

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH ARMEN CHARLES TARJAN

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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Carmen Godwin: This begins an interview with Dr. Armen Charles Tarjan, Rutgers Class of 1944, on April 29, 1999 in Gainesville, Florida at the University of Florida. Since this is a lifetime interview, I'm going to start by asking you about your parents and when they immigrated to the United States.

Armen Tarjan: I'm of Armenian extraction and both my parents were born in the country of Turkey. I don't want to go deeply into the history of what happened there, but Armenians are Christians and the Turks are Moslems, well, inevitably, problems arose. My father came from one of the smaller towns in the center of Turkey, I think it was called 'Gurun'. My mother came from what was then Constantinople, which is now Istanbul.

If you're up on your history, you will know that there were massive persecutions and deportations against the Christians by the Turks happening under Sultan Abdul Hamid about 1890 or so. At that particular time, some of my father's relatives were killed, but others got the message and were able to make it to the Port of Constantinople, where they immigrated to the United States. "They" being my father, one brother and my grandfather, but another brother was killed. They immigrated to the United States and to Massachusetts. My mother, who was in Constantinople during all this knew nothing about the persecutions that were going on in the villages and smaller cities throughout the country. This can be compared to what recently went on in what was Yugoslavia. So my father got his start in business in Massachusetts and later went back to Turkey to get his bride--- my mother. They came over here about 1909 or so.

My father, at that time, was in a rather interesting business. He was an importer, but he was 'wiped out' in one disastrous undertaking. He imported a shipment of raw Filbert nuts that had to be processed by heat to prevent spoilage.. When the ship arrived in Boston, the longshoremen who loaded and unloaded the ships started a strike which lasted for three weeks. My father told me that the nuts rotted in the shell, and "wiped him out" as an importer. So then he went strictly into what he had been doing right along, the restaurant business, which he mostly successfully continued up to his retirement.

CG: So they met overseas, and then he came first.

AT: Yes, he came to America first and then returned to Turkey. I believe that their marriage was arranged – a common practice at that time.

CG: Were they sponsored by someone to help bring them over?

AT: At that time, the United States was accepting all sorts of immigrants, and there was no restrictions against anyone from Turkey. I assume, at that time as well. that the US government knew about the persecutions and were allowing these people to come in without any restrictions.

CG: Did either of them come with other family members?

AT: My mother's mother came accompanied by my mother's two sisters but I don't know exactly when they immigrated. My father's father, my grandfather, was also here but I never knew him

CG: What kind of work did your father and mother do? Were they in the restaurant business?

AT: My father was in the hotel restaurant business. He had a summer resort in the Catskill Mountains of New York, and he had a place up in New Hampshire. I'll never forget that one, because I was a little tot, and somehow, I don't know how it was, I must have tried to pick up a lobster, and the lobster clamped its claw on my finger --- I screamed 'bloody murder'! I'll never forget that and my father chopped the claw off trying to get my finger loose. Through all of that I was screaming, screaming, screaming. [laughter] That stuck in my mind. He also had a restaurant in Boston. As far as his restaurants go, they kept getting bigger and bigger,. Eventually, when he was approaching retirement, he rented a large cafeteria in Ocean Grove (N.J.) for a couple of years and ran that during the summertime. Apparently it was a very lucrative undertaking, because he could live the whole year alone from the money he made in just two-and-a-half to three months each summer. That was his final occupation.

CG: When he did the importing business, how was he able to do it?

AT: Carmen, I wish I could tell you. I just don't know. I wish I'd questioned him about that, but I never really got to my father to really question him about his early life. I'm sorry now!

CG: Your mother, did she help out with his business?

AT: Yes, my mother was an excellent pastry chef -- I don't know where she ever acquired that expertise. They had a small but very, very busy restaurant in Newark during World War II which was always filled, I mean, filled with people. ... There was a basement with ovens, and she used to work there with my father in that restaurant. I know he did quite well lucratively in that small restaurant. Of course, when he had the large cafeteria later on, he had cooks, chefs and bakers working for him.

CG: Was your mother also responsible for housework and things of that nature, and worked for his business as well?

AT: Yes, although we actually lived in East Orange, the business was in Newark, but the restaurant was not open for breakfast. It was only open for lunch. Yet it drew many customers and my father made enough from that for a comfortable living. I remember that we had very adequate home life. It was only for lunch that that restaurant was in operation. Noontime was when people would be there since in the morning and at night there was no activity.

CG: It was a lot different then, the City of Newark. It's a little disconcerting to see the city now and to see older pictures of it and what it was like then. It's not as nice as it used to be. How would you describe your mother and your father's dispositions? What were they like?

AT: Well, I'll tell you, my father didn't treat me with kid gloves. When I stepped out of line, he'd let me know about it. My mother was much more docile, disposition, fine. We had a good family life. I have no resentments whatsoever against my mother and father, and thank God I had the parents I did.

CG: You have one brother, right?

AT: I had one brother, yes.

CG: Older?

AT: He was older -- about six years older. He died of emphysema presumably due to heavy smoking of cigarettes.

CG: While you were growing up, were the two of you close?

AT: Yes, we were close.

CG: I also want to ask you about your mother. You said she made pastries and things. What type of food did you enjoy most? Did she bring dishes from overseas, ethnic dishes, or things that you simply liked?

AT: Oh, yes. We always had ethnic dishes. Well, my wife is of Syrian extraction, born here, of course, but we always had some ethnic dishes that you can find in American restaurants as well. Rice pilaf was one of the staples, but outside of that, we used to have Turkish dishes, too, because both my parents were from Turkey. One dish was called "Sultan's Delight". This was based upon a story about one of the sultan's concubines who was sentenced to be put to death. She said, "If I make you a dish that you will love, will you let me live?" ... Oh, I forgot the name of it but it was an eggplant dish. So the answer to your question, Carmen, is that we did have several ethnic dishes, but since my father was in the restaurant business, we ate the usual food.

CG: So you were born in Massachusetts. How long did your parents live near Cambridge?

AT: After I was born, about one year, we then moved to Miami, Florida.

CH: Do you know what took them to Miami?

AT: At that time, I was one year old, and my dad didn't take me into his confidence, so I don't know what he was doing down there but he was only down there for a year, and then we moved to New York City.

CG: To Manhattan?

AT: Yes

CG: Where did you live at that time?

AT: We lived in two places. They were both on Audubon Avenue in upper Manhattan, around 169<sup>th</sup> to 179<sup>th</sup> Street.

CG: You lived there until you were about thirteen or fourteen. What do you remember about New York during that time?

AT: Well, they are not all good. The area of the city in which we lived was an international section, and a boy had to belong to a gang to survive. I was a Boy Scout and when I had my Boy Scout uniform on and was walking down the street, if two boys were coming toward me on the same side of the street, I would cross over, or for sure they'd "jump" on me. It was a dog-eat-dog existence. As a matter-of-fact, it was so bad, I got my nose broken in a gang war. We were all throwing things, and what happened is a stone hit me right on my nose. At about the same time, my brother got into a fight at Peter Stuyvesant High School which he attended and was almost knifed!. My father said, "I've had it," --- "We're moving," and that we did --- down to Richmond, Virginia.

CG: I've read several books about New York during that time and how difficult it was having to belong to a certain group. Did your brother experience the same thing?

AT: Well, yes, he sure did. It was pretty much a 'rough-and-tumble' existence but we survived, but when I left New York, I had acquired a guttural New York accent! I'll never forget that! When we moved to Richmond, it was in many ways like coming out of the night into the daylight. The Southern accent initially was quite a problem for me. They couldn't understand me and I couldn't understand them!!!

CG: In New York, do you remember riding the subway to go to places? Did you go to Coney Island or anything like that?

AT: Oh, yes -- My Lord, what a question. You're reading my mind! Yes. we used to go to Coney Island It was great fun to go there. I also recall that whenever there was a political rally in Van Cortland Park, we could get free subway rides and free eats. Subway rides were only a nickel then.

CG: It's a dollar and fifty cents now.

AT: Did you say a dollar-fifty? It's a wonder I didn't fall off this chair! [laughter] Wow, a dollar fifty! It was nickel then and you could travel anywhere. We'd often go up to Van Cortland Park, whether it was for some guy running for mayor, or another political position. They'd be giving away free ice cream and other free food. This is probably how I kept out of trouble as a boy --- by going to political rallies!! Another of my favorite pastimes was going to the movies for the phenomenal price of ten cents! I'm not talking about the abbreviated movies of today! At that time many shorts would be shown, followed by two feature length films!!! Going to the movies was an all-day affair!!!

CG: When you say shorts, you'll have to explain to me what that means.

AT: Pathe News would show a newsreel and then there would be a short cartoon. Then another short about something else, maybe on fancy cooking, strange occupations, or almost anything. After that came the main feature, then more shorts and then the second major film. As a result, I

could go there at, believe it or not, eight o'clock in the morning, and then come out much later in the afternoon, even as late as four or five o'clock! I'd spend the whole day in there, but I was keeping out of trouble, and then too, my folks knew where I was, while both of them worked. At that time, we were living in an apartment in Manhattan on 179<sup>th</sup> Street. And sending me to the movies was the ideal way to keep me out of trouble. I wasn't one of a gang that went around marauding. The gangs we had then were gangs of boys, my age, which would stick together for occasional "battles" with the 179<sup>th</sup> Street Gang, or the 177<sup>th</sup> Street Gang. Each street had its own gang. They were nothing but boy's clubs, but they were called gangs.

CG: Did you have trouble if you walked into another neighborhood?

AT: Yes, possibly. You had to be very careful in New York City in those days. Many immigrants coming in --- you could expect anything to happen, but there wasn't any hard crime or anything out of the ordinary. No porno literature or movies, or anything like that. When a horse-drawn ice wagon came by, we'd all rush up and try to get a piece of ice, with the driver shouting, "Get away, get away" ..

CG: Do you remember any films that you saw that stuck in your mind or film stars that you liked at that time?

AT: Well, I remember Charlie Chaplin, and, sure, Ben Blue, was a favorite. There was Charley Chase and WC Fields, also.

CG: The news shorts, would they cover news in America or overseas?

AT: That, I can't remember. All I remember was the Pathe News format, with the cock crowing, and then the news would come on. I assume the news was worldwide.

CG: You said both your parents were working. Did they work in the same business at that time as well?

AT: No, my father at first ran a small restaurant open only for lunch and for workmen. I'll never forget that place! It was sort of a hole-in-the-wall establishment, but it would be filled with people at noon. I'll never forget, the thing that struck me, some men would come in and order two plates at the same time, two plates, such as a roast beef plate and then a chicken plate. I don't know why I remember that so vividly considering my tender age, but I'm referring to lunches that cost about twenty-five cents at that time.

CG: Well, this is also during the Depression as well. How did that time affect your family and their business? Did it affect them much?

AT: We weren't starving or anything like that. My father did quite well in the restaurant business, and, at least, we could always eat there. We weren't affluent by any means but we existed!.. I can still remember when they sold apples on the street and roasted chestnuts as well.. Then too, there always were the hot dog wagons roaming around from which you could get a nickel frankfurter with sauerkraut. That's firm in my memory.

CG: Do you remember your school in New York?

AT: Yes, the schools went by the name of PS followed by a number; PS 132 sticks in my mind. I remember Mr. Heep, H-E-E-P, who had a deep voice. He would scare the 'living hell' out of me with a booming, "What are you doing there?" However, it wasn't until I got to Richmond, Virginia that I have the most vivid memories of my high school teachers ... One was Miss Mayo Province. Mayo Province was a spinster, and she would always 'boom' out, if you did something wrong, "Great guns and little pistols, boy, don't you know .....". She would often use that phrase, "Great guns and little pistols," hence it stuck like glue in my mind. Then I recall, there were others, my band director, Mr. Sinclair. I was very, very 'gung-ho' about playing in the school marching band.

CG: Did this happen while you were in New York?

AT: No, not in New York but in Richmond, Virginia. I was not musical, when I was in New York. It wasn't until I got to Richmond that I joined the Boy Scouts, and then the Boy Scout Drum and Bugle Corps in which I played a snare drum.. Later when I was enrolled in Thomas Jefferson High School in Richmond, fate shaped my musical career!! At high school we had an hour of "study hall". At that time the band would march up and down playing outside on the street. ... I couldn't keep my foot from tapping with the drum beat, so the teacher twice sent me to the principal for creating a disturbance. The principal's name was something such as 'Mr. Shawn'. I remember him as a little man who finally said, "I'll tell you what I'm going to do with you. I'm going to send you around to see the band director" and he did. I told the band director what had happened and that I could play a drum, and what transpired was rather interesting. After my starting on the drum, he asked "Okay, would you like to play something else?" Well, I went around, I tried the bass horn, and some other instruments but eventually, I ended up on the director's favorite instrument, the baritone horn, which I played up to the age of 80.

CG: How did you learn to play the drums?

AT: It was in the Boys Scouts Drum and Bugle Corps, just by "hit the drum or get hit over the head," -- a saying similar to that that. Rather amusing!

CG: Did you have to supply your own drum ?

AT: Yes, I think so

CG: Was it difficult to afford?

AT: I can't remember. Well, the horn, no--- it was supplied by the school. You know, you may have a point, I can't remember buying a drum, but I can remember beating a drum in or living quarters with neighbors complaining. Now I don't think I owned a drum ever. It was all loaned material from the Boy Scouts or from the high school.

CG: Did you march in parades?

AT: Definitely. There used to be several parades in which the Boy Scouts would march. Afterwards, when I played in the Thomas Jefferson High School Band, the band would be in every parade.

CG: What do you remember learning from your Boy Scout experience?

AT: “On my honor, I’ll do my best to do my duty to God, my country, to obey the Scout laws, to help other people at all times,” I remember that. “A scout is,” what is it? “trustworthy, helpful, loyal, friendly, courteous, kind,” that’s what I remember from the Boy Scouts. I’ve been a Boy Scout, my son was a Boy Scout, I was a Scoutmaster. It’s a great organization.

CG: Do you think it was a good experience for what happened later in life, in your later experiences?

AT: Do I attribute anything to Boy Scouts? Well, I don’t go around kicking cats and knocking canes out from invalids. [laughter] Sure, I would say, and I don’t mean to be funny, really, it had an impact on me-- fair play and all of that-- sure.

CG: Coming from New York to the South, you said you had this accent, and it’s a different world coming to the South. What was your impression? How did you feel about moving to Virginia?

AT: Remember I said, “We came out of the night into the day,” and that’s the way it was. It was just a good, wholesome, clean world, which I couldn’t understand until I got used to the southern accent. I understand that when I moved up to New Jersey, I had a southern accent one could cut with a knife, one of those things!!

[tape paused]

CG: All right, we’re in Richmond. So you went to high school in Richmond.

AT: Right--- Thomas Jefferson High School.

CG: That’s when you were in the band. You also said you were in the orchestra.

AT: Yes, I was in the orchestra as well -- I played a trombone.

CG: How many different instruments did you play?

AT: Well, what I tried to play--- let’s put it that way. You know, you just brought up a memory I hadn’t considered. I played in a jazz band. I used to make money playing trombone in a swing band. This was when I was going to high school. We called our band the “Chromatics”. So I made a little money that way, about six dollars a night which at that time wasn’t all that bad.

CG: Did you play in clubs?

AT: We played at dances, sometimes high school dances. There were about five or six people in the band, drummer, clarinet, sax, trombone cornet, etc. I was really into music at that time.

CG: You would have loved it. Last week, the Rutgers Oral History Archives of World War II had sponsored a swing dance, and they had a nine-piece band. They invited students, because now students are into swing music, and they invited all the alumni, so they had alumni and students there. Everybody was dancing. So you played the trombone and the drums. What were the others?

AT: The only things I didn't ever get into were the reed instruments. I tried the cello for a while, but ... I knew I didn't have it as a cello player. I did go into classical guitar. This was after I was in Portugal for 3 months. While I was there in Portugal, I would be invited to dinners and afterwards, all the guests were expected to perform in some way. It was sort of odd, at least to me.

CG: What if you couldn't do anything?

AT: Well, that was about the extent of it. I got up and all I could do was sing, and I don't have any voice. Let's face facts, I had to do something instead of saying, "No, no, I can't participate." Which my wife was already saying. Then, when I got back to the United States, I decided, "That's it. I'm going to take guitar lessons," and I took three years of classical guitar training. The guitar is a beautiful instrument ... but I never got very good at playing it.

CG: Do you think you just had an ear for music?

AT: Well, my mother did. My father didn't. He had a deaf ear, as far as I'm concerned. My brother didn't. My mother played the violin and also took violin lessons. She also painted. She was quite artistic. We used to listen to the opera on Saturdays. So, I acquired my love for music from my mother. Then again, I wasn't all that great on the violin or on the cello. I just didn't have the ability, so I stuck to band instruments.

CG: Do you think you might have gotten your musical inclinations from your mother?

AT: I would think so. Where else?

CG: Did she ever go to the opera in New York?

AT: She used to listen to the opera faithfully, I know that, and she must have gone to performances when they lived in New York..

CG: Did you have a radio and television when you were growing up?

AT: We didn't have television. We had a radio that was, showing my age, an Atwater Kent Radio that is now out of existence. ... I remember, we used to turn it on to listen to, *The Shadow*. Have you ever heard of that one? Lamont Cranston and Margo Lane were the

characters. “Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men. The Shadow knows,” was the lead into the program. I recall *Fibber McGee and Molly* and *Uncle Don*. *Uncle Don* used to read the funnies over the radio every Sunday morning when I was a boy.

CG: Did your family ever sit around the radio and listen?

AT: Yes, they did. See what you are bringing out of me, Carmen, things I haven’t thought about in years. We did used to sit around the radio and listen intently.

CG: So it wasn’t just music. Were there soap opera programs?

AT: I believe there was no such thing as a soap opera. Radio productions to a great extent would be in sequels much like *The Shadow* or *Dick Tracy*, which wasn’t only in the comics but also on the radio. Had you ever heard of the picture sequel *The Perils of Pauline*? That used to be very popular. I can’t remember what the others were, but we used to listen to quite a few of these programs usually on Sunday nights.

CG: What year do you remember getting a television? Was that when you were older?

AT: Oh, I remember very well. My wife and I were living in Greenbelt, Maryland. I was at the University of Maryland, so that would put me about 1947. ... The star performer at that time was Jerry Lester. You don’t hear of him anymore. He was one of the early performers and there was Major Bolles’ Amateur Hour.. Oh, my Lord, where’s my memory? Jerry Lester used to have a big, beautiful blond called Dagmar, [Jennie Lewis?]. She would take the role of a dumb blond who was always laughing and joking with him. I’m estimating these shows to be dated somewhere around 1947 to 1948 or 1949..

CG: So you didn’t have a television until you were in graduate school.

AT: Yes that’s correct.

CG: Your family didn’t have one.

AT: My parents? --- no.

CG: In high school, you also played in sports.

AT: Yes, I was a B-team football player but I wasn’t very good. When I went to high school, my interests were strictly on band, girls and sports. ... At this time, my father was running a popular restaurant called “The Jefferson Coffee Shop”. The so-called “Performing Arts Center” there was called “The Mosque” Any good theatrical production would be at the Mosque. Many of the performers ordinarily would come down to the Jefferson Coffee Shop for meals, as did a regular clientele My brother helped my father with the restaurant which was never closed . ... My brother had a number of friends. One he introduced me to was John Boucher, who was a *Coca-Cola* salesman. In school, however, he had played lacrosse at Johns Hopkins University in Maryland, had been elected an all-American, and was regarded as a “lacrosse great”. Boucher had invented the “Long John Flip,” which was a maneuver that defensemen used to dislodge a

ball that the man they were guarding carried. Well, John Boucher gave me a lacrosse stick and a ball, showed me how to use it. He cautioned, "Practice continually." So I used to practice bouncing the 'India' rubber ball against a wall and became rather adept at it.

When my family moved to New Jersey, my high-school qualifications weren't good enough to get into Rutgers University. I had to go for a year to East Orange High School to raise my scholastic average, which I did. During that time, I heard about the Montclair Lacrosse Club which was part of the Montclair Athletic Club. I discovered they had a non-professional lacrosse team made up of former lacrosse "stars". Some of them would come down from New York, where they worked in offices, and from other areas just to play lacrosse every weekend with other similar teams. I went over to watch them practice and was impressed that these were athletes that had played for Army and Navy, Princeton, Yale and Harvard. I expressed my interest at helping out and was taken on as their water-boy. After a while when they saw I could handle a lacrosse stick and ball, I would "warm up" some of them tossing the ball back and forth.

Then came my big opportunity when the neighboring teams came down, every now and then, they would come down one man short, so who do you think took over, put on the uniform of the neighboring team? It was me! My friends on the Montclair team told me, "Okay, we're not gonna knock you off your feet. We're not going to give you a rough time. We'll take it easy on you". So, that's the way I really got into playing, really playing club lacrosse. So by the time I got to Rutgers University and went out for the freshman team, there was no problem at all. I made the first team immediately as a defenseman along with others who had played more lacrosse than me. Our freshman team we was undefeated; it was a good team!

CG: Before you decided to go to Rutgers, had you thought of attending music school?

AT: Oh, yes. Well, that was back when I was Richmond, VA. I was really into music wholeheartedly and what happened was I auditioned and applied for the Navy School of Music. I was accepted but my parents would not sign the release form since I was underage. They admonished me with "No, no, we don't want you to go into the Navy. We want you to go to college." So that settled that!!!

CG: Are you glad they made that decision for you, now looking back at it?

AT: I would have done the same thing, if I had been them. . It would have been interesting to be in the Navy. I would have become an accomplished musician, instead of the "derelict" I've become. Yes, it would have been interesting.

CG: East Orange is where you moved, when you moved to New Jersey.

AT: Yes, East Orange.

CG: Do you have any specific memories of what East Orange was like, at that time?

AT: Do you recall that I told you I had to go to East Orange High School for a year? I had buddies there we formed a group that did things together.. ... Incidentally, there used to be the West Orange Rugby Club, and we went over to watch them play. We were invited to join the club, which we did. I remember, after meeting and playing with them once or twice, the Club

went to New York to play, the Long Island Rugby Club. I'll never forget that. That was the first and last rugby game I ever played. It was cold, I remember that, and I getting kicked during the game, but it was interesting!

I recall the two fellows, I just to chum around with but can't remember their names now. We were a close group, three of us, and we called ourselves after a chemistry professor, the "Briscoe Boy's Club".

I used to go down to the YMCA in Orange (N.J.) to work out. Can you believe that while there I once played handball with someone who was once the heavyweight boxing champion of the world for a short time. It was Tony Galento from West Orange, New Jersey. ... I believe he beat Primo Carnera, from Italy for the title., then Max Baer beat Tony Galento. ... After Galento had been beaten, He had a bar and used to come to the Orange YMCA to work out and sweat since he was a heavy drinker.

CG: Did you date while you were in high school?

AT: Sure I sure did.

CG: What would you do if you went out on a date?

AT: Dangerous question!!! Well, I wasn't all that handsome of a guy where the gals would come running to me.

CG: I've seen your Rutgers pictures. Yes, you were.

AT. yeah, yeah, yeah!. I vaguely remember one gal named Ernestine, who I dated for a long time back in Richmond. She was a hairdresser's daughter. ... Then there was someone else named Anita. Outside of that, these were the only two earlier "loves" in my life. I didn't date many gals, but then at Rutgers, well, it was a bit different!

CG: Why did you choose Rutgers? Were there any other schools you were considering?

AT: Let's say I wasn't academically worthwhile enough to consider other schools. It was more like, "What school will take me?" After all, Rutgers was the state university and did have the agricultural program which I wanted

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

CG: Did you immediately start in the College of Agriculture?

AT: I did because the tuition costs was low. I was given a grant for ninety dollars a year was applied towards tuition. It wasn't all that expensive to go to Rutgers.. ... For my first year, my father, bless his soul, paid my expenses which weren't all that much then. When I went to Rutgers, I lived in a boarding house in the Hungarian district of New Brunswick.

CG: So you didn't live in The Towers originally?

AT: No, I lived in The Towers after living in the Hungarian district.

CG: What was that like?

AT: The Hungarian district?. I lived on the third floor, and my cellmate in the next room was Carl Schenholm, who became a good friend of mine and was strictly Swedish. Living up there was all right. We didn't eat there but in the mess hall at the college cafeteria. I don't remember too much about it.

CG: Where was the Hungarian district at that time? Was it near Douglas, or was it closer to College Avenue?

AT: No, no, no. It was the other way. You know the front of the university with the curve? If you keep on going down that street away from the river, then you'd run into the Hungarian district. So there's where I had a room my first year

For my second year, since I was in the College of Agriculture in "Dairy Manufacturers", I worked part time for the College of Agriculture and was allowed to join a rent-free living group at "The Towers", atop the Entomology Building.

I made the chocolate milk for the university on Saturday morning. As the hot chocolate milk trickled over the brine-filled cooling pipes, the smell would permeate the entire building and the professors would come down with their cups. As the milk ran over the brine pipes cooling it prior to being put in the refrigerator, the cup-bearers would position their cups under the brine pipes, and get chocolate milk to drink.

I majored in Dairy Manufacturers, and then my third year at Rutgers I changed my major, because the fellow who was the head dairyman there, had a father-son talk with me. He told me, "If you don't have any relatives in a dairy business which you can inherit in time, then get out. You'll never amount to anything. You'll always be working for someone else."

I took his advice and went into Plant Pathology. Why? Because for two years, I worked on a Dutch Elm Disease survey in New Jersey for the US Department of Agriculture which employed college youth as scouts. ... When we, during our surveillance, saw something that looked like Dutch elm disease, we'd climb the tree, snip off the suspicious branch, bring it down and later send it to the lab. They would try to culture the fungus, which had the scientific name of *Ceratocystus ulmi*. If the fungus was eventually detected, the suspect tree would be eradicated.

CG: How did you get involved with that? Was it to get extra money, or was it through the university?

AT: It was strictly extra money. I heard about it and went down and applied, and they hired me.. We worked in New Jersey and also in Connecticut

CG: So that spurred you to go into plant pathology.

AT: Yes even though there were undesirable aspects. From climbing the trees which often were covered with poison ivy, I quickly developed the nasty skin irritations.

CG: Do you think that being in a living group on another campus took away from your college experience at all, since you weren't on the main campus?

AT: No, not at all, because I regularly participated in sports on the main campus. During my freshman year I was involved with soccer, wrestling, and lacrosse. I could spend my time on the main campus, because I was living in the adjacent Hungarian district. Then as a sophomore, the only sport I continued was lacrosse during the entire spring season. ... I had to come down to the main campus for some of the classes, others were in the Agricultural college. Since I minored in music, so I had to go to the main campus. I remember Professor McKinney, God rest his soul --- and Soup Walter. I sang in the chorus for a while.. I had to walk, from the Ag College through the business district of New Brunswick. Every now and then, I'd take the bus.

CG: Now they have the whole bus system, which takes you to the different campuses. Did you do any research for the university while you were an undergraduate or just for the USDA?

AT: No, nothing for the USDA. What I previously described was strictly a summer job. The only research I may have done was for Dr. Pascal Pirone. He was one of the professors in plant pathology for whom I worked in my last year at Rutgers. He took me "under his wing", and I may have conducted some research for him, but only as a paid student assistant,

CG: Which professors do you think made an impact on you?

AT: Professors Pirone, Haenseler, and Davis all did. I was very lucky to have the guidance from those three gentlemen. There was a lady professor, also with the name of Davis. I don't remember much about her.

CG: What were some of your favorite classes? What did you take in music? Was music your minor?

AT: Yes, it was primarily music appreciation and history. I took courses in German but not Spanish, unfortunately. I enjoyed the German classes. I never did enjoy physics or math. I enjoyed science tremendously -- all of the science classes. As for agriculture, classes in mycology, plant pathology -- subjects like those were interesting.

CG: Do you have any memories of games that were important or things that happened while you were playing lacrosse?

AT: Yes! The freshman coach was Tom Kenneally, a very good coach. We had a championship team and were undefeated. The senior coach was Fred Fitch ---. quite a guy! I played midfield-- much running back and forth-- and though I wasn't a regular starter, I'd always play at least half of the game in the relief group.

I started some games, but primarily I was in the relief group. I remember playing Princeton and Yale but not as one of the principal participants. I did my share of bench warming!.

CG: You said you lived in The Towers on College Farm Road in your second year.

AT: Second and third years.

CG: Do you remember any of your roommates during that period?

AT: Sure I do -- 'Hilly' Flitcraft, who was a good Quaker from South Jersey and Joe Blight, who I recall died early in life. I remember my good friend Ralph Swenson, who still writes me. He's a produce grower in upstate New York. They were all a good bunch of guys.

CG: You didn't have the housemother like the fraternities.

AT: No, the thing was, I would have loved to join a fraternity, but money was tight, and I never did join any social fraternity.

CG: So you didn't consider it.

AT: I would have considered it, but I was already in "The Towers" living group. . I was invited to one fraternity that was very close to the gymnasium. They gave us a dinner, but seventy-five dollars to join was too much money at that time.

CG: I was reading that fraternities made the freshmen wear beanies. Did you have to do that?

AT: All Freshman, had to wear a beanie—and I did as well ....I recall that we freshmen had to go to Kirkpatrick Chapel for regular prayer sessions. It was mandatory! Rutgers College was founded on religion, so it was only logical that the practice continued.

CG: Do you remember any other things that they made you do, besides wearing the beanies, as a freshman?

AT: No, I don't.

CG: What did you think about the mandatory chapel? Did you ever try to sneak out of it?

AT: No, I never did. I used to go. It wasn't all that bad. It was short, and there was no preaching. It was conducted by one of the faculty. There would be a short prayer and maybe some announcements -- something like that.

CG: They also had mandatory ROTC, at that time. Was that for the agriculture school also?

AT: Yes, they did. As I previously mentioned I got into the basic ROTC, and then I decided to apply for advanced ROTC. That's the way it all started, the "Scarlet Rifles" crack military drill squad and then the Army Specialized Training Program, when we wore Army uniforms and had to stay on campus.

CG: What were the Scarlet Rifles? What would they do?

AT: The Scarlet Rifles was a military drill team. When you were in the ROTC, if you really wanted to work for it, you had to apply, and become proficient in handling a rifle. Then if you pass the mandatory weapon drill, you'd be taken in as a member of the Scarlet Rifles. ... As such you wore a special shoulder decoration on your uniform.

CG: So you participated in soccer and wrestling your first year.

AT: Soccer, wrestling and lacrosse.

CG: You mentioned that you weren't a member of a fraternity, but you did have an honorary fraternity?...

AT: Oh, that's Alpha Zeta, the honorary agricultural fraternity. It wasn't until graduate school that the other honorary fraternities came in to play, Phi Kappa Phi and Sigma Xi.

CG: What other kinds of clubs or things were you involved in while in college?

AT: Really not too much. I was involved in agricultural clubs.

CG: What would they do?

AT: Have meetings. You know, there wasn't enough time, because I was living off campus. I had to come across town at night for club meetings. It wasn't exactly a good idea. Then there was something else called studying during the other half of the day, so I wasn't involved in too many clubs, Then too, I had to work for the university, but I was in the Agricultural Club.

CG: Did you go to many dances?

AT: Absolutely!! I used to attend the dances and had several dates from NJC. ... I had a steady girlfriend, Eleanor, as well, who wasn't an NJC student. Eleanor and I went together for close to a year.

CG: Really? How did you meet her, if she didn't go to the university?

AT: That's a good question. I don't recall how I met her, but I remember her mother and that she lived in town, and that we went together for over a year. She couldn't have been very faithful because suddenly, one day, she told me she was going to get married. Goodbye Eleanor!!!

CG: Just out of the blue she told you that she was getting married.

AT: It came like a bolt out of the blue --- one of those things.

CG: You'd mentioned earlier that your parents helped finance your education your first year. What happened after that?

AT: The Army requested me to associate with them. That's what happened after that.

CG: I read that you received a scholarship from the agriculture school, but I didn't know if that helped finance all four years.

AT: It's very vague in my mind, Carmen, very vague. I'm trying to remember, how did I finance my second year? It had to be the Army, because I joined the ERC, the Enlisted Reserve Corps, and then I went into uniform. When was the war declared? 1941. Yes, that's it. The entire group of us in the ROTC went into uniform, and we lived across from the gym in houses there. That's what happened.

CG: That's still where the ROTC is now. There's a house right across from the gym.

AT: We had a regular Army sergeant as our barracks supervisor to make sure that we didn't "cut up" too badly. We moved to one of the dorms later on. It was the Army that took over and paid for my education after that. Then when I came back from the Orient, it was the GI Bill that paid for my last year and then paid for a good part of my graduate training, too. I've no complaints about the treatment I got from the Army.

CG: You were able to use your GI Bill then. Did that help you with housing? Sometimes veterans could get loans through the GI Bill.

AT: I think so. I know I did get a loan.

CG: Did you continued in band, while you were at Rutgers?

AT: No, I was just too busy. Maybe I went down and played once or twice, but I didn't continue. The problem was that I made money during the football games parking cars. I became a parking lot manager, telling others what to do, in my last year. I would be on the outside and accordingly never saw the start of a Rutgers game. I always came in afterwards

CG: So you missed the first half of the game.

AT: Not the first half. It was just the starting kickoff, and then we'd all walk in. , I never saw the end of the game, because I had to come out to help get the cars moving.

CG: What was your major?

AT: In agriculture --- plant pathology.

CG: Dean Metzger, do you remember any dealings with him?

AT: Dean Metzger, yes, sure I do -- nice man. Professor Helyar I knew very well, and I also remember Professor Selman Waksman who discovered streptomycin. He was one of my teachers.

CG: When you decided to go into the Advanced ROTC, why did you make that decision? Do you remember?

AT: It seemed quite natural --- with my once having been in the National Guard.

CG: I wanted to ask you about your applying for the Coast Guard immediately after Pearl Harbor.

AT: Well, I was never called, and apparently, they weren't going to call since they knew about my ROTC affiliation. Since they didn't call I applied for the Advanced ROTC and the Enlisted Reserve Corps, and I --presto!-- automatically was in the Army.

CG: The actual decision to go for the Coast Guard was after you'd heard Roosevelt on the radio.

AT: Yes, it was the second day after Roosevelt spoke that I decided to go to New York to enlist.

CG: You and a friend went there.?

AT: Yes, but I can't remember who it was that went there with me. Ted "something or the other". The president of our living group at The Towers was Chuck Benash. I'll always remember Chuck. He was quite a guy to look up to. He joined the Coast Guard but went down with his ship when it sunk

CG: Why the Coast Guard? Do you remember why you wanted the Coast Guard over the other services?

AT: Me? You're asking me a question I can't answer. Maybe I liked the Coast Guard song or for some other stupid reason. It was available, it was there, and I knew about it. I guess that's why. Something else I did that comes to mind as I stare into your beautiful eyes, I was an aircraft spotter. Did you know such things existed? I became a qualified aircraft spotter after taking a course. I had a regular tour of duty on the roof of our building. When we spotters saw a plane, we'd say something similar to, "One, biplane, high, (about so many feet)," which was piped thru to a central office. I can't remember too much about it, but, sure enough, I was an aircraft spotter, and I used to go up on the roof of The Towers to spot on regular tours of duty. I did that for a couple of months.

CG: Did you have a speaker?

AT: Yes, I was speaking into a microphone I believe, but I'm not sure..

CG: This was after the war?

AT: No, no, no. This was when the war first began. It was feared that the Japanese would threaten the West Coast, and that the Germans would threaten the East coast. We had just gotten into the war, and it was feared that enemy planes were going to come over and start bombing.

So, that's what we were doing, reporting airplane activity I had almost forgotten about this. This really is a thing of the past.

CG: Do you remember reading in the paper about the coming war? Did you foresee the war happening, before Pearl Harbor?

AT: If I did, it went over me like a wisp of smoke. I had enough to do thinking of my work at Rutgers and keeping my head above the academic waters. We'd heard about Hitler going into the Sudetenland and Czechoslovakia. At college, we knew what was going on, but we weren't very knowledgeable about the current news. Our studies took precedence.

...

CG: Do you remember where you were when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

AT: Yes, I know exactly where I was. When we heard about Pearl Harbor, I was in the agricultural group that lived in The Towers and worked part-time for the university. It was on a Sunday afternoon, about two o'clock and about five of us were around the one radio we had, listening to President Roosevelt talk about the infamy of Pearl Harbor. At that time, we didn't know about the extent of damage, or how many of the ships were sunk. We were quite shocked at what had happened. No one expected it.

CG: That's when you tried to go and enlist in the Coast Guard.

AT: yes.

CG: You said you applied for the Advanced ROTC. What did you have to do?

AT: It was decided according to one's past military training record. As I understand it, they reviewed your record, and if you had a good record, they'd let you in the Advanced ROTC. Several of us went into the Advanced ROTC. Others, having served their ROTC training, apparently didn't want anymore. I believe that's the way it was.

CG: Did you actually graduate before you started your training?

AT: Training in what?

CG: I think you said the first place you went was Fort Benning, Georgia. Did you finish college first and graduate, or did you go with the ROTC to Georgia?

AT: No, not quite. The facts are somewhat hard to piece together. Actually, it was in my second year at Rutgers that the war broke out, and I went into the Enlisted Reserve Corps, and then I was in the Scarlet Rifles within the ROTC, and I had already applied for the Advanced ROTC. ... I'm thinking back, it was 1940 that Roosevelt federalized the National Guard, and that's when I applied for a discharge since I had already been accepted for college. Okay, that's established! Then it was actually during my second year that I got into the Enlisted Reserve Corps, because we then were in the war -- I believe about 1941. Doing so allowed me to remain

in college, because I was theoretically in the army. We were uniformed soldiers, but in the Army Specialized Training Program which allowed us to remain at Rutgers.

We afterwards were transferred to Fort Dix for basic training, I remember now that the drill sergeant was really, really surprised how well we drilled as a unit. He was barking out commands -- "By the right flank, march. By the left flank, march," and we were executing the commands with precision. He never realized that we were a crack drill unit -- and we never told him!.

CG: Enlisted Reserve Corps and ASTP --- then what?.

AT...Then, those of us in the Signal Corps were sent for signal training at Camp Crowder, Missouri. ...

CG: What did you learn at the Signal School?

AT.. I was in the message center school which involved cryptographic devices, radio, wire communication, all of that. ... That training really became a handicap when later I became a paratrooper specializing in signal communications, because when I jumped I'd be loaded with a rifle, a gas mask, a roll of telephone wire and a radio on my back. I went down like a ton of lead. We had to carry that equipment down with us. So, Camp Crowder was where I went to Signal Corps Training School, and then after Camp Crowder, I was sent back to Fort Monmouth for Officer Candidate School.

CG: When were you at Fort Benning, Georgia?

AT: Fort Benning, Georgia was where I went to parachute school.

CG: Oh, that was after this?

AT: Yeah, afterwards.. Officer Candidate School was at Fort Monmouth, and then when I finished that and got my commission, I went on for more signal training, and eventually was assigned to a team of communications specialists in the Women's Army Corps. There were about six to eight of them that I was in charge of, as a message center unit, and we were supposed to be sent to some Pacific island.

CG: What were the responsibilities of the WACs that you worked with?

AT: They did all the wireless, the radio, worked cryptographic devices. As for me, I sat at a desk and shuffled papers, as far as I can remember. It was horribly boring ---I didn't do anything requiring exertion that I can remember. I was "fed up" with the assignment, and the only way to leave was to volunteer for the parachute troops which, at the moment, were experiencing numerous casualties in Europe. The parachute troops were accepting anyone from any service. A buddy of mine, Larry Tambollini from Pittsburgh, was in the same fix and he wanted 'out'. So we both volunteered for the paratrooper training and were quickly taken and sent to Fort Benning, Georgia for infantry training which we successfully passed. Then we went directly into parachute school, and that's when I said, "Thank God, I know beforehand what will happen". I

had heard how physically tough paratrooper training would be, so after some of us got through with our daily infantry training, we'd get out and run, run, run at night to toughen up our feet. It's lucky that we did because so many of the trainees that didn't do just that developed swollen feet and ankles. Our days of training were constantly jogging and doing pushups among other activities.. We were always doing push-ups! There were sergeants training us who would "bark" out -- "You're loafing, Lieutenant, give me twenty-five." --- and I would immediately drop down and do 25 push-ups. You couldn't talk back or argue, if you did, you were dropped out and sent back to the Infantry.. They were tough!!!

CG: What was your first impression, going back to the initial training that you had at Fort Dix? Did you do things that ROTC helped prepare you for?

AT: The ROTC taught me how to take orders and to move when they said to move. That's about it. It prepared me for the Army. Yes, the ROTC training was very beneficial.

CG: Was that initial training at Fort Dix, was that very grueling?

AT: At Fort Dix, no, not particularly! Well, it was only grueling, because we had this tall, lanky sergeant who was going to teach these college boys a thing or two about "close order drilling". He wasn't particularly bad and I rather liked him. It wasn't easy for us because we were ROTC. We had kitchen and latrine duty and other duties. Everyone did it -- no complaints.

CG: Did you have any friends there from Rutgers?

AT: Yes, the whole contingent with me. We went as a group from Rutgers.

CG: They didn't all go to the Signal Corps.

AT: No, most of them were in the infantry, and a contingent of us, maybe about twenty or so, were in the Signal Corps.

CG: How did you become involved in the Signal Corps?

AT: You've done it again. You've asked me a question I can't answer. Why did I choose the Signal Corps? Honestly, at this point, I don't know. There must have been some reason.

CG: What about the paratrooper school? Is that something that you'd been interested in before, you know --- jumping out of planes?

AT: No, not really, but at that particular point in life, I was enough of a daredevil, I'd try anything. Then too, I have to be honest about it ---- the parachute troopers were one way to get away from those women in the message center unit I had been assigned to as commanding officer.

CG: What was your impression of the WACs?

AT: I feel that the wrong answer will get me into “hot water” – well, here goes! They seem to be arguing much of the time and I felt that they were looking right through me. They couldn’t care less, whether I was there or not. I felt that I had no authority over them. How can you say “Be quiet” to a bunch of women? At the same time, my friend Larry Tambellini was going through the same ordeal. He didn’t like it either, so that’s why we volunteered for the parachute troops, along with the fact that paratroopers always had “glitter and shine” about them --- those shiny boots, and “He’s a paratrooper,” -- that type of thing. Young men are impressionable!

CG: What kind of training did you receive in the paratrooper school?

AT: In parachute school, Carmen, it was much like you’d think. We made mock jumps from a thirteen-foot height wearing suspenders that were attached to a line, just so when you came down, you get a jerk much like a chute opening in midair.. When you jump from a plane, it’s not unpleasant, but then when the chute opens, it’s, “Whap,” and it’s as if you were a puppet at the end of a cracked whip. You experience a ‘jerk’ and end up with “riser burns” caused by the parachute straps across your shoulders (and they do hurt!). After that, it’s just a pleasant sounding “swish” all the way down to the ground. Then, as I said before, the one formula I had that I know saved me from broken bones was --- I’d go completely limp just before I hit the ground. I’d try to be as an empty sack, and it worked! I would hit the ground and tumble all over, but I was never hurt, except for the time when I tried to come down like Errol Flynn, the actor, in a war movie.

CG: Well, tell me about that.

AT: There’s nothing to tell about it. It was just stupidity on my part, pure stupidity. I wanted to land on my feet, just once, and I never realized how fast I was falling. You live and learn ...

CG: Do you remember any other training, such as gas drills or anything like that?

AT: Our gas drills involved going into a chamber filled with tear gas, pull out our gas masks, put them on, and blow out any trapped gas.. So the whole point was the proper procedure for putting on the mask and staying in the chamber for five minutes or so. Admittedly we’d get some gas in our eyes, but at least we learned how to put on gas masks.

CG: What were your impressions of Georgia?

AT: I had a motorcycle, and we used to go to a college in Alabama. Several of us ‘troopers’ had motorcycles.

CG: Did you go on dates with the girls from the school?

AT: Actually, no, I can’t remember any dates with anyone that I had, but we’d go over and see the coeds there and let them know we were from Rutgers University, It was pleasant to socialize with them.

CG: Was this on weekend leaves?

AT: Oh, yes, during weekends. There was no activity on weekends, just “hanging around”.

CG: Did you play cards or things like that?

AT: Well, that’s a ‘horse of different color’. Yes, I played cards when I was ready to ship overseas. I was at Fort Ord, Calif. ready to go to the orient and join my outfit in the Philippines. They apparently lost my orders, so how did I spend my time? Do you think they have something for people like me to do? No way! So every night we played poker through the early morning, If I won and wanted to hang onto my winnings, I would have to get up early and go to the bank to deposit the money, or else the others would win it back from me the next day. I’d have to tell them, “Oh, no, I sent it to my wife. She really needed it,” that type of thing! ... It was just an agonizing period, waiting, waiting, waiting to ship off overseas. I finally received the orders and went off to the orient on the *General Omar Bundy*.

I remember the ship, and all the way over, what did we do? We played cards, blackjack poker!!!. We stopped at Okinawa. The Jap resistance was just about over and the remaining Japanese were holed up in the caves. I unexpectedly was taken off the ship since a Port Signal Officer was badly needed. I was the only trained signal person around, so the ‘honor’ fell on my shoulders. That’s what I did for three months during which time I’d write requests for transfer to the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division which then had left the Philippines where they had liberated the large prisoner of war camp and had moved into Japan which by that time had capitulated. As a result, I went then into the Army of Occupation. When I got my orders to rejoin the Eleventh Airborne Division, the division had moved into Sendai, which is in Northern Japan.

On the way up, I stopped in Tokyo for two days. While there, I felt the urge to get away from the army. Without approval, I did what might be considered dangerous at that time. I got on the subway, rode a while through various towns, and then got off at a small town. I could see no soldiers anywhere --- only Japanese. I walked off the train, and then almost immediately was surrounded by a bunch of little kids! I’ll never forget my astonishment!!!. I had some chewing gum and candy in my pocket so I doled it out to them, as best I could. The kids kept on shouting one word to me --- something such as “Dosedai”. Then, a couple of little ones took my hands and started to pull me in one direction. What harm can one suspect from small kids? . I went along with them and they took me down a couple of streets to a large gate that led up to a big building on a hill. I remember vividly that I could see the gateman in the ‘guardhouse’ looking out and using the phone. He called up to someone. As I stood there before the closed gate he then came out, opened the gate and waved me up to the big building. I was curious so I walked in and up to the large building. As I approached it, a little woman with white hair who had come out and was standing on the steps looking at me said in perfect English “Welcome, this is the women’s division of the University of Tokyo.”

I was really surprised at her speaking English and also finding myself at an educational institution. She continued, “Unfortunately, these are the holidays and all the students are gone, but please come in and I’ll show you around.” I thanked her. She said, “I was educated at Wellesley.” She must have been in her sixties or seventies. She was very kind. I immediately started to unlace my boots since in Japan one doesn’t go into a house with boots on, but she said something such as, “No, it’s all right for you to walk in the way you are,” to which I responded with something such as, “No, it would be discourteous for me to do so.” So I took my paratrooper boots off, and we walked inside. She showed me around for the better part of an

hour, and then afterwards I thanked her, put my boots back on, found my way back to the train station, and went back to Tokyo. That had been an interesting experience.

CG: Did you have any fears at all at that time?

AT: Well, I guess I was a little apprehensive since I was all alone. There wasn't another American around, but how can one be afraid of little children, a gateman and an old woman?

CG: You never knew what was up in that building before you got there.

AT: I didn't know what was in the building, except I knew it was a big, auspicious looking building. There wasn't anything to make me fearful, any ominous looking people looking at me, or anything like that

CG: The trip that you took to Okinawa on your way to the Philippines, what kind of ship was that?

AT: It was troopship.

CG: Was that your first time on the water?

AT: Yes, it was.

CG: Did you get seasick, or what was it like for you?

AT: No I didn't get seasick. I kept busy playing cards.

CG: Were you below deck?

AT: Yes, we were below deck, all right,. But even if it was a troopship, it wasn't too bad. Coming back home on the return trip, however, was miserable! We came back via the Aleutian Islands and the few times we were allowed on deck, it was cold and windy

CG: When you reached Okinawa, what was your impression?

At the countryside was flattened since the navy and the air force had bombarded and shelled that island extensively. ... The only thing that was left standing, despite being battered, was 'Shuri' Castle, which was the biggest castle on the island. Okinawa now has rebuilt, but at that time Naha was "flattened".

CG: You said originally on Okinawa you had to sleep in caves.

AT: Yes, because they didn't have tents for us. We slept in caves, in which the Japs also were hiding. We didn't sleep in the caves for too long a time. I remember picking up some coins I found in the caves ---old Japanese coins. We then got our tents up. These weren't small pup tents, but the larger kind. They were quite livable, about four people to a tent.

CG: Earlier you mentioned the rats that you saw.

AT: Yes, in the caves

CG: Rather large?

AT: They were large, all right.

CG: Were there any other animals like that on the island?

AT: I guess there must have been bats, but I didn't see them. One thing I remember, there were no dogs or cats. I never saw one, because the Japanese ate them. They probably would have eaten the rats, too, if they could catch them.

CG: What was your role as an officer?

AT: It is certainly vague. All I can remember is my thinking --- "This is a waste of time. I've got to get out of here." My role was being the chief signal communications person on the island and occasionally approving requisitions for communication materials, such as telephone or radio. Outside of that, I can't remember much more that I did over there. I don't feel that I did anything really constructive. I think they really wanted a Port Signal Officer in body only -- that's why I wanted to get away from there so badly.

CG: Did it disappoint you that your parachute unit moved into Japan and you were left behind on Okinawa?

AT: That they went on and left me behind? YES, it did, but I had no choice in the matter. The orders had been issued on me.

CG: At the time that you were in Okinawa, what was your rank?

AT: What was my rank? I was first a second lieutenant after which I received my first lieutenant's commission..

CG: When did that happen? Can you tell me about it?

AT: You might as well ask me when was the last time I ate a triple scoop ice cream soda!! Can't remember! I'm sorry, Carmen, all I know is that one of the senior officers came up to me and said, "Congratulations," and handed me a silver bar.

CG: Did you ever make any jumps after your earlier training?

AT: No, I never made any jumps in Japan. There was no place to jump.

CG: Tell me about what happened. Did you eventually join the unit that had left you originally? After you left Okinawa, where did you go?

AT: Well, after I left Okinawa, I went up to Tokyo and then up to Sendai. When I went up to Sendai, I joined the 511<sup>th</sup> Airborne Signal Company. A first lieutenant, named Maslin was the company commander, but he was around for only a short time. He got his orders to leave, and then I was appointed company commander at Camp Schimmelpennig in Sendai.

... It was cold!!! I'm remembering the outdoor latrines (toilets) in the snow.. They were made out of wood. We used to gripe about the way the Jap workers in the camp, in using the toilets would never sit but would squat with their feet on each side of the hole. Each time the resident soldiers wanted to use the toilets they would have to clean off the dirt and cinders.. My company was only at the camp a short time before we were sent North to Hokkaido..

CG: This was during the occupation?

AT: Yes.

CG: After Japan surrendered?

AT: Yes, after Japan surrendered. The people on Hokkaido were very apprehensive about the American invaders because Hokkaido really never had been hurt by the war.. I recall that very vividly! We were quite fortunate since instead of living in tents, we were stationed in the University of Hokkaido in a big building. I'm not sure what it was, but it must have been a dormitory of sorts. My job as company commander while there was to administer company business and protocol, nothing really constructive.

I remember Sergeant Fluornoy, the first sergeant, who telephoned me one day about 45 years after the war. It sounded weird when he called me, "Captain Tarjan" and said he had read my name in the army newspaper *Stars and Stripes*" and thought he'd call to say hello." Some other 'troopers' formerly in my company found out that I lived in Florida and I did hear from them as well.

Getting back to Hokkaido where we were stationed at the university, there is one interesting remembrance. We, the officers, were invited by the professors of the University to a tea. They spoke English, and we had an exchange of views. I thought it was very nice of them to do it, in view of the fact that we were the conquerors, so to speak. We acted like gentlemen, and they appreciated it, and we got along just fine.

We had Japanese working for us as laborers and houseboys that cleaned up, made beds, etc. for which they were paid. There was an officer's club in Sapporo

. I remember first coming into town and being puzzled. As I rode into Sapporo. I thought it was strange that as we rode down the snow-covered street, actually, I was looking down at the various shops, ALL SITUATED BELOW STREET LEVEL!! It didn't take me long to figure out that we were driving on about 4 feet of packed snow !! When the Spring came, the snow melted, and all shops returned to normal height. .

CG: Where did you travel in Japan?

AT: I traveled a moderate amount because I was in charge of the communications setup. I would work with some of the Japanese communications people. Whenever I visited a town, it was always the same routine. I'd meet with the communications person and the mayor would be there with his small contingent. They would meet me, there would be many bows and then they would present me with a bottle of Sake, which is Japanese wine, followed by many more bows. Afterwards, during one such visit, I remember being taken to the house of the Japanese communications representative I met with. As before, I took off my paratrooper boots before I walked in.. There was an open room with seats by the window. He asked me to sit down while all the time I'm curiously looking at these two women. They were kneeling with their heads on the floor. He said, "That's my wife and my daughter," Feeling weird, I bent down low staring in their direction and mumbled a "Glad to meet you." It was a strange introduction! After that, they got up, took seats at the other side of the room, and for the whole time I was there they stared at me. All the time I was talking to the man, I could feel their eyes---four eyes --- staring at me, relentlessly, because I was probably the only white person they had ever seen. An interesting experience!

CG: It sounds like they welcomed you.

AT: Yes, but Carmen, they had to. We were the victors in the War. The only real antagonism I detected was in Tokyo, where some of the younger people would look at us, say something, and then laugh. We knew we were being insulted, but what could we do, shoot them? "In their shoes", I probably would do the same thing. I had no problems with the Japanese. I respected their traditions. I was invited to tea ceremonies, and I thought the way they went around pursuing the business of life despite the surrender was rather interesting.

CG: Can you tell me about the tea ceremonies?

AT: All I remember was that I sat down cross-legged, and the ceremony was conducted in front of me. There were several people there who went through the ritual of making the tea.

CG: Were women making the tea?

AT: Women, all women, no men making the tea, and then the women served it. It was a powdered tea that they mix up with water using a fiber brush.

CG: I've seen it done in the movies.

AT: You know more about it than I do. [laughter] I can barely remember what went on. That, and then the fact is I can't remember any restaurants we went to. There were no restaurants that I can remember, but somewhere I ate *Sukiyaki* and other Japanese food.

CG: What did you think of Japanese food?

AT: Good, good!. I remember watching the laborers. They would always come to work with fish and rice in a little can and they would sit there eating. I saw how they got the rice in their mouths --- by lifting the can up to their lips and shoveling in the food. In China, they don't do it

that way. They just use their chopsticks, and lift the food to their mouths. Once when I was in China at a round dining table, I lifted the rice and ate it as I saw in Japan --- suddenly, I felt eyes on me. I quickly apologized, and said, "I thought that this is the correct way to eat rice," The reply was "We don't do it like that in China." C'est la vie!!!!.

CG: Where were you when the atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima? Do you remember when that happened and what your reaction was?

AT: Sorry, I can't remember where I was. .

CG: Did you know what it was? Could you fathom a bomb that could wipe out a city?

AT: Obviously, as a student with three years of college behind me, I knew what an atom was and I knew about fission and fissionable materials. It impressed me that there was such a bomb but what impressed me more was that it brought the war to an end. What depressed me was the havoc it caused in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and all the people that were killed with something of this nature that had never been known before. I was happy that it helped to stop the war, which it did very effectively.

CG: How long did you spend in Japan during occupation?

AT: All together in Okinawa and Japan --- about six months.

CG: I never did ask you what your impression of Tokyo was.

AT: A big city --- a very big city. There were a lot of people in it who, at that particular time, didn't stare at non-orientals. They seem to have accepted the American occupation. It made me wonder, at that time, how much the common Japanese liked the *samurai*, the ruling class, who got them into this mess. It's something to think about. But as for antagonism, acts of violence against us -- there weren't any that I recall.

Another earlier time I encountered Japs was on Okinawa where there were many of them quite dead! . They hadn't yet been gathered for burial. There were still living Japs holed up in the caves as well. They would come out at night and go into the camps, our camps, to steal food. Food was all that they wanted. Then too, we were not going to go in after them. I mean, there were no orders given for anyone to go after them. When I left Okinawa, they were still holed up in their caves.

CG: Even when you left?

AT: Yes, there were some there. They weren't the surrendering kind. They would either commit *harikari* (suicide) or just wait it out. A few surrendered after a while---they got so hungry, they had to. There also were so many of the native transients, whom we used to call "gooks". They were the native Okinawans who were being shifted out of Naha to the northern part of the island by the military command. Now, it seems like a very heartless thing to have done -- just as heartless as was our treatment of the Japanese living in the US during World War

It when they were put in camps. Looking back in retrospect, it was plain hysteria that made our government act that way.

CG: Do you mean with the Japanese-Americans?

AT: Yes, the American-Japanese. True, there might have been a few spies among them, but was that any reason to take all the Japanese families and put them in the camps?

CG: When did you receive your orders to return to the United States?

AT: It was on a rotation basis, Carmen. I knew when it was going to occur, and one of the other officers was selected as company commander. Orders were cut to make it official to return me to the States. I don't remember too much about it, but from where I was, I had to get back into Tokyo and go down to Yokohama. I can't remember the trip down, really can't, but I got to the ship in enough time. ... It was a pretty miserable voyage back, especially the rough trip through the Aleutian Islands.

CG: Was this a larger ship you were on, going back to the States?

AT: It was a large troopship, loaded with soldiers going home. The bad part was that all you could do was to lay in your bunk all day or get up and go into a very small 'recreation' room where there was very little space. Or, go up on deck where it was quite cold. But, it usually was cloudy and stormy, and all the time the ship was swaying back and forth. If you were seasick, you didn't feel like going anywhere. Fortunately, I didn't get seasick but it was a pretty miserable voyage back. When we sailed into Seattle, we were treated to milk, which we hadn't had for a long time, and cookies.

CG: So Seattle was where you returned.

AT: I returned to Seattle but was decommissioned from active service back East. ... There was no ceremony or anything grandiose --- I merely received my decommissioning orders, and a "Thank you for serving the United States" ..

CG: Had you taken up any bad habits like smoking or drinking in the service that you had to try to quit?

AT: When I came back, I couldn't drop this habit of whistling at girls. No, no -- I did have a bad habit, and I hate to tell a nice gal like you -- it was 'language'. I had to rid myself of the bad language continually used overseas. I'll admit that I got so used to hearing and using it continually. When I was at Camp Crowder, Missouri we had this corporal, I won't give his name, but he had the filthiest mouth I'd ever heard. He used to wake up our barrack in the morning spewing out his filthy language over the loudspeaker. By then, however, as a young high school kid in the National Guard I already had been indoctrinated tot filthy language. So overseas it became very easy to break into the habit of using four-letter words all the time to create impact, even though the bad language one is using has no actual meaning ... I really had

to guard my tongue when I came back to the US. I must have succeeded admirably because my wife never once had to reprimand me for my language.

CG: Where did you meet your wife?

AT: I met her in Newark close to my home. She was from West Virginia and had answered the need for workers to aid the war effort by volunteering to work in the General Electric plant in Bloomfield, New Jersey.

CG: Before your service?

AT: No. I was a paratrooper on leave from the army then. I met her at a dance and she was impressed by the "gallant paratrooper". I looked at her and remember thinking, "Boy, that's the prettiest gal I've ever seen." We started talking, and then I found out where she and her roommate lived, and I made it a point to take her out and to meet my parents as well. You ask, how did I find time to go to see her? Well, I was on a two-week leave. So that's the way it happened.

CG: When did you marry?

AT I went back to Fort Monmouth, about 30 or so miles away, .for extended training and on weekends, we would be together. Eventually we were married in the Catholic Church even though she was Catholic and I was Protestant. At that particular time, I was assigned to Fort Monmouth, N.J. enrolled in Division Signal Corps Officer's School to which I had been assigned for communications training between larger army units. After we were married I rented a small apartment near the fort. We spent our honeymoon in Asbury Park. Fortunately I had a motorcycle which served as our "wheels"..

CG: It was the boots and the motorcycle, right?

AT: I didn't have money for a car.

CG: Did she write to you a lot while you were overseas? Do you remember her writing and sending care packages and things like that?

AT: Oh, yes -- and how. Just a few care packages since I didn't want or need anything, but she used to write to me quite often..

CG: Did she keep any of your letters from that time?

AT: She has kept them, and I have kept hers' as well. Maybe you'd like to publish one of them (big smile!).

CG: So you had a small wedding. Did any of your family members come?

AT: We had a small wedding and afterwards my mother put on a big meal for my wife's mother (who had traveled up from West Virginia for the affair), my best man, the gal who stood for my wife, my brother and my father were there. Yes, we had a small wedding in the Catholic Church, and an enjoyable wedding dinner afterwards.

CG: You had your first child after you returned from the war.

AT: Yes

CG: What was it like to come back to the States after being away so long? Was it difficult?

AT: It obviously felt good, Carmen, and it didn't feel at all strange to be back home once again. Nonetheless, as I look back, it was an experience that I profited from. It was good to go through the army training which I rather enjoyed. Others, of course, hated it, but I never had much problem obeying commands, or even giving commands. It felt quite normal to me. I think, at one time, I considered staying in the parachute troops, but then felt, "That's stupid, why should I?" Instead, I stayed in the Army Reserve. I was assigned a company specializing in Electronic Warfare. This was in Winter Haven, Florida. I stayed in the Army Reserve for quite a while, eventually being assigned to Camp Detrick, Maryland for summer training in biological warfare. However, in order to go to Camp Detrick I had to leave the reserve unit to which I was assigned in Lakeland, Florida at the Army Reserve Center there. When I made that decision (which turned out to be a bad one), I inadvertently ruined my chances to receive an Army pension. You see, I had spent nineteen years altogether in the National Guard, the army, and the army reserve, and twenty years would have made me eligible for an army pension. When I left the army unit in Lakeland to get into the secret warfare stuff, it was not with an organized reserve unit and when I returned from summer training, there was no opening in a reserve unit into which I could fit! Accordingly, I couldn't finish the required 20 years for a retirement pension. But, I'm not "bad-mouthing" the Army Reserve. It has to use such tactics, or else there would be a whole bunch "hanging on" for a pension..

CG: What about the two years you spent in the other unit?

AT: One year, actually. I had nineteen years in all. It was only one year I had to make up to get a pension. It would have been a small pension, but at least it would have been something.

CG: The time at Camp Detrick didn't count?.

AT: They didn't count that because I was there as an observer.

CG: So your daughter was born before you went back to graduate school, right?

AT: My daughter was born in Maryland. She was born when I was in graduate school, and then my son three years after that.

CG: Did you always know that you were going to go to graduate school, or was that something that you decided after the war?

AT: Well, I thought the government treated me and others very well,. They gave us the GI Bill, and when I found out I had four years, a year for each of the years I'd served in the Army, I decided to go on to graduate school. ... Then by the time my GI Bill entitlement had ran out, then I was employed by the government, because I had sufficient training to work for them as an assistant nematologist in Beltsville, Maryland.

CG: Did your scouting work on Dutch elm disease have anything to do with that?

AT: The Dutch elm disease employment happened previous to this. .

CG: Why did you choose the University of Maryland? Do you remember?

AT: As I previously mentioned, I applied for admission to Cornell. I wanted to work under A J Riker, a famous tree expert. I was always interested in trees and had worked on the Dutch Elm Disease Survey as a disease scout, but Riker wasn't taking on any more graduate students, so I didn't go to Cornell. My advisors at Rutgers told me that I could apply for an fellowship at the University of Maryland. That if accepted I would be studying certain worms called "nematodes" under a world-famous scientist named Steiner at the Division of Nematology, USDA at Beltsville, Maryland. I "jumped" at that opportunity even though my two instructors at Rutgers didn't know much about nematodes. Actually, they didn't know anything about them!!

CG: Steiner ended up being an important figure in you life.

AT: Dr. Steiner, yes. He was a Swiss and spoke with a heavy German accent. He was a very kindly, elderly man, and his wife, Emma, was a small, pleasant lady. Dr. Steiner was a very positive influence on my life. Being in the Division of Nematology at that time was crucial in my scientific development. I knew all the famous names in nematology, all of whom are now dead. I was a student of Ben Chitwood who wrote one of the most comprehensive texts in nematology. No one has ever equaled his achievements.. I was his student when he gave a course at the Catholic University in Washington. Also, there was Jesse Christie who was another famous scientist.

CG: What type of research did you do while you were at University of Maryland?

AT: My first published paper was on a nematode disease of boxwood plants. These were ornamental shrubs that were infected with a certain kind of nematode. I also experimented on nematode diseases of African violets and snapdragons. What I accomplished was new information on controlling these diseases. There were so few people in nematology at that time that almost anything I 'stumbled' onto would be a new discovery. Dr. Chitwood and I shared an office together but I never was familiar enough with him to call him "Ben". Chitwood really was a very smart man --- even a genius. He proposed a new concept about certain very important nematodes which became the theme of my doctorate dissertation --- to prove him right or wrong!!! After discussing the project with my two major professors at Maryland, Carroll Cox and Walter Jeffers, I was told that I would have to prove experimentally what Chitwood had proposed. I did so by devising a method of using five different varieties of snapdragon and

infected with the five different types of nematodes that he said existed. I did so by proving the reaction of each of the five species on snapdragon was different, and that the growth response of each of the five snapdragons species to each of the species of nematodes also was different.. That was my doctorate dissertation.

. My Master's thesis, however, was financially supported by the Bartlett Tree Expert Company. It encompassed using a selenium compound on boxwood plants that were infected with nematodes.

CG: Are they included with your other publications?

AT: Yes, they both were published. I have about 217 publications among which some are good, some are 'not so good', some are mediocre, some are quite interesting.

CG: How does that make you feel to have achieved so much?

AT: Tired!!! No, not really. Writing was never my problem, because, Carmen, there was so much to do --- so much to do! So much that had to be shown to exist because almost no one had ever gone into these areas of research previously. I worked a lot with the nematode-trapping fungi. Nematodes are minute worms, and there's a group of fungi that trap and consume them. When I worked with them I was very fortunate to have personal access to the world authority on that group -- his name was Charles Drechsler. I not only studied under him as a special student but I took his course when he gave it on Saturday mornings at the University of Maryland. He allowed me to work in his laboratory at the Department of Agriculture. Years afterwards when I was at the University of Florida, I invited him down. He was with me for two weeks during which time we traveled around Florida collecting nematophagus fungi. Some time afterwards, I discovered a new species which I named after him (*Dactylella drechsleri*) So I was extremely fortunate in having a wealth of expertise always available to me. .

CG: It must be quite a discovery to find a new species that you actually named.

AT: It's somewhat difficult because you must study the organism thoroughly then painstakingly go through the scientific literature to make sure that it is as new as you think it is.

CG: So you have to do a lot of research before you actually say, "This is new?"

AT: Yes, quite a bit!. I'm presently working with a 'family' of nematodes that is inadequately described. No one seems to know what belongs in it. Some of the species descriptions date back to the 1700s. I'll try to make it more understandable so that people can work with it. It's interesting work , but taxonomy is a subject about which a famous zoologist named Huxley once said, "It puts you to sleep in the daytime and keeps you awake at night." Amen!!!!.

CG: That's a difficult subject.

AT: Yes, it is. You must be familiar with the rules of nomenclature as well. They are very strict rules --- the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature by which all zoologists must abide.

CG: I learned a bit about it in Human Evolution, but on a different scale.

AT: Did you!

CG: Were you a graduate assistant for the first professor that took you on?

AT: No. I was a graduate assistant for mycology, plant pathology and botany in the Botany Department at the University of Maryland. As a matter-of-fact, the nematological genius I earlier told you about, Ben Chitwood who wrote those important books --- well, his two children were at Maryland and were students in a class in which I assisted the professor. Daughter Marie resembled her father -- a deep thinker, morose and quite intellectual. Son Ed and his father never got along too well because Ed was --- normal! He eventually joined the Navy, much to his father's chagrin.

CG: Were you able to support your family in graduate school?

AT: Yes, because I was on an assistantship. ... Part of my support was from the postwar GI Bill of rights ... then too, I had a Bartlett Tree Co. fellowship. I also was a teaching assistant – but strictly an unpaid one!

CG: I was just curious if your wife had to take on a job at that time.

AT: No. When I was at Rutgers, my wife worked in the bookstore. When I was at Maryland, my wife was a substitute teacher. When we moved to Florida, my wife became a student and got her degree at the University of South Florida.

CG: What did she teach?

AT: Elementary

CG: Grade school?

AT: Yes, grade school ----nothing very ponderous.

CG: That's interesting. At the USDA in Beltsville, what type of work did you do there?

AT: I worked in a lab dealing with identification of nematodes from submitted samples.. These would come in from the field offices and the contained nematodes had to be identified. We were looking for pernicious nematodes, the ones that would cause plant diseases. Besides doing my nematode research work when I was there, in my last year, when my financial support stopped, he took me on as an assistant nematologist. I did much identification since by then I really could identify nematodes

CG: How long were you at the USDA?

AT: I spent four years there, because when I came to Maryland, I was advised, “You’ll do your research work at the USDA, in the Department of Nematology.” ... That’s when Dr. Steiner became my co-advisor, and I was given a desk in the research lab. ... He did this for several other students as well.

CG: What brought you to the University of Rhode Island? How did that job come about?

AT: I wrote many letters after I graduated. No one, I mean, no one wanted to hire a nematologist. Fortunately, however, my degree was in plant pathology, and Frank Howard at the University of Rhode Island wanted someone to work on the Dutch Elm Disease. So I went there presumably as a Dutch Elm Disease worker, but Howard later told me, “Charlie, I want to get you into nematology --- I think that is the coming thing.” So, I started to do some nematode work, and when the dean, who was an old Scotsman, heard about it, he “hit the ceiling”. He reminded me “You will spend your time on plant pathology, not on nematology.” Shortly afterwards, the federal Northeast Regional Project settled on Rhode Island as being the research center for the Northeast region. I had earlier been asked if I would consent to coordinate research activity and had agreed. Obviously Dean Campbell couldn’t refuse to let me work in nematology. The situation was thrust on him as experiment station director. About the same time, while I was at Rhode Island, I was awarded a nice grant from the Mallinckrodt Chemical Company which gave me \$30,000 , (similar to about \$70,000 today), to conduct research on a certain group of nematocides --- chemicals that kill plant nematodes. Our lab team eventually discovered an effective compound from which several patents resulted. I had two people with me, one was a Chinese named Paul Cheo, and the other an American named Ben Kantak. Another of my involvements was with the governmental Chemical Biological Coordination Center for which I ran pre-designated tests with newly synthesized chemicals. I also had a few students to look after at the time..

CG: Did the chemical company people seek you out?

AT: There really was no one else they could go to. At that time, very few institutions were involved with nematocide exploration.

CG: Did you also teach classes at this time?

AT:. Yes, I did. I had students studying nematology in my laboratory.

CG: So the majority of the work you did was research?

AT: I was really into research, and there were other people I worked with as well. There was Dr. Vance Yates with whom I cooperated to come up with a nematocide to rid poultry of their worms. Also Dr. Vlad Shutak, who was with The Department of Pomology (fruit production), I worked with him ridding apple trees of nematodes. So I had all these other involvements all this time I was doing turf research.

CG: What’s that?

AT: Research on turfgrass.. I not only worked on golf course fairways but I traveled to Newport, Rhode Island where I worked with some of the Portuguese ornamental growers; I had to take the ferry to get there. I also worked in Providence on diseased elm trees on the statehouse lawn. I really was busy!

CG: I guess it's because nematodes are in everything, but wasn't anyone doing that kind of work?

AT: No, there was no one. I was really the first nematode researcher in New England.

CG: How did that come about?

AT: Well, here in Florida, they discovered a very virulent nematode disease affecting citrus trees.. It was called the "Spreading Decline of Citrus". Two plant pathologists named Ross Suit and Ernie DuCharme at the Citrus Research and Education Center at Lake Alfred determined that nematodes were causing the disease, and that acres of citrus were infected. Well, immediately, the call went out for nematologists, but there were very few available. Then the head of the experiment station, Dr. Arthur Camp, found out about me. He traveled from Florida to Rhode Island, took me out to dinner, and then made a proposal. He first asked "What are you making here at Rhode Island University?" At that time, I was making \$5,200 annually but was on the verge of being promoted to an associate professorship. He said, "Okay, I'll tell you what, we'll give you \$6,200 if you come to Florida, and offer you a full professorship". I immediately knew that this was an offer I couldn't refuse." I asked for a day or two to decide. So when I told Frank Howard, the head of the department, he suggested that if he could get me an increase to \$5800, then would I stay?" I said, "Sure, Frank, I'll stay. I like Rhode Island." He went to Campbell, the dean, who adamantly refused." So that was it. I and the head of the department got along well --- he was interested in what I did, and I liked him. Even so, I left Rhode Island and came to Florida.

Well, I came down here, and was here for about four months, when Bill Simonton, who was assistant head of the Lake Alfred station, came in to see me. He said, "Charlie, I've got some good news and bad news." I said, "Okay, what's the bad news? Give me that first." He said, "Well, we can't give you your full professorship." He said that the Director of the Experiment Stations (named Beckenbach) wouldn't permit it because I hadn't been there long enough, and that Dr. Camp acted without authority. So I very naively said, "Well, okay, in that case, I'll probably earn it later." I didn't know how hard it was to get a professorship. Then I asked, "Well, what's the good news?" "The good news is we're raising your salary to 7,200 dollars." I said something like, "All right then, if I'm worth my salt, I'll earn it."

To make a long story short, I learned what the situation was and how difficult it was to get a professorship. Some people had been trying to get promoted for years and had been refused. So, about a year and a quarter after that, I approached Herman Reitz, the head of the station, and said --- "Herman, I'd like you to recommend me for a full professorship." He looked at me credulously! I said, "Here read this," --- it was the former Director's letter promising me a full professorship if I came to Florida. Herman looked up at me and said, "I'll put you in for promotion immediately." I got my full professorship in 1957! Funny, the way things happen, Carmen.

CG: At the Citrus Experiment Station, what did you find out?

AT: I did a tremendous amount of work and had a lot of money coming in for my research. Why? I was working with chemical control of nematodes in which several chemical companies were interested. I also did much work with nematophagous (nematode-trapping) fungi and with non-chemical methods of controlling nematodes. I developed an effective method of control that unfortunately came under a lot of ‘flak’, which is a story in itself. Well, I did much work with chemicals, and had adequate funds to spend on my research. I used chemical and non-chemical methods in trying to control nematodes.

At that time, there was a very large fertilizer firm close by in Lake Alfred. The manager of that firm, Paul Simmons, and I got to know each other at grower’s meetings. He felt that it wasn’t necessary to use chemicals to achieve nematode control and rejuvenation of infected trees. He was very forthcoming about this, very blunt about what he believed in. He felt that citrus nematode diseases could be managed by cultural methods.” I listened to him and he made a lot of sense, because I knew there had been bad effects on the trees from the chemicals I had been using. As a result, he and I got involved in some large experiments involving many acres of citrus trees. When the results were determined, they were quite interesting and proved statistically significant. I then wrote a manuscript for publication in a scientific journal. I had to get the director’s approval on it and was surprised to find him withholding his approval of the paper. For one thing, he didn’t like Paul Simmons name on the paper because he previously had disagreements with Paul. Secondly, what we were proposing was in direct opposition to what the US Department of Agriculture personnel working on the problem were proposing which was the “pull and treat” method of eradicating diseased trees and then fumigating the bare ground. We were claiming that diseased trees could be maintained, to which the USDA disagreed. Reitz said, “I’ll never put my okay on that paper!!!” I then said with a modicum of bravado, “We believe in what we did --- we spent enough time on it. Will you allow me to publish the paper?” He said, “You can do whatever you want to do with the paper, but without my approval”. I then published the manuscript in the *Soil and Crop Science Society Proceedings*. I was dropped from every committee that I had been appointed to at the experiment station, and for a very good while, I was a *persona non grata*!!! This all happened in 1958.

In 1959, Rachel Carson wrote a book called *Silent Spring*, which became an instant best seller. In this book, she vilified the use of chemical treatments. In short she was saying, “Silent spring means if you keep on using chemicals, we’re not going to have any healthy plants and people will suffer because of it. We must return to natural ways of pest control.” Well, when that happened, the Director of the Experiment Station at the university in Gainesville immediately put out a directive that, “Henceforth, there will be minor consideration given to chemical usage and major consideration given to living with the plants using more natural methods.” Immediately, from a pariah, my status rose, and then Herman Reitz, the Director of the Lake Alfred Station where I worked, gave me a long-delayed smile and said to me, “Well, this is the way we have to go, so I accept it. This is the way we’ll do it now --- go ahead with your work.” This was exactly the unforgettable way it turned out!!!!

CG: What a difficult situation to be put in.

AT: Well, it was, it was --- and Paul Simmons, the fertilizer plant manager, was vindicated at the same time.

CG: How long was the period of time before *Silent Spring* came out from the time that you published your work, your article?

AT: Oh, I was a pariah for about a year, maybe a year and a half. I went ahead and did my experimental work without Reitz's approval. But, I wasn't going to destroy the large amount of research we did, and it was good work. It was not disproved in following years, but it was in contrast to what the federal government was trying to do.

CG: While you were working at the experiment station, were you also teaching at the university, or were you just doing the research at that time?

AT: The teaching came afterwards. What happened was that the only other nematologist up at three main campus who was teaching was promoted to Assistant Dean. They needed help for teaching taxonomy, and also other courses. These were "Nematodes of the World Crops", a speech course in how to orally present a scientific research paper, and also a course in marine nematology, as well. I used to travel to Gainesville and teach these courses, but they were robbing me of time I wanted to spend on research. I had to drive up, spend the night here, teach the next day, drive back to Lake Alfred in the evening and then try to catch up on the research work I had to do. I was then asked to consider moving to Gainesville. Although my moving expenses would be paid, there wouldn't be an increase in salary or anything else --- it was just a shift in position to Gainesville. I agreed and in 1978, I and my family made the move and have been here ever since. I then went into intensive teaching and research work and had students under me who were doing their research work.

CG: How difficult was it to balance teaching and your continuation of research and writing and publishing?

AT: Not bad. Others do it all the time, and it was easily done and I'm glad I came. I learned a lot, and it's always good working with students. .

CG: It must be rewarding to see them go on and do other things.

AT: Carmen, I've had many students but I'll never forget some I've had, Iraqis and South Americans ... I still remember them, and they probably remember me, much like the Iraqi who said, "Dr. Tarjan, I will never forget you," that kind of emotional thing. Now I think he may be selling rugs. I had a good life. I have no regrets.

CG: Do you have any students in particular that went on in the same field to accomplish things that you are particularly proud of?

AT: One of my students at the University of Rhode Island was Bruce Hopper. He went on to become one of the world's leading marine nematologists. When I left the University of Rhode Island, he finished his degree there, and then he went to Alabama Polytechnic Institute doing field work, I believe. I'm not sure how he got into the subject of marine nematodes. He then became the marine nematologist in the University of Miami's marine program. There were several intervening years, because he was my earliest student, when I was a young professor. He

afterwards became famous publishing descriptions of marine nematodes. I went down to Miami to study with him for a two-week period. Afterwards I returned to Lake Alfred, got into marine nematology myself, and I published a student manual on marine nematology in 1960.

CG: This is quite a volume, and it says *Marine Nematodes*. Tell me about the articles you've published.

AT: I haven't written any books on marine nematology. I've written chapters in books, but all of my publications are research articles. Some of them are long and quite technical and can be considered as major articles. Others are only a few pages in length. This one is a newly-completed twenty-seven-page long article that is a research pamphlet. It was only this morning that the head of our department suggested it be put on the Internet where it would be accessible to others.

CG: That's great. You'll have to let me know where the webpage is. Some people who write find it enjoyable. Others find it extremely tedious or difficult. How do you feel about writing?

AT: Extremely tedious for the first line! After the first line, the words usually flow out since I know in which "direction I'm headed". I have the necessary thoughts and data in mind --- it then becomes pure work. No, writing never was a deterrent to me. Sometimes I even enjoyed doing it.

CG: After you left the Citrus Experiment Station, is that when you started on marine nematodes?

AT: No. Although the marine nematode book was published in 1980, work on it was started much earlier while I was still at the Citrus Experiment Station.

CG: You were telling me that you had some other books published.

AT: ... Yes, I have. I showed you one of the books, and there are two others. If you wish to call this large spiral-bound laboratory manual a book, then there is one more.

CG: The one that you published with your student who went to Miami was on soil nematodes?

AT: No, not really! It was a systematic nomenclatorial work. It presented a history of each of the species of nematodes as we know them, going back to the time the species was first described. It presents every change the species name has undergone... What you examined was a new edition published with the co-editorship of one of my former students.. At the time the first version was published, I remember the arguments that I got into with some of the Californians who were unsympathetic to the Florida group of nematologists. I vividly recall some of their statements such as "I don't know who'll ever use it. I don't know what good it is," There was an ongoing rivalry between the East and the West concerning nematology. The first copy of my book came out in 1960. Then a larger revised copy was published with the former student and I coauthoring. After that, I put out yet another copy presenting new information coming out after the last copy was published.

CG: Was the supplement put out because of the arguments back and forth, in order to settle that East-West rivalries?

AT: Oh, no. The supplement mainly presented changes that had occurred during the following two years. When I decided not to continue with more supplements, another nematologist from France expressed the desire to continue the work. His name is Renaud Fortuner. He managed to get it on the internet. He was located in California, but his job there terminated and he returned to France where he has remained.

CG: When did you start your interest in marine nematology?

AT: I started my interest in marine nematodes, when I found out that my former student had evolved into a known marine nematologist, and he was located in Miami. I've retained my interest in the subject and gave a course last year on the subject. One of our graduate students who took the course was from Poland. Her name was Dorota Porazinska. She's now at a very good research laboratory in Colorado. Dorota was always an excellent student interested in all phases of biology. I recall that one day in class after some intensive microscopic work, she looked up at me -- her eyes wide open -- and said, "Dr. Tarjan, I never imagined marine nematodes would be this fascinating". This was because marine nematodes have so many more body embellishments than other nematodes.

CG: How do they differ?

AT: Oh, in so many ways. If one looks at a plain person with no personality or good looks--- very unlike you --- and then looks at someone who's ravishingly beautiful-- like you -- there's a mountain of difference between the two. In all seriousness, marine nematodes have a number of appendages on them that are so amazing. They have various types of head structures which we call 'antennae'. They have teeth and mandibles in their mouths. They have interesting esophagi, internal parts, sexual parts (the males particularly). The females are somewhat "ho hum" among the marine nematodes, and among other nematodes in general. It's the males that show most of the appendages, and ornamentation on their bodies. This is only for the marine nematodes, not so for the plant and soil nematodes that are quite plain when compared to the marine nematodes.

CG: Are they of different sizes?

AT: Decidedly, they're usually bigger, much bigger, but they can be very small.. They occur at the bottom of the ocean or float near the top. They are on marine plants and they can be fish parasites.

CG: So you find them in the oceans, but do you find them in lakes?

AT: You do find them in freshwater lakes. Nematodes are ubiquitous --- they are everywhere. Marine nematodes also are just as easy to find. But keep in mind that are not single-celled 'protozoans' but many-celled 'metazoans'. They have digestive and sexual systems. They can sustain themselves. Some females are capable of producing offspring without male sperm

CG: When you moved to Florida, did you leave your brother and your parents in New Jersey?

AT: Not quite! When I moved to Florida, I moved to Florida from Rhode Island --- to Rhode Island from Maryland --- to Maryland from New Jersey. Even when I was in New Jersey, I wasn't living with my parents since I was in New Brunswick.

CG: But you were still a longer distance away from them.

AT: Exactly.

CG: What about your brother?

AT: My brother died in 1960 at the age of forty-six from a respiratory ailment. I was in Florida at that time.

CG: Your parents stayed on in Montclair?

AT: Yes, my parents remained in Montclair. My father died in 1968, my mother in 1985.

CG: So she outlived him quite a while. You told me about some of the organizations you are involved in, but we didn't get it on tape.

AT: I believe I told you about my joining Toastmasters based on my inability to speak up. I didn't feel comfortable when speaking in front of people, but now I have no problem at all. As I previously mentioned, I taught a class in how to give a scientific talk and still maintain the interest of the audience.

CG: So the Toastmasters helped you improve your public speaking to a point where you could even teach other people how to do it.

AT: Exactly -- on how to give a speech. Primarily, what I did for improvement was to concentrate on how to tell a funny story or joke. Something which previously I was unable to really do. Now I have several of them on the tip of my tongue but I didn't "spring" any on you, did I?

CG: You did a few. Maybe they weren't intentional.

AT: They weren't intentional, I guarantee you.

CG: Another subject you mentioned was tropical nematology.

AT: Oh yes, the *Organizacion de Nematologos de los Tropiclos Americanos*. Originally, it was called OTAN, the Organization of Tropical American Nematologists and is a group of which I am one of the founders. We first met in a hotel room in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where its

formation was discussed. There were two Americans involved, and all the rest were from different places in the Western Hemisphere. The organization is still quite strong.

We also have another group that's been in existence since 1961. It's the Florida Nematology Forum to which all of the nematologists in Florida belong. Once a year we meet for a scientific session followed by dinner. I held the first meeting in 1961, when I was at the Lake Alfred Experiment Station..

CG: So you would say there were probably less than ten people when you first began the OTAN organization.

AT: My recollection is we decided to start it with that few members, then when others learned about it, they quickly joined and spread the word

CG: How many members are there now?

AT: Oh, probably a couple of hundred.

CG: Really?

AT: They've joined from Africa, Europe and even the Near East. There are nematologists in China that know about this organization, because when you are in Southern China, around Guangzhou, it gets very hot there. Accordingly, their nematode problems are similar to the tropical area problems ... Then I'm sure there's some Vietnamese and others that now belong to the organization.

CG: Were there any other organizations that you've been a part of? Have you been a part of any veteran's organizations?

AT: I am a member of the Astronomy Club that was started in 1986; that's been a thriving organization. I've been in the Gainesville Band, and now am in the "Santa Fe Brass". I'm also a computer "bug" having been a member of one of the first computer organization that started in Gainesville. It was started back about the time the first PC came out and I belonged to one or the other computer clubs ever since. Also, I'm treasurer of the Alachua Memorial Society which is a burial society dealing with pre- and after-death considerations.

CG: Your wife, through the years, did she continue teaching grade school?

AT: No. She's been strictly a good housewife, but she is very, very much charismatic. She has worked for the hospital auxiliary. She belongs to a women's Aglow International group --- something like that. It's a religious group which gets together for meetings, and she works with the church she belongs to, helping out with the secretarial work.

CG: You mentioned that she was involved with the library.

AT: We both help out at the annual book sale--- something we both enjoy. Beyond that and similar altruistic activities, we work out three times a week at the university gymnasium..

CG: What, do both of you go to the gym.?

AT: Both of us! There is a workout center for faculty and staff called the Living Well Center. It costs \$240 a year per person, and we both belong. It's one of the ways of TRYING to stay young, the sound of creaking bones notwithstanding!!!!.

CG: It sounds like you're both pretty active in church as well.

AT: I am not. I don't believe you asked about my church.

CG: You were Protestant, but I'm not sure what after you married.

AT: Well, I am a believing Christian, believing very much in the Holy Trinity, but I don't belong to any church. I have participated in and supported the (silent) Quaker Fellowship, and I liked it because it gave me a chance to pray, to read the Bible and to really meditate for one solid hour. I also go to the nearby Baptist Church and quite often to the Lutheran Church whose music I enjoy. I also occasionally take in the Methodist Church whose preacher is one of the best I've ever heard. What am I -- a religious wanderer????

CG: Is your wife Catholic?

AT: No. but at one time my whole family was Catholic, and they all left the Catholic Church for charismatic churches. My daughter is quite active in a very modernistic Presbyterian Church in Las Vegas. She has home-schooled her children and they both seem quite smart. I don't really agree with home-schooling since I feel they'd be better off among others in public schools. But I could be quite wrong -- and her kids are smart!

CG: It doesn't sound like you're picky about religion, as long as the basis of belief is the same.

AT: Perhaps my views on religion can best be described by the story of a beautiful garden inhabited by holy men of many faiths.. In one corner the Rabbi recites from the Torah as he bows his head, in another corner the Franciscan monk chants his prayers as he fingers his beads, a short ways from there kneeling on a prayer rug the Muslim Mullah reverently prays to Allah, while the Catholic priest quietly chants from his bible as he crosses himself, nearby the Buddhist peacefully sits with shaven head bowed and all are watched by the Hindu who accepts all religions within Hinduism ----- AND THE ONE GREAT GOD looks down and smiles, because each one is reaching him in the way that they know !!!!!

CG: Tell me a little bit about your children and what they do.

AT: Susan, now age 53, was a bird trainer at first. She broke into the Busch Gardens group of male employees as a bird trainer even though she's small. She was attending the University of South Florida, and eventually received a Master's degree in Gerontology (problems of the aged), but she never pursued it. At Busch Gardens she would put the birds through their routines in front of the seated audience. Later she trained baby elephants and seals. She eventually married

one of the publicity agents for Busch Gardens, Victor Donovan. They now live in Las Vegas and both have responsible jobs,

CG: How many children does she have?

AT: Two, Maren and John. Maren is now seventeen, and John is thirteen. Victor, the father, has been “around”. He’s worked for the *Queen Mary*, which now is docked in Los Angeles. He was a press agent for other organizations. He has always been involved with publicity work and is very good at it. .

CG: What about your son?

AT: That bum??? No, no, no --- just kidding!!! My son Alan is still unmarried at the age of 52. ... He has about 18 years experience working for IBM. In college he was awarded a degree in zoology and was quite unhappy trying to make a living as a teacher in grade school. When I moved up here from Lake Alfred, he also left Winter Haven, came up here to Gainesville, enrolled in computer science. did extremely well in it, and as a result, got a job with IBM as I previously mentioned.. So -- he’s still a computer hack, and a very experienced one!

CG: You’d mentioned different countries you had lived and traveled to. Can you tell me why you went to those countries and what different countries you’ve been to and your experiences there?

AT: The first country I went to was Puerto Rico, and that was because my former mentor, Dr. Gotthold Steiner, was spending his retirement down there. I had a very, very strong feeling to go and I’m glad that I did --- he died two years afterwards. When I went to visit him, I learned the full story of his life that I submitted for publication in an appropriate scientific publication after he died. He was a Swiss and how he got over here to America makes interesting reading – but for another time. In the 70’s, I got a position with the Food and Agriculture Organization, of the United Nations. I was indoctrinated in Italy and then sent to Egypt where I spent six months. After that, my wife and I did some visiting in Lebanon and Syria. My wife then returned home while I went on to Bulgaria, Italy, Hungary, Germany, Belgium, and France. By that time I was fairly tired. I didn’t know it then, but I had ‘picked up’ an infection by *Ascaris* nematodes in Egypt. When I finally got home, I had no appetite, was tired and listless! Suspecting stomach worms, I did my own analysis, being a nematologist by training. I found that I had two internal parasites, both of which I put on a microscope slide. Then I went to a MD and told him that, “I would like you to write me a prescription for piperazine hydrate. These are the parasites I have.” He looked at me with wide eyes then I told him, “I’m a nematologist.” Right away, he wrote the prescription, I got the piperazine hydrate, and cured myself in about a week or two.

CG: Were you infected because you were studying them?

AT: No, I was infected because I unknowingly ate them. Nematodes are in the water and in the food. What can one do? The Egyptians themselves are extremely kind people. If you refuse to eat their food, it’s much like insulting them. People overseas were extremely kind, they really are, and I never had any trouble. The only place I had a problem was on the Eastern border of

Portugal. I was over there in a place called Elvas. We went there to get some samples from cork trees, and we were invited to the house of the Director of the Research Station for dinner. While there, the director asked me why the Americans were persecuting the Cubans. In other words, why we were being so bad to Castro? ... He said, "Castro is a good man Thinking furiously I said something such as, "Well, some of us look at it differently, as our government does." So I let it drop as quickly as I could. That was the only place politics was discussed, except in Egypt at my pension where there was quite a mixture of nationalities. My wife and I were the only Americans living there. We had a room we slept in and took our meals outside on a raised patio. There were Polish scientists, Polish engineers, and there were the Englishmen ---- the English and the Poles used to argue about politics. ... but I never got into it. It was senseless. There used to be many political arguments but I never took part. No one ever came at me with, "You Americans," or anything like that.

CG: What was one of your favorite countries that you visited?

AT: Germany. Germans like Americans --- make no mistake about it. I lived with a pleasant German couple named 'Moosdorf' -- Hans and Anna. I remember once in a liquor store I was looking at a bottle of wine when an older man came over and stood by me and said in German, "That one's not good, this one is better," and then continued to talk... I quickly interjected with, "*Ich bin ein Amerikaner*". He immediately told me (in German), "I have a sister in Detroit and I have a brother in San Francisco," or something similar. The people there were very friendly. I never met a hostile German, once they learned I was an American. But go to France where I have relatives -- oh, boy, the arguments I had in France with the taxi drivers, in restaurants, at the train station, incredible!! Once I tried to purchase a ticket to visit my aunt who lived in Belgium, and I couldn't understand the ticket agent. He was mumbling at me. Then I asked him in French to write it, so he took his pencil and scribbled some words which were unintelligible. He was getting more and more angry. I was never impressed with the French, despite the good French nematological friends I had (including French relatives!!).

CG: Who were the German family that you stayed with?

AT: That was Hans and Anna Moosdorf from whom I rented a bedroom. I worked in the Institute for Deep Sea Research where I spent about a month and a half working with two authorities on deep sea nematodes. They were good people.

CG: The countries that you visited in Europe, were you doing research there, or were you traveling?

AT: I was doing both. It was research work in Germany where I had a grant from the German government. In Portugal, I had a fellowship to do research work but I really was training some of the lab people. Portugal was an interesting country, naturally with excellent wine. We'd go into "wine treasuries" in each winery and they'd show you a bottle that's 300 years old. They told me "When we cut the bottle open, there could be nothing but vinegar or the most delectable wine in the world." Then we went to Jerez in Spain, where there were immense vats of wine. Jerez is where sherry wine comes from, and then port wine comes from Oporto in Portugal. We went there also and sampled some of the wines, really an experience.

(NO, I wasn't dead drunk most of the time in Portugal!!!)

Many times in various parts of Portugal, I would retire at night, and then, even in the middle of the morning, "clang, clang," a church bell was tolling. I would usually be near a monastery, and the bells tolled starting at 3:00am. It was something one doesn't easily forget!!

CG: What was your wife's favorite place to visit?

AT: Italy. We spent a lot of time in Italy. She liked Italy; she liked the foods as well as Italians themselves. The Italians are very friendly people unlike the few disastrous encounters I had in France. Yet, there were quite a few enjoyable French. One woman in Antibes, France, whose boarding house I stayed in told me, "I am going to teach you French," she spoke to me in slow French all the time, and I profited from her kindness. I also remember the meals that were excellent. Afterwards, a platter of different cheeses would be brought out along with sliced French bread. I'd marvel at the array of French cheeses as I ate them with wine. There'd always be wine there, always. I remember those cheeses -- they were quite an eyeful. ... Then Holland was also great for good cheeses.

CG: You enjoyed your travels?

AT: Yes, I did, except perhaps in the Arabic countries where life can be much different. Yet, some of the kindest people I encountered were Arabs. I'll never forget one occurrence, Carmen. We were getting soil samples from mango groves in lower Egypt -- it was the middle of the day and "hotter than Hades"! We were walking from one grove to the other, when we came upon a 'fellahin'. This is one of the poorest kind of people in Egypt, with his wife who was covered up in all that heat with only two eyes showing. When he saw us, he said, "faddal" which indicated "Please sit down and eat with me." Carmen, tell me where you'll get that kind of treatment around here.?? Yes, it was really something -- a kindness that I'd never, never experienced before. There are many kind people over there. Many times we walked around at night up to twelve o'clock. There was no crime that we knew about when we were there. When they caught a criminal ---- I actually saw a couple of police battering the hell out of one culprit. One would hit him, I saw that, then the other one would hit him, knocking him off his feet, then dragging him up, I mean, they were tough on criminals.

CG: Was the ice cream there similar to gelato?

AT: Once when I was walking in a lengthy indoor market, I heard a strong pounding. The Egyptians make a special heavy ice cream by beating it until it comes out like taffy; it's a different kind of frozen confection altogether. They actually beat the ice cream until it becomes very tough and stringy. I remember eating it and then drinking "Tamarr Hindi" -- a tamarind root concoction.

CG: Did you go to your fiftieth reunion at Rutgers? Have you had your fiftieth reunion?

AT: Yes, I've had it and I was at the fiftieth reunion, and I was invited to the fifty-seventh, but I'm having some physical problems now which I must deal with. I thought I'd try to make the sixtieth. I'd really love to go. Doug McCabe, an old friend of mine, who is very prominent with

'44 activities, has written me a couple of letters, "Charlie, you've got to come up," Unfortunately, there won't be too many more reunions with all of us getting older.

CG: Did you enjoy your fiftieth reunion?

AT: Yes, it was quite enjoyable, but even then I was having trouble with my hip replacements and couldn't walk too well. Nonetheless, it was good to see the fellows and recognize so many of them, and I would love to go back once again.

CG: Is there anything that you think we haven't talked about that you'd like to add?

AT: I'd like to talk to you for the next hour so that you could tell me about yourself. Where did you get such a pleasant personality?

CG: I don't know.

AT: I'd sure like to meet your parents. I'll bet they are as pleasant as you are.

CG: It's been an absolute pleasure.

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

Reviewed by Kathryn Tracy 7/8/02  
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 7/11/02  
Reviewed by Armen Charles Tarjan 8/02