sort.

KP: Did you ever interact with any WASPs, Women Auxiliary Pilots?

WH: No, none in the areas that I went in.

KP: Did you have any contact with female Air Corps personnel?

WH: Yeah, we had a few, mostly enlisted. We had one administrative Air Force officer who came and was employed by the club, and so, we did have some, and, of course, we had a lot of nurses who were officers. ... There were very few women and, again, ... there were no blacks. The blacks were in their own squadron. They had Lockbourne Air Force Base. ... Columbus, Ohio, during the war, was one of the two bases that had the black squadron's pilots.

KP: Did you have any interaction with black pilots?

WH: No, no. I ran into one black. ... We were going down into Cuba on some transport missions ... after the war, taking SAC crews down to Jamaica and Havana for training, and I had met these ... two men, ... I think they were enlisted, at the time. I've forgotten whether they were enlisted or officers. In West Palm Beach, Florida, I teamed up with two blacks. ... We went out to dinner together, and we came to this restaurant ... and the waiter, or the *maitre de*, said, "I'm sorry. You can't come in here," and he says, "Why?" and he says, "Blacks can't eat here," and he says, "I'm not black, I'm Hawaiian." "Oh, okay." [laughter] So, I don't know. I think he actually was a Hawaiian. I don't really know, but, I remember that. ... There was discrimination, a lot of it, then and we had no blacks in any of the outfits I was in.

KP: Since you served in the Air Force during World War II, and then, went back in during the Korean War era, were you surprised at how well integration worked in the Air Force?

WH: No, not at all. When I ended up in B-52s, in Loring Air Force Base, Limestone, Maine, we had three black aircraft commanders, and one of them was in my flight, and we got along fine. Joe Harrison, now there was a character. The first time he got to Loring and was given a crew, they went through their training, and [on] his first mission, he took off, and, after every pilot takes off, he calls back and says, "Sophomore, three, two," whatever the name of your aircraft was for that night, "is off. Everything is in the green," and Jim Harrison called back, "Sophomore, thirty-two, the jig's up." Another story, I didn't see this, but, I was told [about it later]. It was authenticated. He and his wife were in the bar in the officers' club and there were two guys two chairs down from him at the bar, pretty well liquored up, and talking. They didn't even know who was sitting besides them and one of them said, "Let's go into town, and get a black girl, and change our luck," and they say [that] Jim just calmly got up, and went between the two, and put his arms around them, and said, "I wouldn't recommend it. I've been sleeping with one all my life and it hasn't changed mine," [laughter] but, he retired. He retired shortly after I did, and he wanted to get into civilian aviation, and [he] got all the information I had and [did] what I had done, and he got a job at United, in Denver, as a simulator instructor, and so, he had himself a nice, little job after retirement.

KP: You ran an officers' club after the war ended.

WH: Yeah, as a slot machine mechanic.

KP: It also sounds as if you spent a good amount of time in the officers' club during the war.

WH: That was our ... only recreation. I probably drank too much. I never got drunk. I never have, maybe once or twice in my life, but, these officers and gentleman used to have all sorts of games they'd play in the club, after people got a little high. You'd take a whiskey bottle, and there's just a couple [of] drops of whiskey in it, and you rub it, and get it warm, and light a match, and put it in it, and you get this flame that goes down. Have you ever seen that done?

KP: No.

WH: Well, you get it lit and shove the cork in. As it heats up the bottle, ... it goes, "Pop," down behind tables. [They were] shooting corks after a party at each other. [laughter] Again, we weren't very old. [laughter] Why don't you put that on tape? [laughter].

KP: Do you think that many of your fellow officers drank too much?

WH: Yes, yeah, a lot of wives, too. ... It's very conducive to alcoholism, no question about it.

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

KP: This continues an interview with Mr. William G. Halliday on March 9, 1995, at Rutgers University with Kurt Piehler. You were saying that military life was very conducive to drinking during World War II.

WH: More so in World War II than it is today, because ... most of the clubs will not allow alcohol to be served at noon, whereas we'd go in for lunch and have a drink ... or two, and then, go back to work. ... In isolated places, ... on trips up to Newfoundland, Gander, Goose Bay, Labrador, there's nothing there. There's no town to go to, no activities, so, your activities always surround, or is involved in, the bar, in drinking and eating.

KP: During the war, had you considered making the Air Force your career?

WH: Yeah, I tried to. I applied for a regular commission, and I didn't get it, so, that's when I took my release and came back ... to Rutgers, and then, when I was recalled in the Korean War, I applied for a regular commission again. I figured, now, with a Masters degree, and teaching, and quite a varied experience in the military, that I'd get a regular commission. I didn't get that. So, I went for the minimum Reserve active retirement, twenty active and five Reserve time. So, twenty-five for pay gives me a good income for life. I wouldn't have to work or have any other investments. That and social security, I could live on, but, I don't think I want to try it. I've been very fortunate in investments and I make more in investments now than I do from my retirement salary.

KP: Congratulations. Where were you when you learned about the use of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki? What were your thoughts at the time? Did you think that the bombings would end the war?

WH: ... For the atomic bombing, I was still at Sedalia, Missouri, Sedalia Army Airfield, and I was quite sure that that would be the end of it, ... after Hiroshima, and then, with Nagasaki, I was sure that there would be no more fighting, 'cause, at that time, I thought we might have to extend our training a little bit and get some more help down in the Pacific, but, fortunately, it was over. I'd like to make one comment on that. There's a lot of talk today about the good and the bad of the bombing, and, ... working for Japan Airlines, I got to know a lot of middle-aged people who had been in Japan during the war and after, and the majority of these people say that they are glad the atomic bomb was used. If it hadn't been, there would be a Northern Japan and a Southern Japan today. There's no question about it. The Russians already were in the Kurils and the four northern islands north of Hokkaido, and they were ready to march right on down, and the bomb stopped the war and stopped the Russians from invading Japan. So, the adult, conscious people are very aware of the results. ...

KP: Since you had applied for overseas service earlier in the war, did you think that you might be sent to Japan?

WH: No. At the time I wanted to go overseas, ... there was very little in the Pacific. It was mostly in Europe, and, yeah, there was a war in the Pacific, and ... my brother was down there, but, I was more concerned about [the] activity in Europe.

KP: Why Europe?

WH: That's where all the troop carrier [action was]. ... [In] the battle in the Pacific, there was no place for troop carrier [activities. There is] a five-hour fuel supply on a troop carrier plane, six or seven on the C-46. There's no place you could go out there.

KP: You felt that you were going to end the war in training.

WH: Either that, [or], ... somehow or other, I'd get into Europe, yeah.

KP: After the war ended, you were transferred to South Carolina, I believe.

WH: Yeah.

KP: That was your last assignment.

WH: Yeah. I was separated in South Carolina, from the officers' club. It was [the] headquarters [of the] Third Air Force.

KP: What was it like to run an officers' club?

WH: It was very pleasurable. It was a social type club, after the war. ... There's a lot of social activity going on. There was a lot of responsibility. The slot machines drew in a heck of a lot of money and I had to make bank runs every morning. Usually, I did it myself, ... not that I didn't trust anybody else, but, I wanted to make sure the money got in the bank. The slot machines were the biggest source of income and we were able to get all sorts of bands and entertainment in. The entertainment was fabulous. A lot of these large entertainment groups would go [and play] for low fees, just for the military. ...

KP: Which acts did you get?

WH: Yeah, the biggest one was Bob Hope. That was all volunteer. We ... set up standing room [only] in a hangar for Bob Hope, but, I can't think of any of the names of [the other] individuals. ... The USO had a large following, but, we'd get local bands for the club, for our dances at the club, a lot of times.

KP: Did you book Bob Hope in Missouri or South Carolina?

WH: That was in Missouri, Sedalia, Missouri.

KP: What was it like to see Bob Hope during the war? Do you have any memories of the Bob Hope show?

WH: No memories, other than there was a mass of people there, and they all were cheering, and Bob had to go real slow, to wait for the noise to drop off, before he could go on with his next line, but, to see Bob and the beautiful girls he brought along with him was fantastic. Of course, I was married then, so, I wasn't really looking. [laughter]

KP: You mentioned that the slot machines were very popular at the officers' clubs that you ran. There were very few places where gambling was legal at the time, except in ...

WH: Officers' clubs, yes, and the NCO club, too, yeah, and [the] base [club], yes.

KP: How much money did they take in on, say, an average weekend?

WH: It's a relative thing. ... I was always amazed at ... a weekend's deposit, [the] deposit [on] Monday morning, and, at that time, I was a first lieutenant. Then, a first lieutenant would be making about seven, ... eight thousand, and so, I would say it was probably up in the thousands.

KP: Was it that much?

WH: I would think so, yeah, but, ... again, that amount has slipped. I could be way off on that.

KP: It was a large enough amount to really matter though.

WH: It was a sizable amount to me, yes.

KP: When did you get married?

WH: '46.

KP: 1946?

WH: ... It was after the war in Europe, I guess, June, '46, yeah, after the war in Europe. ... No, the war was over in [Japan, too.] I guess ... it was completely over then, yeah, right, yeah.

KP: Were you still in the service when you got married?

WH: Yeah. We stayed together, 'cause we got married at Sedalia, Missouri, and two or three months later, I was transferred to South Carolina. We went to South Carolina. We were there for several months, and then, I got out in November or December of '46, yeah, and then, we came back to Rutgers. I lived over in a little upstairs apartment, in a place that had a summer camp, a Jewish summer camp, mostly [people] from New York, ... out here to the southeast someplace. ...

KP: Near East Brunswick?

WH: It was south of there. I can't think of the name of the town, Old Town. If I had a map, I could probably pick it out. ...

KP: Spotswood?

WH: No, closer than that. ... It was just across Highway 1.

KP: Somerset?

WH: No, ... southwest.

KP: How long did you live there? Was it more than a year?

WH: No, just for a matter of two or three months, and we got the trailer housing over on the west campus.

KP: The trailer campus, which is now called Busch Campus, was called University Heights.

WH: Yeah.

KP: I have been told that it was very Spartan.

WH: Oh, yeah. [laughter]

KP: Did you have indoor plumbing?

WH: No. These [trailers] were about twenty feet long, double bed in the back, a small kitchenette, and we had to carry a bucket of water in to do the dishes, and then, it ran out of the bucket. ... I'm not sure if we dumped it through the trailer on the ground or [if] we carried the bucket out. I think we carried the bucket out, but ...

KP: ... It was very Spartan?

WH: Yeah.

KP: How did your wife like this arrangement?

WH: Well, we were in love. [laughter] It was a home. It was a home, yeah.

KP: Was the trailer park the best available option?

WH: On the GI Bill, it was ... the only affordable housing. [laughter]

KP: I know that the housing situation at the time was very tight. Finding an apartment was next to impossible.

WH: Yeah, yeah, yeah, and you couldn't get a car without getting all loaded down. They sold every car that came in in '47, and because my father had always bought cars from the Chevy dealer in Ridgewood, I got a ... Chevrolet Fleet Line Deluxe, new, with only a radio and a heater in it, for eleven hundred dollars.

KP: It sounds like you always had a fondness for automobiles.

WH: Yeah, I've had my share, including a TR-3, when we lived in England, [which] I bought new. ... In Japan, after my son, ... my oldest son, graduated from high school, and I thought he was going in the Navy right away and wouldn't be driving it, I bought a Fair Lady-Z, which is the same as a Datsun 240 Z, only it had a ... 1990 CC engine, instead of the 2500, because, in Japan, anything over 2000 CCs has double taxation, at that time. So, they made it in Japan. It was the same as the 240 Z, except the smaller engine, but, it had a five-speed shift. So, it was just as peppy, and the wheel's on the right hand side, and then, when I was ... recalled, I started out with another Chevy, and then, when I was stationed in Columbus, Ohio, we needed a new car. So, I bought a ... Packard Clipper, which was the smaller of the Packards. ... We fell in love with that. ... We found out that they were stopping to make Packards two years later, when we wanted another one. So, we got a year old [model], the last real Packard that was made, the Packard Patrician, and we had that until I left in '59 for Europe. ... That was a boat, zero to sixty in about six-and-a-half seconds, a five-thousand pound car, had that torsion suspension and levelizers that would level it. While you're driving along, you use up five gallons of gas and you [would] hear the motor come on, lower the rear end a little bit. Anybody get in the car and you [would] hear the motor changing the torsion bar, electric shift. [There was] a little button on the wheel. You'd press the buttons. If you're going forward, hit reverse, it wouldn't go into reverse until you came to stop, and then, it went into reverse. [laughter] [Additional sports car: In May, 1998, my second son gave me a 1971 Datsun 240 Z. It was just Nissan factory restored with a one-year factory backed warranty. That son had learned to drive in the Z in Japan.]

KP: Your studies improved after you returned from the service.

WH: Oh, yeah, yeah, maturity. Oh, yeah, I was much more mature. ... Well, not really. I was a little more mature. [laughter]

KP: Why did you put it that way? Is there a story there?

WH: Well, I know we had a lot of sociability. ...

KP: At the trailers?

WH: At the trailers, yeah. We had a hall there, and we had meetings, and ... we were a community, and we had activities. We had dues and had parties. ... Yes, I'd say I wasn't quite grown up. We had about five trailers of very religious, [now], I'm religious, but, very religious people who didn't believe in dancing, or alcohol, or anything, and always voted down any

alcohol at our parties. So, somebody got some grain neutral spirits and put it in the punch and those real religious people had the best time of any of the parties. [laughter]

KP: They did not know what hit them.

WH: No. They just were having a good time. [laughter] So, I [say] we weren't completely grown up, but, ... I was more studious, and I got all As and Bs, and then, in graduate school, I had all As, except for ... one or two Bs. I don't remember now.

KP: You described University Heights as a community. Was there a division between the Heights Campus students and the main student body? Were there any tensions between the two groups?

WH: Yeah. We weren't really [a part of the college society]. We never felt we were part [of their community]. This is why we had such a good community, because we felt that we had to have our own community sociability. We were all married, we were all returned veterans, and we were a much more homogenous group than the campus in general, and so it was. We didn't have very far to go to the stadium, either, [laughter] football games.

KP: You went to a lot of football games.

WH: Yeah.

KP: I understand that football formed the cornerstone of the campus social life. The games were well attended.

WH: Yeah, oh, yeah. There were a few students who would rather sell their tickets and weren't really that interested, but, they were in the minority.

KP: I also understand that students in this era did not express their political views very often.

WH: No.

KP: It sounds as if the Heights Campus community discussed everything, but, politics.

WH: Yeah. I don't recall ... anybody [who was] really interested in politics at the time. I voted for every election, but, ... I don't recall, until recently, being with people who were really ready to discuss politics and express their opinions on it. You find an occasional few. ...

KP: Your father was a Republican in the 1930s.

WH: Always, yeah.

KP: He stayed loyal to the Republican Party even during his hard times.

WH: Yeah.

KP: What about the Rutgers student body, both before and after the war?

WH: Before the war, we had a few people who were very outspoken in the Communist and Socialist areas. I can remember a discussion with one and my only retort was, "Why should a guy who decides he just wants to sit on a fence and whittle get the same pay that the guy gets for doing the plowing and the farming?" and they didn't have an answer. [laughter]

KP: Was there any change after the war?

WH: Again, being ... in the Hillside community, we didn't get involved with the other people and we all had the same idea, "We had a job to do, we went and did it, now, let's get on with life." [laughter]

KP: You were eager to finish your degree and move on.

WH: Yeah, yeah.

KP: How did the professors treat the returning veterans?

WH: They were mostly very, very lenient towards the veterans, trying to help some of them. Some of them had had no college at all, and [they were] helping them get in line, and, I remember, ... one of my professors had been a buck sergeant during the military and was back now and teaching, and a lot of the ex-GIs wore parts of their uniform, and, of course, the officers had very distinctive, woolen clothes, what they called the pink shirt, and the dark green pants. ... They wore forever, and so, I was in this class with this ex-GI, and I had my pink shirt on, and he's lecturing. All of a sudden, he looks at me and he says, "Is that an officer's shirt?" and I said, "No, it's mine." [laughter].

KP: Many alumni from the postwar classes have expressed mixed feelings about Dean Crosby and his attitude towards the returning veterans. Do you have any feelings on this subject? Also, what did you think of mandatory chapel?

WH: Yeah, I never got to know Dean Crosby at all. I listened to him and I'm afraid that there was a little negativism in my attitude toward him. His appearance, his speech, grated on me to a certain extent. So, other than that, I had no other opinions on him, and then, the chapel, I mentioned that, before the war, the entire freshman class met in the chapel and [there were] lots of seats left over. My sophomore year, again, the entire sophomore class had meetings there. When I came back, there was no way you could get even one of the colleges in[to] the Kirkpatrick Chapel, so that the ... size was amazing to me, the amount of change in five years.

KP: Did you miss the old Rutgers of 1941 and 1942?

WH: ... There wasn't any separation, really, ... or any real close connection between the Ag campus and the main campus. It wasn't a separate college, but, when you're on the Ag campus, [you are separate]. The activities and the classes were what I wanted, on the other side, they were requirements, so that I did feel a lot of closeness to the Ag campus, even though it was all Rutgers College at the time. ... I can see the need for changing it and having a separate college, but, at that time, it was all just a college and the university. ... Of course, it was my interest. To me, all of the instruction and all of the activities on the Ag campus were much better and meant for me than the activities on the main campus.

KP: Was there any tension between the "Aggies" of the Ag School and the Rutgers College student body?

WH: I don't think so. I don't recall any tension, no.

KP: When you came back, did you still aspire to become a horticulturist?

WH: Oh, yeah.

KP: Were your professors surprised at how well you did in class after the war? Did Professor Helyar ever comment on your newfound dedication?

WH: ... After my first semester back, I saw. I met him, and he said just that he was real happy to see that I was a little more mature and able to handle myself in college, something to that effect, but, [he] made me feel good, and most of my contact was with Dr. Davidson, in the floriculture greenhouses.

KP: You mentioned that he was your favorite professor.

WH: Right.

KP: What impressed you the most about him?

WH: I think I was impressed, mostly, with his knowledge in all fields of horticulture, floriculture. ... People who can retain that sort of information amaze me. I can't. [laughter] ...

KP: Was your graduate school education financed by the GI Bill?

WH: Yes. I was still on the GI Bill, because I had four years, and I only had two-and-a-half at Rutgers, and I had two more at Michigan State, and, with the semesters, it came out less than the four years, and I was given a teaching assistantship, which cut my expenses down considerably. ... I was married. I was able to maintain a family. ... We started out in a trailer there, when I first went to Michigan State, and, there, the trailers were older than the ones at Rutgers, and we found out that, after moving the couch out from the wall, ... there were mushrooms growing behind our couch. ... We checked with a few other families and almost every other trailer had mushrooms growing ... behind the couches.

KP: At Rutgers?

WH: No. This is at Michigan State, yeah, and I was only in that for six months. ... In the teaching assignment, I was ... made the director of the floriculture short course, and I kept up my research and my classes, and taught ... the two-year students. They came to campus for six months of classroom work, and then, I had to locate them ... out in the marketplace, in a greenhouse, working, or in a flower shop, arranging, or whatever their interest was. They worked for one year, and I had to go around the state and visit them regularly, and then, they were back for six months. So, I had that job for little over a year. Then, I got my notice for recall and I had been planning to go for a doctorate. ... So, I had enough free credits for a Masters, and I got my [advisor], Dr. Watson, got my committee together, and, in two months, we set up the orals. ... I finished up all my research and went off in the Air Force, and, a year later, I had my thesis finished, and the degree was conferred a year later, in '52. I was recalled in April, '51. In '52, spring, I got my degree.

KP: What was Michigan State like? You mentioned that it was a bigger school than Rutgers at the time?

WH: Yeah. Again, Rutgers was so much bigger after the war, and then, I went to Michigan State. At the time, I think Rutgers was something like five thousand. Michigan State was almost twenty thousand. ...

KP: It was closer to the size of Rutgers today.

WH: Yeah, and the thing that took me to Michigan State [was], while I was in my last year at Rutgers, I found out that Michigan State had gotten some tremendous amount of money, at the time, for new greenhouses. So, I was going up there to get all the latest in experimental greenhouses, where we could control the temperature in small sections, and the humidity, and everything else. That is all automatic now, but, it gave me a beautiful platform for my research.

KP: Did your decision to go to Michigan State have anything to do with your wife hailing from Michigan?

WH: No.

KP: Michigan State had more to offer you.

WH: ... I tried several of them. They were the only one that offered me the teaching assistantship.

KP: That influenced your decision.

WH: Yeah, right, that and the greenhouses.

KP: Did you enjoy teaching?

WH: Well, I have been a teacher or a student all my life. I instructed in the Air Force ... during the war. I instructed at Michigan State for a year and, when I got recalled into SAC, I was an instructor ... in a simulator for five years. I was an instructor in the B-52 for co-pilot checkouts. When I went into the airlines, after two years experience in ... the 727, I became an instructor in the 727 line, ... where I take ... the co-pilots who are ready to check out as a captain, and let them fly the left seat on the routes that they are going to be given their check on, and give them the experience on that, and techniques, and things of that sort. So, I've either been a student or an instructor all my life. I enjoy it. ... Now, I give lectures on Earthwatch expeditions ... and [I show] slides from all of the Earthwatch expeditions I have been on. So, that's fun.

KP: If you had not been recalled, do you think that you might have gone on to teach at the university level?

WH: No. I was using that as a stepping stone to owning my own greenhouses.

KP: That was your goal at the time.

WH: Yeah. My goal when I went back to ... Rutgers, and then, to Michigan State, was to get a job ... teaching long enough to build up enough money, and enough experience, and enough contacts, so that I could afford to buy my own greenhouses and be a manager of my own greenhouses. The Air Force changed my mind. [laughter]

KP: Why did you remain in the Reserves?

WH: Free flying.

KP: You continued to fly.

WH: Oh, yeah, right. We had the North American Texan, the AT-6, at Newark Airport, and we were an aerial reconnaissance outfit, and we had some beautiful cameras. ... The photographer would sit in the back seat, open the sliding canopy, and take ... hand held pictures out [the window]. ... We flew the AT-6, and then, when I got to Michigan, I joined the Reserve at Selfridge, and they had C-46s, which I had already been instructing in. So, I came in [and] was a squadron commander in the Reserve and an instructor. So, I could go out there every weekend, from Michigan State, and fly almost all over the United States.

KP: Was it a shock that you were recalled during the Korean War?

WH: No, it wasn't. I had gotten a lot of *esprit de corps* in the Reserve unit and, about six months before we were recalled, I got a letter from the Department of the Air Force saying that I was being released from the Reserve unit, because of my position. I was susceptible to ... a relief from recall because of my instructing position in the college and I checked it out with some lawyers and a few people ... in the military and found out that [I could stay in] if I would make a

statement that I would refuse to accept a deferment from the college, I would not ask for one, if our unit was called up. We had a good unit, a troop carrier unit. "If our unit is called up, I'll go." So, they let me stay in. So, they recalled our unit for one day and, after we arrived there, they divided us up among [the] Strategic Air Command bases.

KP: Did this move disappoint you?

WH: Definitely.

KP: Most of the people I interviewed who stayed in the Reserves commented that their Reserve unit did not amount to much.

WH: Ours did, at Selfridge.

KP: Your unit was actually able to conduct training operations.

WH: Yeah. ... We had a lot of pilots. We flew. I had a friend at college, who lived near me, who was in the Naval Reserve, and I took him out in his uniform, and he went on one of my cross-country trips with us. [laughter]

KP: They recalled this unit that you had nurtured and led, and then, broke it up after one day.

WH: Yeah.

KP: What was your initial assignment?

WH: I was assigned to Strategic Air Command, El Paso, Texas, Biggs Field, and they had B-50s there. It was a new version of the B-29, four engine props, and they didn't need me. I was real disappointed. They had, really, ... no job [for me]. They had no place for me. I'd fly along and Dr. Hannah was in charge of War Manpower, something. He went from the university to War Manpower. I wrote a letter to Dr. Hannah, it was a personal letter, telling him that, a former teacher, I was called up because I was needed. I wasn't being used properly. I was being taught how to cheat on tests, so [that] I always got a hundred, and I felt that there was something better for me. ... To my disappointment, Dr. Hannah turned it over to the military channels and I got a real strong reprimand, down channels, for going out of channel.

KP: You went way out of channel. Were you disappointed by the response?

WH: Yeah. ... I definitely was. He knew. I can't believe that he was that ignorant of the military. He could have written back and said, "I wish I could help you, but, in my position, there's nothing I can do," but, to turn it over to the military [was wrong of him].

KP: Were you surprised that he did that?

WH: Yeah.

KP: You were reprimanded. How did that affect your career?

WH: Well, ... I think it prevented me from getting [the] assignments I wanted, and, again, I had almost nothing to do for ... about a year, and then, ... by going through background, they picked me to go into this B-47 training. They called it the "Four-Headed Monster." SAC was just starting up. They had ... B-45s, and they were coming into the B-47s, and Curt LeMay wanted all three crew members to be able to perform any one of the functions, aircraft commander, co-pilot, navigator, ... and bombardier. The navigator was also bombardier, and so, ... this is one good assignment I had. I had a year's vacation, 'cause schools in the military were easy. I went through navigation school in Texas. I went to bombardier, radar operator, and, I guess, yeah, the three, bombardier, radar, and navigator schools. ... I was a navigator, a trained navigator, and a bombardier, and a pilot, and so, they called us, "Four-Headed Monsters," and, of course, ... he felt that we should be rotated, the positions, but, that wasn't practical. So, I ended up as co-pilot, initially, and then, I became a simulator instructor for four years at Columbus, Ohio.

KP: You had originally enlisted in the Army Air Corps, which was a very independent, but, still subsidiary, branch of the Army. When you were recalled, the Air Force was a separate branch of the Armed Services.

WH: The Army Air Corps was originally started and carried up into ... '49, and then, the Air Force was separated. I couldn't remember what year it was. I thought it was after I was recalled. I was recalled [in] '51. That was the Air Force then, yeah.

KP: Were there any differences between being a part of the Army and being an independent organization?

WH: No. The only difference that I could see, and that was strictly philosophical, was that there's no way I could be put into an infantry regiment, if I lost my flying status. I would always be in the Air Force then and have some other job in the Air Force.

KP: During World War II, were you ever concerned that you might be transferred into the infantry?

WH: Yeah. ... They could transfer you at the time. It was no problem there, yeah. It wasn't a fear, but ...

KP: ... It was in the back of your mind.

WH: Yeah.

KP: It was not unheard of.

WH: Yeah. ... Some of the cadets who washed out, I believe, went into the infantry.

KP: Were there any other changes? You mentioned that you were shocked when you got to El Paso by the cheating on exams.

WH: Yeah, yeah.

[Tape Paused]

KP: You were not pleased by the cheating you witnessed at El Paso.

WH: No. ... I think this was just the idea that Strategic Air Command demanded a hundred percent and there's nobody [that] can make a hundred percent all of the time. So, [there is] only one way you can do it, and that's [to] take an exam, but, let people discuss it, and, coming from a college atmosphere to this, it irked me.

KP: Did you want to go to Korea? Since you had not seen combat in World War II, did you see this as your opportunity to serve in a combat zone?

WH: Yeah. ... When I had a crew at ... Loring, Maine, I wanted to get them to volunteer. Of course, we were getting into the Vietnam War then and, at Lockbourne, ... there's no way we would get involved in the Korean War. They weren't using jets over there, but, in the Vietnam [War], they were, and I never could get a unanimous decision there, and I volunteered to go, if they needed anybody, but, they never used [me]. I was in the G Model at Loring and they never used the G Models in combat. They used the Fs, and they used some of the earlier ones, but, the G was kept out of Vietnam, but, I got to Vietnam in a 727, as a civilian pilot. [laughter]

KP: You were flying as a civilian.

WH: Delivering the *Stars and Stripes*, the military newspaper, supplies, personnel.

KP: Were you working for an airline at the time?

WH: Yeah, World Airways, initially, for the first two years, over in Japan.

KP: You are the second pilot I have interviewed who got to Vietnam that way.

WH: Yeah. ... We flew into Da Nang, Cam Ranh Bay, Saigon, Pleiku.

KP: What was it like to be involved in the creation of SAC, the Strategic Air Command?

WH: SAC started before I got out in '46, in Lincoln, Nebraska. They had the B-29s, and started out SAC there, and I was connected with them, before I retired, in ferrying crews from Lincoln, Nebraska, to the training bases in the Caribbean, Jamaica, Vernon Airport, and in Cuba and Puerto Rico. So, I did a lot of ferrying down to [the Caribbean]. ...

KP: You were there almost from the beginning.

WH: Yeah. We were just a service, getting the crews down there, the extra crews and the ground personnel, to run their operations out of the Caribbean, and then, when I was recalled in '51, that was six years later, five years later, I was in SAC, and it was going strong, but, [they were] just getting started with the jets.

KP: What did you think of SAC's mission to launch a nuclear attack against the Soviet Union?

WH: I think it was fantastic and I think it saved ... the world from a third world war. We flew airborne missions over Thule, Greenland, ... to monitor ... the sites for transmissions and possible launches coming over the Pole, any atomic blasts anywhere, and we also flew the Mediterranean from Loring, Maine, and so, we did a lot of airborne alerts.

KP: Did you think that it was inevitable that we would use nuclear weapons or did you have a different view of the potential use of nuclear weapons?

WH: No. I felt that we were going to have to go and drop them at some time. I really did. We were ready.

KP: You would not have hesitated if you had been ordered to launch.

WH: No, no. Every time a message came on, training, you hope it's a training mission and a training order. ...

[Tape Paused]

KP: Did you ever have any contact with Curtis LeMay?

WH: No. ...

KP: He became a very controversial figure.

WH: Yeah. I think he was ... the main push behind SAC, but, I think ... he used his power beyond reason. He felt that he was a god, I believe, and people were going to do what he said, whether it was good, bad, or indifferent. ...

KP: Did your fellow pilots share this view?

WH: Yeah. I mean, the joke that fits ... the situation perfectly, Curtis LeMay walks up to a plane with a cigar in ... his mouth, smoking, and ... one of the crew chiefs says, "Gee, he should be told not to smoke there. The plane might blow up." The guy said, "It wouldn't dare."  
[laughter]

KP: You were with SAC during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

WH: Yeah.

KP: Were you put on alert?

WH: No. I was in training. What year was that?

KP: 1962.

WH: Yeah. I was still in training, in checkout in the B-52s, then. I was quite sure I was.

KP: Were you with SAC at the time?

WH: That was SAC, yeah.

KP: However, you were not assigned to an active crew.

WH: No. It was strictly a training base. We were just getting ... organized and I was in an aerial reconnaissance, ACM reconnaissance, outfit, anyway. ... We started, probably, [in] '53, actual activity there and running on training missions, but, it was strictly getting checked out in the equipment and the planes in '52, when the missile crisis went on.

[Somehow, this got out of order. In 1952-1953, I was in checkout on the B-47.]

KP: Since you were in the Air Force during World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Cold War, how effective did you think the Air Force was in each conflict? What did you think of Air Force doctrine?

WH: The Air Force was right and did a good job all of the time. ... [laughter].

KP: How effective were the bombing campaigns in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam?

WH: Well, I wasn't involved ... in the Korean War, because I was in SAC and the bombers, and we never got over there. Some of our planes did go up and do ECM work along the coast of Russia, and some were detected, but, most of them got in and out and never were detected. ... As far as we know, they were never detected. So, we got electronic information from those flights, but, that's as far as we were involved in it, and I never took part in any of those, 'cause, at that time, I wasn't on a crew anymore. I was running ... the simulator.

KP: The Air Force was segregated during World War II.

WH: Yeah.

KP: When you were recalled, the Air Force had been integrated. Did you notice any problems with integration from the standpoint of efficiency?

WH: I didn't see any problems at all. [In] the areas I was in, there were no problems. However, there was one problem that I saw with the commander of ... [the] Eighth Air Force in Massachusetts. We had a Negro captain who was accused of making love to a white wife. It was mutual. ... He was cashiered out, and yet, the same general had commanders, that I know of for sure, who were setting him up with wives while the husbands were away, when he went to visit [their] bases. So, it was all right for him [to commit adultery] with white [wives].

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

KP: Was the cashiering of this black officer the only case that you know of a black airman being treated unfairly?

WH: Yeah. That's the only one that I know of, but, to me, it was so blatant. He was gone so fast. ...

KP: It was common for this general to commit adultery with the wives of other officers.

WH: Yes, right. ... He had several, I know. The base commander that we had ... was setting him up when the ... husbands were away on TDY. He had several wives that he could set up for the visiting generals and this general, the head of [the] Eighth Air Force in the 1960s. ...

KP: Was he a Southerner?

WH: Not that I know of, yeah.

KP: What did you notice about the changing role of women in the Air Force during your long career?

WH: [I] noticed that there were more of them and there was almost no problem in the Air Force, that I saw, integrating women in. Of course, there were no women pilots until after I left, but, other than that, they were in all phases of the activities.

KP: It sounds like there was a great deal of mutual respect between ground crews and flight crews during World War II. How did that relationship change over time?

WH: Yeah. ... It was a more personal feeling in World War II. You were working with each other. There was a lot more professionalism in SAC, in the ground crews. ... It wasn't quite the same as civilian flying, where you let the ground crew do everything. In SAC, we had to check up on everything the ground crews did. We had to know how to change flaps, how to change tires. ... We had to ... make a complete inspection on a B-52 that took two hours before a flight, and most of this stuff was just checking up on [them], making sure that the ground crews had done a good job, and, as far as I'm concerned, they did a beautiful job. ... In the airlines, you walk up and go up in the cockpit, and the ground chief comes up, and hands you the paperwork, and tells you what he's done and how everything is, and you say, "Fine, thank you," and you take it, and you go fly.

KP: However, there were different rules in the Air Force.

WH: The flight crew made a complete inspection of everything, even though the ground crews had gone completely through it. I trusted them completely, but, ... we had to do our own preflight then, after they finished.

KP: Did you ever find any problems?

WH: No.

KP: The quality of maintenance remained high.

WH: Yeah, I think so. I think we had excellent maintenance, aircraft facilities, everything. I was very happy with everybody who took care of me.

KP: Overall, it sounds like you had a very fulfilling career in the Air Force, except for your assignment in El Paso.

WH: Yeah. I sat around and did nothing.

KP: Were you reluctant to leave the Air Force after you finished your twenty years?

WH: No. I was very anxious to get out when I had finished my twenty years. I could see no future in it for a Reservist. ... They wanted me to extend, and [they said that] they needed me and all this sort of stuff, and I said, "No, I've got my twenty in. I'm going to leave," and I did it at the right time, and I was in the right place at the right time, right up through my final days on a 747.

KP: When you worked for World Airlines, even though you were now a civilian, your mission was largely of a military nature.

WH: It was, yeah, and almost all of the pilots were ex-military, and ... those of us in Japan were on a military contract flight. We had three 727s and about fifty crew members, and we were all based in [the] Tokyo area, and we all flew [to] the same general areas. We had charter flights in different areas, where we'd go up to Korea and pick [up] Korean soldiers to fly them down to certain bases in Vietnam. We had this one daily run with the *Stars and Stripes*. They'd put personnel, or baggage, or cargo, or animals for medical testing, on the flight and seeing eye, not seeing eye, but, sniffing dogs and their handlers. ... We'd go, everyday, from (Yukota?), Japan, to (Kadena?) [Air Force Base], Okinawa, to Manila, to Cam Ranh Bay, and then, over to Bangkok. ... At Bangkok, the crew that took it down would go and rest for twenty-four hours and the crew that had been in rest for twenty-four hours would pick up the plane [and] go from there to Saigon, to Pleiku, to Da Nang, to Taipei, and back to Yukota.

KP: How much time did you actually spend in Vietnam on these flights? Did you simply land and take off?

WH: Yeah, and, in Pleiku, with the Communist lines very close all the time, very short. We usually would have all of the ... cargo right at the back of the cargo bay, where we could dump it right out, and the operations was on the west end of the field, on the north side, and the runway went east and west, and the Communists were out there, on the west, mainly, and we would always land to the west. ... As soon as we got on the ground, the engineer would get up out of his seat, have everything all set. He'd go back to the back door. As soon as he heard the brakes set, we'd pull into the operations area, ... he'd lower the aft stair, he'd run out, open the cargo door, throw the baggage and the papers out that belonged [there], close the cargo door. As soon as we saw the light go out on the stairs, we'd taxi out and take off to the east, as the engineer's running down to get back in his seat. We could do it in about three-and-a-half minutes on the ground. [laughter] Da Nang, and Saigon, Cam Rahn Bay, we were not in as much of a rush.

KP: Did you ever have hostile fire directed at your plane?

WH: Oh, yes, frequently.

KP: You finally got to see some combat, or at least you had people trying to harm you.

WH: Yeah. Going into Saigon, we frequently saw small arms fire. Going into Da Nang, we would frequently see rockets coming in over the airport, or in the approach area, from the mountains to the west of us.

KP: Did you have any close calls?

WH: Not for me. No, we never had any. Pan Am got hit by a rocket once, ... in the tail area, and ... World Airways got a few holes in the wings, or the tips, from small arms fire, and some of the other aircraft did, too, but, I never saw anything. ... I could see shells going up at times, but, [I] never got hit.

KP: Were you ever scared?

WH: No. [laughter]

KP: You were both in the military and a civilian during the Vietnam War. What did you think of the war at the time?

WH: ... I have always objected to the rules and [I felt] the same within Korea. Our fighters couldn't go beyond a certain line. They couldn't go into China and chase the fighters. ... If you're going to fight a war, let's fight it. Let's get it over with. Let's drop the A-bomb, if necessary. I can see no reason in letting them come back and fight again if you can knock them out of the air. I didn't think that the theory was very good on either of those wars.

KP: Your son served in the Navy during the Vietnam War.

WH: A short while, yeah.

KP: Did he serve in Vietnam?

WH: No. ... He went into Navy training, and then, he went into ... a submarine unit, but, the submarine was in dry-dock ... in Virginia, and they lived on a scow alongside it, and he had a little discipline problem, because ... he wanted to go out on the submarine. They went out on two training missions in a year, on another sub. They didn't even own [the ship], and the whole crew went out, and he ... had a few discipline problems and was asked to leave. [laughter]

KP: Why did you leave World Airways?

WH: ... Two things, I got fed up with Ed (Daley's?) personnel policies, the way he handled the airline, the way the people would tell you to do things on your own, and, if it didn't turn out right, "I never told you to do that." ... [Also], Japan Airlines needed some fully qualified 727 captains, at a lot more pay and a lot more respectability, and I was able to pass their line check and go right to them from World.

KP: During World War II, if someone had said to you, "Twenty years from now, you will be flying for Japan Airlines," what would you have said?

WH: No way would I want it. I got so used to flying where I wanted to go and how I wanted to go, and, to me, at that time, flying an airline was, ... you set your clock, and you take off from this airport at two minutes after the hour, and you go up, and you go to here, and you turn here, and you land there, and you do this day, after day, after day, the same thing, over and over again. I would not have believed it, but, it wasn't quite that way when I flew for Japan Airlines. We had varied routes, we went all over, and they treated you like a king and paid you like one, too.

KP: Given the hostility towards the Japanese during World War II, did working for the national air carrier of Japan strike you as strange?

WH: No, no. I got real friendly with one of the Japanese instructors. He and I, then, ... at first, were instructors of the 727 together. He was my age. He had flown Navy.

KP: In World War II?

WH: In ... World War II, and he had been a DC-2 pilot, and I was a DC-3 pilot. [laughter] So, we had a lot in common and ... he never did get into much combat. He was only, usually, service and ferrying people around.

KP: You could relate to that.

WH: Yeah, right, and one of our Japan Airlines pilots had actually bombed Hachiogi. He was on a bombing mission over Tokyo and it was ... overcast. He couldn't find it, so, his secondary target was Hachiogi, right near where we lived at (Yakota?). So, he had bombed Hachiogi. No, there wasn't any animosity. There were a few co-pilots who objected to the foreigners there, because they thought we were preventing them from upgrading to captain and keeping them from going, but, they couldn't handle it. They had a tremendous washout rate, co-pilots trying to upgrade to captain. They just didn't have the experience, and so, we actually were helping. We were instructing them.

KP: You were paving their way to a captaincy.

WH: Yeah, right, doing more good ... than they realized.

KP: Your brother had served in the Pacific and had almost been killed at Pearl Harbor. Did he win a little at your decision to work for Japan Airlines?

WH: No. He had mellowed on his feelings towards the Japanese quite a bit. In fact, after he retired, he worked for a travel agent and they were setting up McDonald Travel Agency, a major chain. ... He was in Dayton, Ohio, and he actually set up flights for some of the companies that he worked for, for business meetings and things, in Japan and in Hong Kong, and so, he was going back and forth, setting up all the arrangements for transportation, hotels, and accommodations. ...

KP: Did your brother ever visit you in Japan?

WH: No. We only got together when he and his wife took a vacation and came over and visited me. ... He was never there in the areas where I was at the time I was there and he was always so busy. He'd stop at one place, and get all his meetings, and hop on a plane, and go to another place. So, we did get together over there, on a vacation.

KP: What was it like to live in the Japanese society?

WH: It was difficult, but, I enjoyed it. I got along very well with most of the Japanese, even though I never became fluent in Japanese. All of the people I worked with at Japan Airlines had to speak English, and promotions ... for the cabin crew and for the cockpit depended on their ability to converse in English, and so, they wanted to practice their English all the time.

KP: That probably hindered you from learning Japanese.

WH: Yes, it did.

KP: When you started at Japan Airlines, Japan was doing well, but, it was still not the economic superpower it became by the early 1980s. Are you surprised by how well the Japanese economy has performed?

WH: I'm surprised, because, when I went over there, it was 360 yen to the dollar. Now, it's ninety. I was just back there in August, and the yen has increased almost four fold in value, and the prices have gone up, naturally, with their increased economy. A decent hotel in the Japanese market is three hundred-and-fifty, four hundred dollars a night, but, because I'm retired Air Force, I can go to the military hotel for fifty-two dollars a night, a first class hotel. [laughter] Yeah, the prices are outrageous there, now, when you have to convert dollars to yen.

KP: However, you have quite a different memory of Japan. You could probably buy anything that you wanted, within reason.

WH: Yeah, right. ... The dollar went down to three hundred yen to the dollar before I left, maybe even 280. I've forgotten exactly where it was, but, we were given a yen revaluation twice a year, ... based on the yen per dollar and our income. We were given this lump sum twice every six months to make up for the change in the value of the yen. So, there was no hardship at all and who would have thought of accepting a job in Japan by being paid in yen. The company that set up this insisted that it be paid in dollars.

KP: You would probably want it the other way now.

WH: [laughter] Yeah. I was not paid in yen.

KP: Many American observers have examined the Japanese methods of running a corporation. Since you worked for a Japanese company, how accurately do you think Americans have assessed the Japanese corporate culture?

WH: ... They don't understand it and it has changed. It's becoming more like the US all of the time. As I go back, I see these changes. When I was still there, two college graduates, one female, one male, could be hired by the same company [and] go into the same department. The woman would not be given as much to do as the man, but, she was in charge of making ... the tea, serving it, picking up the utensils, taking them back. She didn't have the time to do the work and she was not paid as much as the man. Another area, I think this is changing a little bit, too, you went into any office, if you can get in before the doors open, the bank, I did it in the garage where I had my car worked on regularly, at the start of work, they all gather, everybody, and the president of the company or the director of the office makes a little company speech, a pep talk to the people. They all sing the company theme song and, "Banzai," and then, they all go to work.

KP: Did you have similar gatherings at Japan Airlines?

WH: No. We didn't have it in the crews. The cabin crew did, yes. ...

KP: Your crew would have a similar gathering.

WH: The cockpit crew, we had nothing like that. Now, whether some of the Japanese captains did, [I don't know]. I never did see anything quite like that, but, I've seen some of the real high ranking pursers, the male pursers, [do it]. There were no women pursers at the time I started

flying with them. Now, there are women [of] equal rank with the male pursers, but, I've seen the male purser get up and give directions to his crew, before they got together with the captain, co-pilot, and engineer, and they were ... quite rough on the females, but, that is changing and is changed a lot now.

KP: You mentioned that your wife did not adapt well to your career in the military.

WH: Yeah. ... She got tied up in the club and the alcohol and it's unfortunate. ... She lost an awful lot in life, I'm afraid.

KP: Was this common among military wives or was she an exception?

WH: No, no. I would say probably half of the wives ... over drank and the kids didn't like it. They didn't like her smoking. ... I quit in '60, and the kids didn't like the smoke, and my wife would never quit.

KP: Smoking was a real part of the military culture. What prompted you to quit?

WH: Yeah. Two things, I'm Scotch and I figured out how much I was spending a year and what I could do with it. The other one was that, when I was over in Spain, I was working in the command post, where we had fifteen hour night shifts and nine hour day shifts, and I would go on a night shift with four full packs of cigarettes, maybe one open, and I was so dependent on them, I could see me ... going back on a crew and getting forced down in enemy territory. I would have risked my life to steal cigarettes, I know.

KP: You consciously thought this out.

WH: Yeah, yeah, and how could ... an intelligent being like me let anything control me? and I just threw them away. Sex, I don't mind controlling me, but, cigarettes, no. [laughter]

KP: You mentioned that you wish that you could still fly for Japan Airlines.

WH: Yeah. There's no reason to have an airline captain retire at sixty, universally. You're ... looked at by someone at least every two months throughout your whole career. You get a physical every six months. As long as the medical man, the doctor doing the examining, is conscientious, he knows if there's something going wrong. You're given simulator checks twice a year, where your knowledge of the systems has to be accurate and your reactions to indications in the cockpit have to be precise and instantaneously. If you're slipping at all, you're going to be found out. There's somebody riding with you on a flight at least every four months, five months, sometimes even more frequently. The Aviation Bureau, or the FAA in the United States, can get on any plane at any time, after take off, give the stewardess his card, and say, "I'd like to get to the cockpit," and they have to let him in, unless they have an emergency in progress, and there's no reason [to retire people early]. There are a lot of men who are too old to fly at forty. ... If a person can pass all these tests, if they want to change it from a physical every six months, make it every three months, if they think there's a chance, [then do that]. ... According to statistics that

have been compiled on pilots, the incapacitation of the pilot in the cockpit occurs more in the twenty-five to forty age group than it does in the forty and up age group. ... The younger people are so interested in getting to the top in the flying [game] and getting the big bucks and the big aircraft that if they find something wrong, they don't tell their flight surgeon, their regular doctor, they go anonymously to another doctor and get it checked out, whereas a person who's been a pilot any length of time is more conscious of his responsibility and tells the flight surgeon when he has some symptoms or something. ... Things are found out before they get to the point where ... a guy is incapacitated in the cockpit. So, why retire people at sixty ... if they still have all their wits, and have their physical ability, and they ... can retain the knowledge of the aircraft, pass all these written tests, the flight simulator, the physical checks? [There is] no reason to retire at sixty.

KP: You were probably sympathetic to Claude Pepper's efforts to strike down most of the mandatory retirement age regulations.

WH: Yeah. You cannot ... have any discrimination by age in the United States, but, the FAA says you have to retire as a ... scheduled airline pilot at sixty. So, there's two branches of the government that are diametrically opposed.

KP: I have been struck by how dangerous flying was during World War II. However, I have been equally awed by how safe flying has become, particularly airline travel. Do you have any other comments on airline safety?

WH: Yeah. The best statistics [are], in the United States, on any holiday weekend, more people are killed in automobiles on that one weekend than are killed in aircraft accidents in the world in a year.

KP: What do you think has been the driving force in making commercial air travel safer, the airlines themselves, agencies like the FAA, or technological improvements introduced by the manufacturers?

WH: I think it's a combination of all of them. I don't think there's any one that can take credit for it.

KP: Is there any aircraft, civilian or military, that you particularly liked or disliked to fly?

WH: Yeah. The B-52 G was a big piece of metal with enough power to force it through the air. It didn't feel like an aircraft. It had no ailerons. It uses spoilers, which decrease lift and produce drag. So, instead of ailerons going up and down to make you turn, out of the wing comes this big spoiler, comes up like this, and it adds drag and slows you down, but, it also forces that wing down.

KP: The B-52 stayed in our arsenal for a long time.

WH: It was old in ... 1962, when I went to it. [laughter] [In 2000, the B-52 is still our number one bomber!]

KP: I remember reading about B-52s in the early 1970s.

WH: Yeah, right. The most pleasurable one would be either the T-33, the single engine jet, same as the F-80, or the 727. The 727's a fighter plane. It's hot. It's fun to fly.

KP: Later in your military career and as you moved into commercial air travel, did you develop the feeling that flying was a lot more fun during World War II?

WH: Yeah, no regulations, do what you want. [laughter] It had its advantages, but, it also had it's disadvantages. We weren't concerned about the accidents or the people who got killed as much as we are today. ... "Get 'em trained and get 'em out in combat."

KP: Do you wish that your son, who was in the Navy, or any of your other children had made a career of the military? Are you disappointed that none of them did?

WH: No. As I said earlier, I always felt that it was better for them to pick something they liked to do. ... If they asked my advice, yeah, I'll tell them what I think, but, it is much more important to get something that you enjoy doing at less pay and be able to enjoy life for the rest of your career.

KP: At Rutgers, your chosen career path had been horticulture. You strayed into aviation, but, you ultimately returned to your interest in science through your involvement in Earthwatch. How did you initially get interested in Earthwatch?

WH: I saw a television article on one of my trips to the States, when I was still flying for Japan Airlines, on one of these Earthwatch expeditions, and I thought, "Now, this is a thing for me to do when I retire," and I'd forgotten the name, and I couldn't find it. It took me about four years before I found out who Earthwatch was and where they were and got started. ... So, seven years ago, in '87, ... [was] the first year I went on an Earthwatch expedition, and they ... have them in forty-three different countries this year, and [there are] a hundred-and-fifty different scientists that they're aiding. ... People like me pay all their own expenses to get there, plus, a payment to Earthwatch to do it, and you work like a slave, and you get a lot out of it, and meet very interesting people, and feel like you've accomplished something. You're aiding scientists in gathering data in ecology, conservation, [doing] basic research on species like the platypus, ... [which there is] very little known about, and yet, they think they're decreasing and might be endangered. ... They need to find out how they live, how they breed, when they breed, how long it takes before the egg is laid, how long it takes for the egg to hatch. They don't know any of this, so, they're trying to get data on it. ... The echidna, the other monotreme, ... they have a lot of information on that. It's not a nocturnal animal. It does do some work and walking around at night. It's mostly during the day and you can see 'em. They're slow. You can catch them. [laughter] They're on the land. So, they've learned a lot more about the echidna in the last ten years than they have on the platypus, and Earthwatch goes ... [to] over fifty different countries

this year, and [they cover] almost every scientific field you can think of, from agriculture to zoology. [I just finished my twenty-third expedition in September, 2000, with "Zebras in Kenya."]

KP: Do you garden?

WH: Well, as I say, I have two degrees in horticulture, and I don't do anything with it, but, I have beautiful yards everywhere I live.

KP: The whole reason this interview took place at this time is because you live quite a distance from Rutgers, in Rochester Hills, Michigan, but, you came to town to visit your current girlfriend.

WH: Yes.

KP: If you do not mind, could you reflect on how you know each other, since it goes back to Rutgers and the trailer park?

WH: Yeah. I started school in the Spring of '46 and lived in the Heights, in the trailer, married housing, and my friend and her husband, freshly married, came in in September of '46. They moved into the trailer next to us and we have been friends ever since. We have three children each, about the same ages, but, opposite sexes, and we talked of getting them all married and keep it all in the family. ... Orié's husband was an alcoholic. He was an engineer, had his own surveying company, ... a civil engineer, and my wife was an alcoholic, and we maintained contact and visited all throughout the years. ... Around, oh, [the] early '80s or late '70s, her husband and she got a divorce. My wife and I were separated, and she died in '83, and I was flying for Japan Airlines, and I got to see her a couple of times before my wife died, and then, when my wife died and she had her divorce, we became very close friends, and we've maintained a close friendship. So, I get to New Jersey maybe once every month, six weeks, and she ... comes out to Michigan and visits me ... at least once a month.

KP Do you ever reflect on how long you have known each other? Does it just seem natural?

WH: It just seems natural, right. We were always close friends, all four of us, and it's strange how things turn out. ...

KP: Was her husband also in the military?

WH: Yes. He was in the infantry and went through [on] the GI Bill. ... They were just married in the Summer of ... '47 and we were married in June of '46.

KP: Have you stayed in touch with anyone else from the University Heights group?

WH: Nobody else from University Heights, but, [I have] one good friend from the same class at Rutgers who was in soils, Jack Griggs. He and his cousin, Jean Griggs, lived out here along the canal. ... Jack and I have been friends and gotten together quite frequently through the years.

KP: When did you first begin to talk about the war? Did you not want to talk about it at first?

WH: No, because I didn't have any bad experiences in it. So, I have always talked about it and my brother, although he had many bad experiences, ... was quite able to talk about it. ... So, I learned more about the war in the Pacific from my brother than I did anywhere else.

KP: Did you think that you had one of the better assignments for getting through the war?

WH: Yeah.

KP: It sounds like your brother had a lot of close calls.

WH: He had ... many, many, yes, right. He was on many bombing missions in the Pacific, in the [B]-17, and had quite a few harrowing experiences, and he lived through it, fortunately.

KP: He also made the Air Force a career.

WH: Yes.

KP: Were you ever stationed near each other?

WH: Yeah. He was stationed at Wright-Paterson while I was stationed at Columbus, Ohio, and, when I first got there, we didn't have any planes yet, and I would go over to visit him, and I would go fly B-47s with my brother, fly co-pilot for my brother at Wright-Paterson, which my commander didn't think much of, and my brother's commander thought this was wonderful. He didn't have enough pilots.

KP: Of all of the Armed Forces, I get the sense that the Air Force was the least hierarchical. There was less of a distinction between officers and enlisted personnel in the Air Force than in the Army or the Navy.

WH: ... I only had one incident, in 1945 or '46. Before I was married, I was flying some of the troops, ... at the end of the war, from SAC down to the islands, and ... we had a staging base at Palm ... Beach, West Palm Beach, and I met a very nice female sergeant, and we talked a couple of times, and, one time, I invited her out to dinner. ... Of course, ... you had to wear a uniform all the time. So, we were walking downtown and went to go in this restaurant, and an MP came up and told the woman he wanted to talk to her, and I stood there, and he took off ... around the corner, and I saw another MP, and they took her, and put her in a car, and came back to me, and I said, "What happened?" and he says, "Well, she knows better than to associate with officers. You should know better, ... too, sir."

KP: Was that exceptional?

WH: No, that wasn't exceptional. That was the way things were in those days.

KP: Several Air Force veterans, particularly those that served overseas, have told me that the relationship between officers and enlisted personnel was often quite relaxed. Even though they were billeted separately, the enlisted men would often visit the officers in their quarters.

WH: I found that more after I went back in[to] SAC. ... I lived in a trailer park. When I first got recalled, we bought a new trailer [and] a new car, ... because I knew I was going to be stepping around to quite a few different bases in the interim. ... At Columbus, Ohio, [when] we first got there, there was no separate officers' or enlisted [quarters]. ... We were all mixed, and several of my best friends were enlisted personnel there, and so, my wife and I, and a sergeant, and an airman and his wife would get together for parties and things in the trailer park. Of course, we couldn't do it in the officers' club or the NCO club, but, you were a lot freer there, I think.

KP: Thank you. Is there anything that I forgot to ask?

WH: No. I think you've drained it. [laughter].

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

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 9/27/00

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 10/3/00

Reviewed by William Halliday 10/00