

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN F. TINSLEY

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

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

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Sandra Stewart Holyoak: This begins an interview with Mr. John F. Tinsley on May 9, 2008, in New Brunswick, New Jersey, with Sandra Stewart Holyoak. Thank you, Mr. Tinsley, for coming to see us today. I know you are on a long trek, from Florida to Virginia to Pennsylvania and, now, here. You are heading to Long Island to celebrate your ninety-first birthday; congratulations. Could you tell me when and where you were born?

John F. Tinsley: In Elizabeth, New Jersey, Elizabeth General Hospital, on May 17, 1917.

SH: To begin, let us talk a little bit about your father and his background. What was his name?

JT: Well, my father was one of three boys. My grandfather came over from [Ireland]. He started in Belfast, Ireland, and came over here and settled in a place called Hampton, New Jersey. Eventually, he worked in the iron mines in a town called Asbury, which is just down the road a bit, and he worked there for I don't know how many years, but he raised a family there. My father was born there on September 26, 1875, and he was the second son and, ... prior to that, he ... also had an older sister who was born and he had a younger brother, John, who was the one who went to Rutgers, the man after whom I was named. ... So, my father had a little eighth-grade education in a one-room schoolhouse. Eventually, he made his way to Elizabeth, New Jersey, started to work at [the] Singer Sewing Machine factory. They gave him a brush and some acid and said, "Start cleaning these stones out here," and he said, "Well, you can keep it," and he went home and left the job. Subsequently, he did a little schoolwork and, ... as men used to do, learned a little secretarial work, how to type, and so forth. ... He eventually began to work for Maloney Oil Company in New York and he sold oil for awhile and became assistant to the president, Martin Maloney. ... When Martin Maloney died, Dad joined with another fellow who worked there and they took over the Maloney Oil Company and ran it as the Collins Oil Company. ... He stayed there. He commuted to New York from Elizabeth up until, almost until, the day he died and that was it, and he died in 1949, ... but he was a pretty rough character. I mean, he had done a lot of hard work in the country up there, as all of them did, but the iron mines; I remember, he took me up there one time, on a walk, and there were a bunch of kids playing in, like, a swimming hole. ... He said, ... "Never let me catch you in that swimming hole." He said, "I have been four hundred feet down that hole [mine] and, if the water gives way somewhere, they're just going to go down like a toilet," and that was the end of that. ...

SH: This is out in the Hampton-Asbury area.

JT: This is Asbury, yes, in the mountains, in; ... I don't even remember the name, the Kittatinny Mountains or something. ...

SH: Right, that would be the area, out in either Hunterdon or Warren County.

JT: ... Yes, Warren County, right, and that was where we used to go in the summertime, ... when my mother was alive. We'd go up there and spend the summer and he'd come [out], commute to New York from there.

SH: Did you have a summer home out there?

JT: No. We just always found a place to stay and rented a home, or something like that, and we'd stay there and that was it.

SH: Can you tell me a bit about your mother? What was her name and background?

JT: My mother, I know comparatively little about, because she died ... in 1923, when I was six years old, and, back in those days, they didn't tell kids anything. So, any information I have about the family, ... back in those days, was strictly a hand-me-down or listening to what was being said, but they just didn't tell kids anything.

SH: That is true. What was her name?

JT: Her name was Marie Margaret Hammer, ... before [her marriage].

SH: Was she from that area as well?

JT: She was from Elizabeth. Her father had come from Germany. He married a woman, Teresa Rapp; I don't know whether she was already a resident of the US or she came from Germany also. I don't know, but, as I remember her, she lived two years with us longer than my mother. She died in 1925 and I don't remember, recall, any accent, German accent, in her speech. So, she obviously grew up in the US, but he was one of those guys that came over here to make a bundle and go back to the "Fatherland." ... They had this funny incident; funny, it was not funny, at the time, it involved my mother's older brother. He became an MD [at] Cornell and he was on the ambulance when he was twenty-one, so, he was sort of a young genius-type. ... What happened to him, what happened to her, I should say, she got sick and died in December 1923. I don't know why or what she died from. ... To get back to the grandfather, ... my uncle, Uncle Will, as I called him, he ... joined the military in World War I and ... became a captain, as in the Medical Corps. He came home in the uniform, very proud of it, and the old man looked at him and said, "You're a disgrace to the family, wearing that uniform," because he was still a German and that was it, and he used to [say], "Oh, they'll never lick Wilhelm." I mean, he was really a ...

SH: A devout German.

JT: Yes, and so, that led to a little difference in the different parts of the family. [laughter] ...

SH: Was this a story that your Uncle Will told you about?

JT: My father told me that one, because he was there when it happened, and somebody threw a cup of coffee in the old man's face. [laughter] ...

SH: A real brouhaha.

JT: My mother, I know very little about her. She played the piano well. She taught my brother how to play the piano, and I didn't have much musical talent, I guess, of course, I did take music lessons, piano lessons, for a year, this was after she had died, and, at the end of one year, the teacher and I both agreed it was better that I pursue something else. ...

SH: That is what my teacher would have told me. [laughter] Did your father or your mother ever say how they met?

JT: I have no idea. ... It's one of the things that bothers me, that I know so little, but they didn't ... talk about it in front of [the] kids and they didn't tell kids anything. It was just the way things were, ... but they seemed to get along. I never remember any argument or anything at home ... and she was a very gentle person, as little as I can remember. I was six when she died.

SH: Did your father remarry then?

JT: No, he didn't. He raised us. We had housekeepers at home. ... He'd hire a housekeeper and we had a couple of different ones along the way, but that was as far as it went, I mean.

SH: Were these housekeepers there to just take care of the house?

JT: ... Well, one, the first one, she just came and spent each day there, and then, would come back the next day and that was it. The second one, or second or third, I don't know, [maybe] it was the third one, we had one that lived in with us. ... I don't know how many years she stayed with us, but, eventually, she left, too, and so, we were on our own. ...

SH: How much difference was there between you and your brother and your sister?

JT: My brother was about a year [older]. He was born in 1916, in February, so, he was about a year-and-a-half or a year-and-a-quarter, something like that, older than I. ... He spent one year at Rutgers, 1933-'34, and then, I was supposed to start the next year and Dad came in one day and said, "Sorry, it ain't going to happen. You know, things, business is bad." This was the Depression. ... I was the youngest guy in my class when I got out of high school and I probably became the oldest guy ... when I started at Rutgers. That was in 1939 [when] I started and ... I guess I was twenty-two years old then, September 1939.

SH: Did your brother then leave Rutgers and go to work?

JT: He went to work at that time, and then, he eventually, by going to night school and everything else, became an accountant and he ended up as a financial vice-president with Blue Cross-Blue Shield, up in Syracuse, New York, and he did well.

SH: You said you had an older sister.

JT: No, my father had an older sister, also, a younger sister. Grandpa Tinsley had five children who survived, Robert, Mary, Martin, Margaret and John. Martin Tinsley had two sons, Martin and John.

SH: Oh, your father. It was just the two boys.

JT: Yes.

JT: There were three boys. There was Robert, Martin and John. Robert was the oldest. He became an engineer in Peter Breidt's Brewery in Elizabeth. Dad went into the oil business and John went up to New England and started out with US Steel and, eventually, became president of Crompton and Knowles Loom Works, and he was there for many years in Worcester, Massachusetts. ... He had an older sister. I found out there were two sisters. There used to be this old gal that lived with my aunt, ... who was my father's older sister, and we called her Aunt Maggie, and I never asked who she was. ... I eventually found out that she was another female who was born in the Tinsley group up there. ...

SH: She really was an Aunt Maggie. [laughter]

JT: Yes, she was Aunt Maggie and that was it, and so, she died somewhere along the way. ...

SH: In your family, your mother had the two boys.

JT: Yes, and I presume there were others, because ... I checked with the cemetery and they said, "There's a Tinsley infant buried here, too," and so, I think, probably, in those days, they didn't all survive. ...

SH: Let us talk about growing up in Elizabeth. What are some of your earliest memories?

JT: Oh, I went to school there, went through elementary school. I went to the Catholic elementary school, the Sacred Heart School, and graduated from there, and then, as with all of us, we had neighborhood kids, and then, we played games, baseball, whatever we could do. ... We lived on Lafayette Street, which is right on the edge of what was an Irish neighborhood ... they called Keighry Head, and that's where the school was and I went there. ... At that time, Mickey Walker was the big star, he was a prizefighter, middleweight champion of the world, and, oh, every kid in the neighborhood there wanted to fight. [laughter] I mean, it was an Irish neighborhood. That's where I learned to fight, [laughter] but that was it there.

SH: Did you have after school jobs?

JT: No, well, like, [as] kids, I didn't do much. ... At one time, I ran ... a paper route for somebody. I don't know, I probably got paid a buck-and-a-quarter a week or something, you know, to deliver papers, but, ... most of the time, it was just play, and then, I finished there and I went to St. Benedict's Prep in Newark, ... which was a very good school, academically. I mean, I didn't have to worry; you could go to virtually any college without taking a bunch of exams. They recognized it. ... I got out of there in the Class of '34 and that's when I was told that I wasn't going to college, yet. [laughter]

SH: Yet. In your four years of high school, were there sports that you participated in?

JT: No. ... Surprisingly, I was interested in sports, but I never played any sports there, except in the gym classes and all that, but, because I traveled from Elizabeth to Newark every day, for four years, ... I didn't have time. They had to stay after school, and I was too young to have a driver's

license when I was a senior and I didn't get that until it was May 1934, which was just about the time of graduation. ...

SH: Did you have a car, a family car, that you could drive after you got your license?

JT: Well, after I got my license, yes, and I did. My brother and I, eventually, somewhere in the mid-'30s; we were both working for the New York Life [Insurance Company]. The only reason we were there is because my Uncle Will was the head of the New York Life medical department and he got us jobs. So, I was an office boy, eventually senior grade, ... but we bought a car together, somewhere, a '37 Ford. ... About a year later, Friday night was my night with the car and I went out to Long Island, on a date or something, and driving home, it was raining and the windshield wiper was going. I got within a mile of home and fell asleep behind the wheel of the [car]. I ran into a telegraph pole, knocked it down. The car was upside down and also caught on fire. There were wires out there, sparkling in the rain on the wet street, and I opened the door, got out, went across the street, stopped and watched it burn. A milkman came along and said, "Let me get you some help." Next thing, a police [car] came. They took me to the hospital. I had a cut over my eye and a hole in my knee, but, other than that, I was all right. He took me home at seven o'clock in the morning, the police did, and I rang the bell and my father comes down, "My gosh, come on in." My brother came down, looked at me and said, "What happened to the car?" [laughter] ... So, I figured, from that time on, I was living on borrowed time.

SH: When you were in high school, what was your favorite subject?

JT: Hard to tell. I liked school, when I was a kid. I didn't feel badly about any of it. ... I liked math somewhat, but ... I'm trying to think of who the teachers were. I guess math was it, history a little bit, but that was it, ... but they gave us a good education. We covered everything. You had to take physics, chemistry, and all college prep courses, you know, that kind of thing then.

SH: Who were your teachers?

JT: They were the Benedictine priests, I guess, monks or whatever they were, but we had some secular, I mean, people, teachers. They had different people in for different courses, ... if they couldn't accommodate them, good faculty.

SH: This was an all-boys school.

JT: Yes, all-boys school. It was on 520 High Street in Newark. I think it's now Martin Luther King Drive or something like that, yes.

SH: You went to Catholic grade school, and then, also, St. Benedict's Prep. Did you attend church regularly?

JT: Oh, yes, at that time, I did, I mean, as [I was] growing up.

SH: Did you participate in any of the activities at church?

JT: No.

SH: I know Elizabeth was divided, as you said, ethnically; there was the Irish neighborhood and all of that.

JT: Yes.

SH: Did you have your own church?

JT: I went to the same place, Sacred Heart School, ... and the church was there, and that was just eight years. ... There were no junior highs then, or they were just starting in the public school system, but I went from eight years there, then, four in St. Benedict's in Newark.

SH: Did most of the kids in your neighborhood go to Catholic school as well?

JT: A lot of them did, but [it was] the Irish neighborhood, I mean, so, there were a lot of Irish Catholics, but ... a lot of them went to public schools, too. ... We grew up [together], and I knew them all. I mean, when you're a kid, you knew everybody within five blocks. That was it.

SH: Did you live in an apartment or in a house?

JT: Oh, we lived in a house. It was a four-family house and it was on the corner of Spring Street and Lafayette Street, or it was one house from the corner, and then, the highway came through, Highway 1, which ... goes past Newark Airport and goes through Elizabeth. Well, they had to move the one house on the end and they moved that a block and put it on an empty lot down there on William Street. ...

SH: You wound up with the corner house. [laughter]

JT: Yes, we ended up with the corner house. It's still there. I drove by it about ten years ago and it was still there. I presume it hasn't burned down or anything. ... Right across the street, ... diagonally across, was the American Gas Furnace Company, big factory, wooden factory, and out in front, he had this big, open lot and we used to go over there and play ball all the time. If you broke a window in the factory, the manager didn't say anything. He was a nice guy. He knew the kids were there having fun and that was it. ...

SH: Did you go anywhere? You talked about renting a house.

JT: This was up in Asbury; we did that. We went up there as far back as I can remember. We went to Annandale one year, and then, we went up to Asbury thereafter, every year. It's on the Musconetcong River. That's where I learned to swim and everything. ... My mother, I still remember going down and she's taking us down to the Musconetcong and we'd go swimming and it was quite a place. It was what they called a black mill area, where the fellows worked, a lot of the local people worked, and it was the; oh, what the heck do you call the black stuff that's in [the] lead a lead pencil is made with?

SH: Graphite or lead?

JT: No, it wasn't lead. It was graphite, I guess it was, and these guys were supposed to wear masks in there and a lot of them used to get lung disease, black lung, ... but we ... watched them work and everything else. ...

SH: Did you continue this after your mother passed away?

JT: No. That was the end of it and we never went back up there again as a family. ... From there on, ... my father sent us away to camp in the summer, for ten weeks. So, it took ... care of most of the summer and we went to camp up in Monroe, New York, in Orange County. ...

SH: The same camp, year after year?

JT: ... Yes, we did that year after year, did that for four years, I believe, and then, we stopped, for some reason. I don't know. I guess the Depression caught up with him there, too. ...

SH: What was the camp up in Monroe called?

JT: It was Camp KC. Knights of Columbus ran one. Everybody ran a camp up there. It was competition between the various camps, and so, ... yes, I guess it was fun. [laughter] ... I didn't know what the alternatives were.

SH: What are your earliest memories of the Depression? ...

JT: Oh, I remember, in Elizabeth, well, we'd go to church and I used to notice the different people in church, that I got to know who they were, and I watched them go downhill in their dress and everything else. There were various markets, open markets, where people went. I'd go down there and you see fellows looking around, reach in a can and pick out an apple and peel it off and eat it. I mean, there were some tough times in Elizabeth, ... but we were lucky; we never missed a meal. ...

SH: What about the housekeepers? Were their families impacted?

JT: I guess that's why they became housekeepers, some of them. ... I didn't know much about them, other than that they'd take care of the meals, and then, go home, and that was it, and then, [the] one that lived with us, the same thing, but I never really got close to any of them. ...

SH: Were they from the neighborhood?

JT: Not close. They were from some other part. I didn't know where they came from.

SH: Are there other things that you remember about Elizabeth, before you went to high school?

JT: Oh, I remember a lot of things. I mean, there was a park in Elizabeth called Warinanco Park and they had a big stadium and we used to go up there and watch football games and there was a



lot of soccer played there. The various ethnic groups had their soccer teams, and they called it "football," but that was all at Warinanco Park. They had baseball teams there. Eventually, I ... made the Elizabeth AA. I played for them. That was in the Union County League and ... it kept me out of the Army for a year.

SH: How did it do that?

JT: Well, I was supposed to be drafted on Tuesday. I played my last game with them on Sunday and I broke my ankle in that game. [laughter] So, it looks like a put-up job, but ... they had all these sports going on. There was always a city league or a county league or something, and we watched a lot [of them]. We also played a lot of games. When we got big enough, ... we'd make up a team and get in the city league and they had a pretty good program for the kids in the city.

SH: That is great.

JT: Yes. ...

SH: You do not hear a lot about that in that day and age.

JT: Yes. They were well-organized and they seemed to know what they were doing. It was a lot of good, clean fun and we got to play. ... Elizabeth was broken into ethnic groups. I mean, we were right close to Keighry Head, but, then, there was Peterstown, which was the Italian section, Elizabethport were the blacks, it was Frog Hollow, which was the Polish. ... Each one of them had a team of some kind and we got to [play]. Some of them got kind of violent, [laughter] but it was all good fun. I mean, nobody pulled knives on anybody, or guns or anything else. If you got into a fight, you fought it out like a man and that was it. ...

SH: Had you done any boxing because of this?

JT: I had an uncle, actually a friend. ... What the heck was it? Uncle Somebody; he gave us a set of boxing gloves and ... my brother wore one pair and I started to replace the old-fashioned punching bag, I mean, because my brother was a good fighter. [laughter] ...

SH: Did you interact with your father's brothers and sisters and their families?

JT: Yes. His sister, Mary, had one son who was a couple of years older than me, but, ... whenever we visited back and forth, we got very friendly, and then, we moved fairly close to them, and so, I used to see an awful lot of them.

SH: You said you moved; where did you move to?

JT: ... Well, from there, we moved, in 1929, ... to a part called Elmora, the "Swamp." [laughter] ... They used to call it the "Mortgage Hill," you know, where people went up there, ... you had your own home and everything else, and so, it was in a fairly nice neighborhood and a lot of kids there. ... I actually ... did more growing up there than anyplace. ...

SH: Elmora.

JT: Yes, it's a section of Elizabeth, ... and it's not the wealthiest section, but it was upscale from where we were. ...

SH: Your father made this move right at the beginning of the Depression.

JT: Yes, he made it in 1929, bought the house. I guess he ... bought it at the wrong price, probably, but we moved up there. ...

SH: He was able to keep it, though.

JT: Oh, yes, he kept it and he kept working all the way through.

SH: Did you and your brother ever go into New York?

JT: Oh, yes, we went in. ... We'd meet Dad in there ... every Easter, to get new clothes, you know, and we went to this place or that place, and, in-between, we'd go in there and stop in his office. ... I found out, this was back in the '20s, we'd go in by ourselves, but, I remember, we always went into this corner. We'd think, "Let's go eat somewhere." So, he'd take us down. I remember walking up a stair and knocking on this door and I hear, "Click, click, click." It was a speakeasy. I mean, we went in there. [laughter] ... Downtown New York was quite a place. We got to know a lot of it very well.

SH: Where was his office? What area of New York were you in then?

JT: Let's see, ... it was down at the Battery. That's the Whitehall Building was where he worked. In fact, ... the first job I got out of college was with the Tidewater Oil Company. They were in the same building, but Dad had semi-retired after World War II, but I knew the Whitehall Building. It was down there. The aquarium was across the street and a couple of blocks from Wall Street and a couple of blocks from where the Twin Towers were put up. I got to know downtown New York pretty well. ...

SH: Was it you and your brother or were you going by yourself ?

JT: Well both. I'd go in by myself on occasion. ... When I got to working for New York Life, 24th-25th Street, why, there was a gal in the office whose father was a sportswriter for the *New York Times*. Betty (Drebinger?), her name was, and, whenever I wanted to go to a ballgame, I'd [say], "Hey, Betty, how about it?" and she'd call up her father or one of the sportswriters and there'd be a ticket waiting for me at the gate. So, then, she married a friend of mine and that put an end to that stuff. [laughter] ...

SH: This was to go see the Yankees or the Giants.

JT: Oh, I went to, yes, the Polo Grounds ... and Yankee Stadium. I've been in it many times, I mean, but I was a Giant fan and I once had a tryout with the New York Giants. ... I was

nineteen or so and I was in-between high school and college and I got invited to go over [to] Jersey City to have a tryout. I don't know how it started, where it came from, but they had scouts around, they used to watch. I was playing ... for Elizabeth AA and that was pretty good ball, and I went over there ... to Jersey City. I ... went and showed the letter to the boss and I said, "They want me over there," and he says, "Do you want to do it?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Well, go ahead," took the day off. So, I went and met Travis Jackson of the Jersey City Giants. We worked out. There were a bunch of guys there and, after it was over, he says, "We're going on a road trip and we'll be back in two weeks," and he says, "You, you, you and you," I was one of the four, he said, "I'd like to see you back," and what happened, that's when I had the automobile accident, in that interim. So, that ended my baseball career, I mean. [laughter] Yes, so, that was it. ...

SH: Your injuries were a little bit more than just superficial.

JT: Oh, yes. Well, I banged my knee, went up against the cowl in front, and there was a button, we had a fog light, and that went in under my kneecap. ... I had an awful lot of problems with that for awhile, but it came around all right. ...

SH: You said that when you graduated from high school, your father had already explained that you would not be going to college.

JT: Yes.

SH: What were your plans at that point? What did you do?

JT: Well, the first thing, he got my brother a job over there first, ... with Uncle Will, but I went out and I did everything. I worked for delivery stuff. You know, the department stores used to have delivery service then and I used to go in there and I worked as a helper there, two dollars a day, they paid us, ... and we did other things. I was a soda jerk for awhile, ... wherever you could find something to do. In winter, we'd shovel snow and go around, make a buck or two, but we were never starving in our family, I mean, never really broke or anything, but we just did that. ... I got involved in an awful lot of horsing around. ... I had a very good friend that I used to hang out with. ... He got a job as a salesman and he was working for an outfit in England called Burleigh Brooks. They made miniature cameras. ... He started selling these and making a lot of money, but what happened was, in 1939, the war started in England. ... That ended his cameras, and that ended his business, but he had bought a convertible car, the first one I ever saw, a Plymouth. The top went up and down by itself, but Eddie and I used to hang out together and we did all sorts of things. ... We used to go to the auto races and he'd talk ... people into letting him drive the cars. I mean, he was good. Eventually, he learned to fly and ... he heard about something up in Canada and he went up and applied to them. They were training cadets up there and they needed people to take these planes and just fly them around up there. They taught him how to fly multiengine planes, [Avro] Anson bombers, and he did that for I don't know how long. When he came back, he had this endless number of hours of flying. ... Every airline in the country wanted him, was open to him, so, he took TWA and he became a pilot with them and stayed with them for his life, career. He was quite a guy.

SH: Did he play ball with you as well?

JT: Oh, yes, he was a catcher. He was a great hockey player. ... In the wintertime, we played a lot of hockey, just make up games and everything, but he did a lot of things, I mean, [laughter] but, most of all, he got into TWA. ... I traveled around the world a couple of times, but, every time I got to an airport, I'd go over to TWA, "Did Captain Meehan come through here?" "Oh, he just left," you know. ... We never did get together again. ...

SH: What position did you play on the baseball team?

JT: I played infield, I mean, mostly shortstop. ... When I got here, I played freshman ball. ... I started out, moved up to the varsity. I did pretty good as a freshman. I was playing second base and we get out to practice. First thing, I'm suddenly going to move up to the varsity. First thing, he says, "Bunt one and hit three." I bunted it on my toe and the ... nail went black. ... So, it put me out of action for a couple weeks, and then, he selected the team and I ended up as a benchwarmer, [laughter] ... but I stayed with it. ...

SH: You talked about the different odd jobs that you did from the time you graduated in ...

JT: '34, '34 to '39, that was when I was [doing that], except, in 1936, I went to work for New York Life and I stayed for three years, but it was just a couple of years in-between.

SH: That you were doing the odd jobs.

JT: Any job you could get, you'd do. ...

SH: You were commuting into New York with your brother to go to work.

JT: Oh, no, I didn't work in New York then. From June 1934 until the Fall of 1936, I did whatever I could find. In 1936, I began working for New York Life.

SH: Okay. Where did you work?

JT: Locally. I mean, that was it. I was always trying to find a job locally, doing something. That's why I said I was a soda jerk. ...

SH: When you went to work for your uncle, where did you work?

JT: I didn't work for him. I went to work for New York Life, but he happened to be the head of the medical department. That's how I got the job, but I ended up in what they called the trust agreements department and I was an office boy, that's all, and ran around.

SH: This was in New York.

JT: Yes, and that was from '36 to '39. At that time, ... I started to save money, believe it or not. I was making sixty dollars a month starting out and paid two dollars a week for a railroad ticket,

plus subway fare back and forth every day, and I still managed to [make it]. I made a few bucks bowling, too. ... We used to bet on it and I did all right. [With] the baseball in the summer, you'd make a few bucks. I mean, ... we played a lot of games in Warinanco Park. You couldn't charge anything, because it was a public park. We played a team called the Colored All-Stars one time, and what they'd do, they'd pass the hat around thing. Guys would go around. Well, we played this Colored All-Stars and they were good. I mean, they couldn't play in the big leagues at that time, but what happened [was], there was a crowd. Field Number Eight, they had it completely surrounded with ropes around there. It must have had a couple thousand people out there and they started collecting it. Well, one of the guys, two of them, went down the leftfield line, went down the stands, and then, went all the way out. They got out to centerfield and they took off with the money. [laughter] I mean, we never saw them again. [laughter]

SH: So much for the gate, right? [laughter]

JT: ... So much for that. [laughter] ... It was fun days.

SH: You have some great memories. You said you were setting money aside; was it to go to college? Was that your plan?

JT: Yes, I was trying to save it. I saved up enough and I went in and quit the job in August, and I came down here to Rutgers and I took whatever entrance requirements [there] were, I filled them, and then, I told my father I was going to do it, and so, he didn't say, "Oh, go ahead," you know. ... After he got the grades, after the first semester, I was doing pretty well and he said, "All right, I'll pick up the next bill," and that was how it went from there on. He paid it for the rest. ... He wasn't sure that I was going to be a good student or anything. ...

SH: [laughter] How did your father's business recover from the Depression? Was it slow and steady?

JT: Yes, enough to make a fair living out of. I mean, that was it. They used to broker ... oil of different types. I mean, you had the things, I remember him selling engine washing oils, to the railroads. They'd clean their engines with this oil, and all sorts of specialty stuff. ... They weren't in manufacturing of it or anything. ...

SH: Why Rutgers? Why did you pick Rutgers? Did you look at other schools?

JT: My uncle.

SH: Because of your uncle.

JT: I knew he had come here and that was it.

SH: Just for the record, can you tell me about your uncle? We talked off the record before.

JT: Well, he became a life trustee of Rutgers, eventually.

SH: He graduated in 1900.

JT: Yes, he was valedictorian of his class, 1900, but he ... got a job with the military as an engineer, when they were putting a cable in from Seattle to Alaska and they had the cable made on the East Coast and they had to go around South America to deliver it. The Panama Canal wasn't done yet. So, he was put in charge of that and they went all the way around South America and he delivered it to Seattle. He later worked for US Steel for awhile and was sort of on a fast track ... to move up in the hierarchy, which he was doing. He was head of the South Works, as they called it, up there in Boston, which was a big thing, when he was in his twenties still, and then, he had moved to Worcester and was living there. ... Crompton and Knowles was the biggest manufacturer of ... looms in the world and the fellow ... who was in charge of them, was the president, was one of these hand-me-down jobs. The guy didn't know what he was doing, but he always had an honorary job as the president. So, they offered John the job as vice-president and general manager. ... This was before World War I. He was still a young man and he stayed with them and, when the ... old guy retired, he became president. So, in effect, he was in charge of it for forty years and he did very well.

SH: He was the valedictorian, here at Rutgers, in 1900.

JT: Yes.

SH: Did he participate in any other activities that you know of here at Rutgers?

JT: I remember my father saying he was playing football or something, he [would] come home all bruised up, [laughter] ... but he was a good student. ... He joined a fraternity, and I don't know what; Chi Phi. Is there one right down on the corner, on College Avenue, just not far down from Bishop? and it was there. He belonged to that. I don't know. The other part of it was is [that] he was a good student and that was it. ...

SH: That is right, and Tinsley Hall is named for him.

JT: ... Yes, that's right. He got talked into building a dormitory, way back. The fellow in charge of that campaign, back then, was the president of some big grocery chain, he was a Rutgers man, and he got him in there and must have talked real good, [laughter] ... but he did, oh, many things. He was a director of many big companies. He had friends all over, I mean, ... all over the country and very good friends and big shots. Well, he was invited to the White House by President Hoover, back then, to just come down for dinner, he and his wife, he invited them down, and he did a lot of things.

SH: Was your family close with he and his wife and family?

JT: Well, we were fairly close, but he was in Worcester and we were in Elizabeth, and I remember going up there and visiting, up in his big house he had there and everything else. ... He married a local girl up there. Her name was Munroe, ... Helen Munroe. Her father was some big politician, somewhere or something, but, at any rate, why, they only had one child, unfortunately. Believe it or not, that child is still alive, she's completely out of it, "Molly," and

has been since birth, and that was it. ... The only thing we were able to track down, his wife was a diabetic and, usually, that ends with kids that have deformities. The doctors can correct such conditions now. ... So, when his funeral was up there, in 1952, I think, I was up there representing the family and I met some of her family. They were there at the wake and everything. ... They said, "What do you think?" I said, "They should have had more children. It doesn't happen with every one." [Editor's Note: Mr. Tinsley gasps.] They all looked at me like I was some nitwit or something; well, the heck with that. ... He did very well. ...

SH: Let us come back to your decision to come to Rutgers; had you ever been to campus before you came in 1939?

JT: Well, I'd been here to watch ballgames. I mean, my cousin was here and my brother did the one year.

SH: Which cousin?

JT: His name is Robert Connelly. That was ... my father's older sister's son, and he got his degree from here, but he was there before me, ... because he was older than I was. ...

SH: Did he come here right after school?

JT: Yes. He had a checkered career. He was here, and then, he dropped out, and then, he come back and he dropped out. He finally made it, got a degree here, in I don't know what. ...

SH: When you came in 1939, did you have a major picked out?

JT: I wanted to learn economics. ...

SH: You knew exactly where you were going with this.

JT: Yes, I knew that, and then, old Dean [Eugene E.] Agger, I got to know him. ... I was impressed. He started the "American school of banking." ... Every banker has to go through that now, and ... he started it. I was impressed with certain members of the faculty, particularly Houston Peterson, philosophy professor. ... Well, see, I finished three years, then, I went off to the Army. [I had] been out for five years, I went three years, went off to the Army for four, came back and, finally, got a degree, and then, I went to work, and then, I came back again and got a master's degree. ... I'll never forget, at that time, Houston Peterson, I took every course he ever taught, he taught philosophy, and loved him. He was a great man, and I'm in the library one day and he looks over and sees me. He says, "Just what the hell is your chronology around here?" [laughter] That's just what he said, ... because I got to know him pretty well, but he was a good guy. ... I pulled a trick, that I shouldn't have done, but I did; Arthur Burns used to teach statistics here. He'd come down from Columbia to teach, and I went in and saw him one day. ... I didn't have him, have it on my schedule, and I went in and saw him one day and said, "Could I just come in to your class and sit down and not say a word? ... I just want to learn statistics, but I can't ... take any more courses on the subject." He thought for a minute and [he said], "Yes, okay, just keep your mouth shut. That's all." ... I mean, he was a good guy. So, I learned some

statistics from Arthur Burns. I just got through reading a book from the guy that used to be the head of the Federal Reserve, who just retired. What the heck was his name, a Jewish name? ... He wrote a book, and ... somebody gave me a copy of it. I read the thing and he gets in there and he's talking about running into Arthur Burns, how he was sort of a mentor for him for awhile, before he ended up going to NYU, but he was at Columbia at that time.

SH: Are you thinking about Alan Greenspan?

JT: Alan Greenspan, yes, very good book, by the way. ...

SH: Okay. You came here as a freshman in 1939.

JT: Yes.

SH: What did you get involved with? Were you commuting or were you living here?

JT: I was commuting, but I did play freshman basketball and baseball, and then, sophomore year, I gave up the basketball. Frank Hill called, kind of corralled me one day, "Come on, aren't you going to come out for the varsity basketball?" ... "No," I said, "I used to warm the bench here as a freshman." I said, "I don't think I'll do much better." Now, he teases, "Come on, we're different," and I never did go. ...

SH: This is a different coach then.

JT: ... Well, that freshman [coach] was a different coach than the varsity coach, and Frank Hill was the varsity coach for a long time. ...

SH: Who was the coach when you did baseball?

JT: Oh, that was Chuck Ward. ...

SH: Did they know about your baseball career in Elizabeth?

JT : No, but ... I was up there playing one time; after I'd been a freshman here, ... I went back there and I was playing for the Elizabeth AA again. I went up to Plainfield and Chuck was in the grandstand there and I got up, and I'll never forget, ... we called for a hit and run. The second base[man] ran over and I hit it right where the second baseman was, and Chuck was in the stand there and he called me afterwards. We were talking there. So, I must have impressed him somewhat, but ... I got damaged too much in the game. [laughter] ...

SH: As a freshman here, were you aware of what was going on in Europe?

JT: Oh, yes. We had debates, and it was Max Gideonse, you know, and Edward McNall Burns. They had a debate about our participation in that. Oh, this was hot stuff.

SH: Really?



JT: Oh, yes. ... You were part of the isolationist group or the interventionist group.

SH: They did the debate here on campus.

JT: Oh, yes. They had a debate. ... I don't know, I forget exactly where it was, but it was very good and there was a lot of discussion that went on among the faculty and students.

SH: Were the students involved?

JT: Oh, yes, and ... what we used to have was, once a month, there'd be a convocation of some kind in the gym over there and I remember seeing an awful lot of people there. They had Wendell Willkie. ... The President, what the heck was this president's name, oh, a Princeton guy?

SH: Clothier?

JT: Clothier, Robert Clothier, yes. Well, he evidently knew ... Wendell Willkie and he invited him in. He gave a speech over there at one of these convocations. I saw, let me see, they had Paul, the big, black athlete.

SH: Paul Robeson.

JT: Paul Robeson, they had him there. They had Marian Anderson there. They were there for evening programs.

SH: Really, at this convocation?

JT: Yes. ... We all got involved and I saw some great names over there. We had Herbert Hoover there one time. He put everybody to sleep, but, I mean, he was there. [laughter] But, Wendell Willkie, I've never seen a student reaction like when he was in there, and he talked for over an hour without using a note. ... This was back just prior to World War II and he gave this speech and, when he got through, he stopped, there was sort of a moment of silence and the place erupted. They got up and cheered like I never saw anybody cheered before. He was good. He was a Republican, too. That's the one I could never figure out. [laughter] ...

[Editor's Note: The following addendum was written by Mr. Tinsley during his review of the transcript]:

Pre-World War II, there were student convocations monthly or periodically. Herbert Hoover and Wendell Willkie spoke at these, individually. There were also presentations by the Music Department on certain evenings. It was as part of this program that Paul Robeson and Marion Anderson appeared (separately) with public attendance and paid admission. The appearance of Paul Robeson was objected to by the American Legion and others because they stated he was a Communist, etc. President Clothier put out a statement that said: Mr. Robeson was a distinguished graduate of Rutgers and was welcome to appear on campus any time.

Remembering the rather emotional political environment of the times, I thought he did a courageous thing. I hope this clears up the confusion of the four aforementioned persons on campus.

[End of addendum.]

SH: Was Norman Thomas here as well?

JT: Oh, yes, ... they even had Norman Thomas at chapel. He was a minister and he gave a political speech in chapel. [laughter] ...

SH: You had mandatory chapel back then.

JT: Yes, that's right. We had to go every week. ...

SH: Did you get a ticket, or whatever, to go to St. Peter's or did you go to Kirkpatrick? I have heard that Catholics could be excused from mandatory chapel.

JT: Yes. Well, that didn't bother me, going to chapel. I mean, I went to chapel and that was it.

SH: Do you have any Demarest stories?

JT: Dr. Demarest? Yes, he was on "Holy Hill," [the hill where the New Brunswick Theological Seminary is located], down there. I remember him. I didn't know him or anything, but that was a separate group. None of us ever got there. ...

SH: What about Dean Metzger; any Dean Metzger stories?

JT: Oh, yes, I knew him. I knew him quite well.

SH: How come?

JT: I knew all of them. I mean, [laughter] it wasn't that I got in trouble. ...

SH: Okay, because when somebody talks about Dean Metzger ...

JT: Yes, I know. I remember him. He and my uncle were quite friendly. I mean, that was it. ...

SH: When they had these debates about intervention versus isolation, were you just being informed or did you have an opinion?

JT: ... Oh, I had an opinion. I was an interventionist. ... I thought we should stop Hitler. I mean, there was no question about it. ... We had some real hot times, believe me. [laughter]

SH: Did you really?

JT: Oh, yes, because that was serious stuff, and I remember an awful lot of arguments in the classrooms, ... but that was funny, though, to have Edward McNall Burns, the historian, he was an isolationist, he didn't want to go into it, and Max Gideonse, who was an economist, why, ... Max Gideonse and his family, ... they were Dutch, but they left before the Germans got there and they come over here. ... He had his doctorate from Harvard and he was a very bright guy and a very neat guy, ... good tennis player, too, I might add, [laughter] but Harry, his brother, never got his PhD degree, but he ended up being a head of Brooklyn College. He was a president of that. ... There was a lot of activity, a lot of position taking among the students about ... what was going on in Europe. I mean, we were into things, and I wonder, kids don't seem to be interested anymore.

SH: When you were commuting, were you coming down on the train?

JT: Oh, I got a car. I had a car. I got a '33 Ford, that worked. [laughter] ...

SH: Did you have anybody traveling with you?

JT: Oh, yes. There was a kid named Bill Burke, from down the street, and my cousin was back, Robert Connelly. ... He used to drive down with me, ... but they didn't like my schedule. I was doing stuff, I was playing sports and doing all this stuff, you know, and driving the car. They had to wait for me. ...

SH: Did they have a place for the commuter students to hang out at that point?

JT: I'm trying to think what there was. ... No, there was nothing formal, but ... the classrooms were open more. If you wanted to have something, why, they'd let you use this building or that building, and they were quite good about it.

SH: After your freshman year, did you go back to work in the summer for New York Life?

JT: Yes. ... For one summer, I went back and worked for New York Life and earned a few bucks, and still getting my sixty bucks a month. I was making eighty-five [dollars] a month when I left in 1939. I was office boy, senior grade, ... but I went back. I made that deal with them when I left. I said, "Can I come back here?" and ... they took me back for a summer and I did the same kind of thing.

SH: When you came back as a sophomore, in 1940, you would have been eligible to sign up for the draft?

JT: Yes, ma'am, I did.

SH: You did.

TJ: My brother got drafted. ... I don't think ... his was the first number pulled out of the hat when they started; I think it was the second number. ... He'd put in his year in the military, and then, was dismissed. They let him go after a year, when they first drafted people.

SH: That is right. He got out before December 1941.

JT: And then, he's home and we're listening to the football game, and I still remember, the Giants had the ball on Brooklyn's forty-five-yard line when [the] war started. They'd come in, "Pearl Harbor has just [been bombed]." ...

SH: What was that like, to be sitting there with your brother?

JT: The first thing he says, "Here I go back again," and that was it, [laughter] and he did. Two weeks later, he got the notice and he's back in, yes.

SH: You had already signed up for the draft, but you were exempt, because you were in school.

JT: Well, I didn't get exempt. No, I never got any exemption for school. ... My number just came up at a certain time, at the end of my sophomore year, and that's when, I was saying, I was back playing ball with Elizabeth AA, broke my ankle and that kept me out of the draft, ... probably saved my life, because they had an ROTC here and all these guys in my class there, the Class of '43, we lost an awful lot of them and they were good friends, a lot of them. They got killed over there. They made the invasion of Europe. If I had stayed here and gotten drafted, in fact, if I'd have gotten drafted when I broke my ankle, why, I don't know where I would have ended up, but, as it turned out, I went to OCS [Officer Candidate School], down there at Benning. I graduated from there and was assigned to Camp Roberts, California, and then, I was there for about two weeks and got my overseas orders, to report to Camp Stoneman and go on over from there.

SH: Let us back up and talk about being at home, listening to the game, in December of 1941. Did you come back to campus on Monday? What was it like here?

JT: That was December the 7th, wasn't it? Let me see, yes, I come back to school and everybody is talking, you know. It was just *the* topic, "What's going to happen next?" ...

SH: Were there other debates then, as had taken place before?

JT: Well, just before that, they had a lot of the big debates, but, after that, there wasn't much of a debate, because, I mean, we were at war and that's all there was to it, but, prior to that, ... when I first got here, there was an awful lot of dissention and different positions that everybody took.

SH: I just wondered if that ended and everybody moved forward.

JT: Well, there was no more isolationists after the war started. I mean, that was the end of that.

...

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: Your sophomore year.

JT: Well, we were all talking about, "When are you going to get drafted?" I mean, they put the draft down and everything else.

SH: Was it hard to stay focused on the academics?

JT: Well, it was a story that was going on, not a reality. I mean, we hadn't ... gotten to that point where we realized ... how serious this was, but, it was ... almost like an academic question. ...

SH: Was there any thought to enlist and therefore pick the service that you would be in?

JT: Well, the ROTC was infantry here. When I went in, I asked for the infantry, because I wanted to see some action. Say no more; that was all I thought.

SH: You had been in ROTC your freshman year.

JT: The freshman and sophomore year was compulsory.

SH: Were you thinking of going for Advanced ROTC?

JT: I was thinking of going on and I went in and they interviewed me and the guy says, "What fraternity do you belong to?" and I said, "What's that got to do with military science?" and that was the end of me. [laughter] I still remember that, and, also, one of the guys, there was a Colonel (Robinson?), you can find him in here, [Mr. Tinsley points to the yearbook], and ... his father was the military guy in the military and I come in, I didn't connect the two, and I'm coming into class, talking about this dumb colonel up here and somebody grabbed me and says, "Lay off, Tinsley. That's his son." [laughter] ... Then, what happened, if you had a certain grade, ... you were exempt from the final exam, if you had an "A" on all of your tests. Well, I had an "A" from the tests and everything and I got an "F" on my report card. I said, "They can't do it. I was exempt from the final and everything." ... I went in and saw the Colonel that was top dog in there, and I said, "Look, how can they do this?" and so, the end result, that was the guy I was talking about and his son was in the class and he gave me an "F," the son of a gun. Well, he changed it, the Colonel, the big colonel changed it, but he only changed it to a "D," I think. He wouldn't do any better than that. ... That took care of me as a student of military science.

SH: You think the son actually ratted you out.

JT: Yes, it had to be. I mean, there was no other reason, because I didn't do anything in class, I took all the tests, I had "A"s, exempt from the final exam, and then, he ... give [me] a flunk. I said, "They can't do this," and I don't even remember what grade he did give me there, but it sure wasn't an "A." I mean, that was ...

SH: That is ridiculous.

JT: I had a rather hectic academic career, believe me. ...

SH: The second semester in your sophomore year, what were your plans after that?

JT: I was going to get drafted. I knew that was coming. ...

SH: Did you go to work?

JT: Well, no, that's when I broke my leg and spent the summer with ... a big cast on my leg. ...

SH: What did you do, a guy that we have just seen in all the pictures, and you played basketball and baseball? What did you do?

JT: ... Well, if you sit around, I learned how to type. My father got me a typewriter and I got a book and I learned how to type, self-taught. ...

SH: You said your brother was called back in. How soon after?

JT: About two weeks after Pearl Harbor. He had put in his year already. He'd been drafted early and put a year in. Then, he got called back in and he was in the artillery when he was in for the year. Then, he applied for the Air Corps and was accepted and went on into that, until he got up to the final exam before they became officers and everything else and they flunked him on a physical, susceptible to hernia and susceptible to hay fever and potential hernia. He had had a hernia when he was a kid. They picked it up. So, he ended up ... spending the war checking books in airports and Air Force things. ... He had Alma, his wife, with him and he went all over the country. He had special gas rations, had his own car, but he was a tech sergeant, I guess. That's what they gave him and that's what he did. Now, when I come back and got off the train and saw him, I said, "Was it a tough war?" [laughter] I mean, so, okay, let's go on here.

SH: That summer, you were in a cast.

JT: I was at home, learning to type. That's all.

SH: Were there friends around you that were leaving or had already left for the war at that point?

JT: Oh, yes, guys started to get drafted. I mean, that was it. ...

SH: Now, you were at the beginning of what would have been your junior year in 1942.

JT: Yes, '42, yes.

SH: Did you come back to Rutgers?

JT: Yes, I came back. ... I had my cast all off and I was limping like crazy and I'd come back and just put in a full schedule and finished. When it came to two weeks before the final exam, ... or a week or so before, ... I got called into the draft [board] again and I told them, I said, "Look, I've got final exams in school, another week." They gave me the other week and I finished my junior year and went.

SH: Okay. You were literally here 1942 into ...

JT: '42, ... until the end of '42, yes, September 1941 through May 1942.

SH: That would have been into 1943.

JT: No.

SH: No, right.

[TAPE PAUSED]

JT: Yes, '41, that's when I was there, yes.

SH: Okay, we are talking May of 1942.

JT: Yes.

SH: What was the progression then?

JT: I got drafted and I went in the military, took basic training at Camp Wheeler, Georgia, went to a noncom school for about a month, went to OCS three months and, January 6, 1943, I got commissioned a second lieutenant.

SH: That would have been in 1943 then.

JT: Yes. I got my commission before these ROTC guys, that I said I was going to go back and have some fun with them.

[TAPE PAUSED]

JT: I'm a "second louie."

SH: How did you get chosen to go for Officer Candidate School?

JT: I just didn't want to be a private, that was all. ... I applied for OCS.

SH: You did well on the exams. Did you volunteer?

JT: I figured ... if I was going to get shot at, I might as well be in as an officer, I mean, in infantry. ...

SH: Okay, now, you are a brand-new ...

JT: Brand-new "second louie." I got married, ... got ten days delay en route, ... first assignment Camp Roberts, went there and everybody at Camp Roberts, all the officers there, were movie stars and all this, because [it] was in California and they're all ... bucking to become permanent party at Camp Roberts. So, any new guy come in, like me, I'm there about a week or so and, all of a sudden, I get orders to go on, leave Camp Roberts, you know. [laughter] So, they get rid of these new guys that come through. They didn't want competition.

SH: What movie stars did you meet? Did you meet any movie stars?

JT: Oh, there were a bunch of them there. I don't remember who, but, I mean, the guys, they pointed them out to me, guys who were there.

SH: You mentioned that you had gotten married. Was this a girl from Elizabeth?

JT: No, one I knew from the office, New York Life, and I'd dated her for some time and, as it turned out, it was not the right thing, period. [laughter]

[TAPE PAUSED]

JT: ... I actually didn't think I was going to come back. I mean, when I went in, second louies in the infantry didn't have much future and that was it, and I figured I was going to be one of them, but I was going to get in the fight and that was all there was to it.

SH: Talk about the sense of *gung ho* or patriotism.

JT: Oh, yes, ... I don't know whether it was patriotism.

SH: How would you describe it? There has to be a new sense. You have been here for the debate.

JT: And I went through OCS. I was never really impressed with many things in the military, except that I wanted to get out; if I was going to get in the fight, I wanted to be in the fight and that was all there was to it. Now, that sounds goofy, but that's exactly what I wanted, and so, I went off and got in the infantry. [laughter]

SH: Was your wife able to travel with you?

JT: Only at first, when we first went out to Roberts. Then, I got my orders to go overseas and I sent her right back. ...

SH: Did she come back to her parents?



JT: Back to her parents, yes.

SH: Was she a New Jersey girl or New York?

JT: No, New York, Long Island.

SH: From Camp Roberts, you get your orders to go overseas.

JT: And then, I went up to Camp Stoneman, and that's where they processed the guys and put them on a boat. ...

SH: Were you going in as a replacement officer?

JT: ... Like all of the officers, we're all replacements. They put me on a quota, I guess, and we went down. We got on a ferry boat, went down the Sacramento River or whatever it was, and they put us on a boat and I got on the boat; you won't believe this. Some years before, when I was a kid, my brother and I went up with my father up to visit my uncle, up in Massachusetts, ... and they used to run a boat. The *New York* and the *Boston* were two Eastern Steamship Lines. They went up. One would be ... coming down, the other one would be going up. It was an overnight trip, and so, ... my father decided to go on a boat. We went on the boat and went up there to Boston and met my uncle and everything else, ... but, when I got on this boat that I get on, it was the SS *Munargo*, I still remember the name of it. I kept looking around; there's something familiar about this boat. It turned out to be the same boat we went up to Boston on. It was the *New York*, they called it. I asked one of the ship's officers. That got sunk somewhere in the war, but, I mean, when we went over, it wasn't. ... That was it, coincidence.

SH: Where were you sent then from there?

JT: Hawaii. I joined the 165th Infantry, the "Fighting 69th," and they were defending the Hawaiian Islands against all comers. So, we did a lot of training there, I mean. ... We went to different islands. ... No, I never got to the big island. It was Oahu, Maui ...

SD: Kauai.

JT: Kauai was the one, ... and then, there was another one, where the missionary was. ... We made a landing there with (ISA?). That's cheating. We made a practice landing there, and then, hung around for a couple of days, and then, went off again.

SH: Was it the leprosy colony of Father Damien?

JT: Yes, that was it. We never did see much of it, but I never did get to the big island. That was the one I missed.

SH: What kind of devastation did you see in Pearl Harbor, or did you get to see it?

JT: Oh, I went down to Pearl Harbor ... a couple of times. A friend of mine, ... Bob Borah, ... I had the Second Platoon of I Company, he had the First. He had a cousin or something, went out [to] the Battle of Midway. They came back with a bunch of movies from the carrier it was on, all this stuff, and they had all these movies and he got an invitation to come down. I went down with him. We went down to Pearl and watched these movies, with the naval officers in there. ... Oh, they had some stuff you never see on TV, oh, jeez. [laughter]

SH: They were actually films of the battle.

JT: Actual fighting films, yes. ...

SH: Was it kind of an educational tool they were using?

JT: No. On the ship, in the wardroom, they just had set up a movie and they had all these movies they took from ... fighter pilots and other things.

SH: No, I thought maybe they were showing this as a training film.

JT: No, no, it was just as information, to let the guys know what they had been through on this boat before. That was all, but we were both officers, in the Army. We had a go-ahead and we went down and saw it. ...

SH: Did you get to catch up with your brother before you left the States?

JT: The closest I got, he was in there in the Air Corps and he got to Santa Ana ... when I got to Roberts. We were that close, and, no, never did get to see him.

SH: Okay, out in California.

JT: No, no, ... he was at Santa Ana. They had an airbase there. ...

SH: Did your father's business change at all once the war started?

JT: I don't know. ... He managed to survive the war. I mean, ... the business was still going. He still worked up until almost until he died, in '49. ...

SH: In Hawaii, you were just training.

JT: It was all training and we had this sector of the beach that we had to guard. I met, who was it? [Admiral] Nimitz. We were down on the beach there. He had ... a house on the beach and we were down there. ... I used to take the guys for a run up to the end of the beach and back every day, and we get up there one day and this old, white-haired guy [is] there, ... and he [shouted], "Hey, Lieutenant," he called me over and I go over there and we started talking. I didn't know who [he was], never introduced himself, but that's it, and the guys, finally, we get back, ... "You know who that was?" "I don't know. He's a nice, old guy." "Oh, God, that was Nimitz." [laughter] ...

SH: How long are you in Hawaii then?

JT: Oh, we were there, oh, six months at least, ... but, then, the 165th got called for the first step back, ... the Gilbert Islands. The Marines hit Tarawa and the 165th hit, what do you call it? Makin Island. You'd never guess who wasn't there; me. ... My friend, Bob Borah, and I, ... in the company was Big John (Potter?), was the captain, and then, we had an executive officer who was bucking to do everything. He was a mean son of a gun and we used to get in an argument with him all the time, both of us. ... We had this big party, the division commander, Smith, Smith, General; no, was he a general? but he was division commander, 27th Division. He was commander and he had all the officers over, had a party at his place, "[We] got over there, now, go in there get 'em," the real *gung ho* stuff, you know. Well, when it came time to go, all of a sudden, Borah and Tinsley are eliminated. ... Captain (Potter?) got himself hurt in an auto accident. So, the other guy was acting captain and he did our rating and he rated both of us awful, never told us. So, we were left behind and sent as replacements down to the South Pacific. So, the end result of all that was, why, all the guys I knew [went over], ... and some of them come back and I saw them. I said, "How did we make out?" I said, "How was the guy as a captain?" They said, "Great." He says, "He was a real *gung ho* character, but he was nasty," and that's what you had to be. So, that was it.

SH: Your friend, Borah ...

JT: B-O-R-A-H, Borah, Bob Borah.

SH: Was he someone that you met in the military?

JT: Yes. Well, I met him there, because he had the First Platoon, I had the Second, and Borah ends up; after the war, I'm watching a TV show and who comes on as one of the contestants, is Bob Borah. So, I wrote a letter to the [station]. I've still got the answer from him. I wrote a letter, "Dear Bob, you were magnificent, John." [laughter] That was it, and he got the letter. I sent it to the station. They got it to him and ... he was living somewhere down in Carolina somewhere and had married and had a couple of kids. ...

SH: Where did they send you then? Did both you and Borah go?

JT: Oh, we went down; well, on the way down, I picked up a fever on the boat and they took me off at Guadalcanal, put me up on a litter and off the edge and dropped me into a raft and in I went. I stayed there ... until they got rid of the fever. They called it ... cat fever, or something like that. I don't know. That was it. So, then, ... we were free and we got sent to different outfits in need of replacements, and that's how I got spread over the Pacific. There was one guy with us, a guy named (Moony?). Well, there was a colonel onboard there and he and (Moony?) used to get in fights. (Moony?) was a second lieutenant. I said, "Why don't you lay off? That guy's a colonel." "I'll never see him again." Where does he get sent? He ends up right in the same battalion. [laughter] ...

SH: What are they transporting you around the Pacific in?

JT: Anything. I went on an LST [landing ship tank], on regular small boats and small steamships, you know, and all, whatever they had. They used them all over the place there, ... but, at any rate, I went to Guadalcanal. Then, I started island hopping from these places. Eventually, I ended up with the 108th Infantry and we went into New Guinea, New Britain, first. ... From there, we went in, we replaced the First Marine Division, I remember that, at Cape Gloucester. ... I knew a kid, lived a couple blocks from me, Joe (Kaiser?). I grabbed one of those guys, I said, "Do you know a Joe (Kaiser?)?" "Oh, yes, he just went back out to the ship," and he got killed later, with the Marines. ... So, anyway, we were there and ... Rabaul was up ... the other end of ... New Britain and ... we mixed up with a few Aussies there. ... We had a lot of fun with them. ... There was a guy that they wrote up in all the newspapers. There was some Australian by the name of (White?) and he was a character. ... We had a radio system, you know, and a guy, Joe Jackson, was our expert and he could take anything and make it work. He went to Cal Tech out there and he was good and we're there communicating with the guy and he's up in a tree, overlooking the airstrip at Rabaul. ... The guy, I still remember him, he got on and the guy says, "Well, what kind of planes are they?" He says, "Do you want the serial numbers?" [laughter] I mean, jeez, and he escaped and came on back. We did some patrol work there and didn't see much trouble at all.

SH: When you say patrol work, what do you mean?

JT: That means they send out a patrol. Anywhere from four or five men to a squad go out and explore the area, see where the enemy is. ...

SH: This (White?) had been like a coastwatcher. Is that the term they used?

JT: Well, he was [with] the Aussies. I don't know what they did. They were all over the place. ... We got invited down to what they called a (sing-sing?) one time, the natives. They had this big get-together and, while we were down there, I looked across the water. He said, "You see those logs over there?" "Yes, looks like a bunch of logs." Takes a pistol, "Bang, bang," crocodiles; they're all over the place. [laughter] ... At any rate, we went from there and ... we went over to New Guinea, did a lot of practice landing, Lae and Salamaua, and then, we got ready for the invasion of the Philippines. ... On one of these trips on a boat, I don't remember exactly where we were going, but they sent an advance party of a few officers, went up ahead to tell us how to prepare for the next thing we're doing, you know, and they kept sending back word, ... "Bring sawdust." ... [They] kept getting word, so, [the] guy kept accumulating sawdust, big stacks of it. Well, the thing was, they had sent the word back, that meant, "Beer," and the wrong guy got the message. So, we're loaded up with sawdust. ... We're out in the middle of the ocean, it catches on fire, [laughter] smoke coming out of the hold. ... So, we went up and we went up to the Admiralty Islands, and then, we went to the Philippines. ... We made the landing at Lingayen Gulf. That was on; what the heck was the name of the island now?

SH: Luzon.

JT: But, that was when the war ... really started for me. I mean, we landed and our objective was Manila. So, we went ... ashore, got out on the highway and started down the highway, and

we have a few skirmishes, you know, here or there. We got down to a place called Tarlac and Tarlac was the place where they put the American prisoners from Bataan, and they had taken them up there, the ones they didn't send up to Japan. ... A bunch of Rangers went in there and got them out. They were about five miles away from us. We didn't even know it was going on until afterwards, but we went down there and took Clark Field, which is the big airport there, and a little bit of fighting. Then, they shunted us down to the right to go down, back to Bataan, where MacArthur had sailed from, the, "I shall return," you know, and, while we're out there, ... oh, along the way, we had a few battles. I mean, some of them were not too good, ... but we managed all right, a few casualties, but we got up into one set of hills there. We get up, and I'll never forget this. We went down there and our company was in one side. ... They sent this one company up. There's two hills on the side, so, they send the guys up in-between them and, boom, they get out there, ... the Japs came down on them and we ended up, we finally took the hills, but that was one of the experiences I had there. ... I don't like to get into war, fighting stories, but we had a guy named Seavy, was a Jewish guy, and he was a medic and a guy used to call him names, you know. He had been awful, all sorts of things. Well, we were up in the hill there. We had just taken the one hill, got up there and he was a medic and we were getting shot at pretty much, and one guy kept yelling for the medics. ... I remember yelling to a guy, "Stay down there, Seavy," and he gets up to go help him and some machine gun cut him up. ... So, that was the end of him, you know, and one of the guys they all hated became a hero, but, jeez, it was awful. So, then, we went down toward; they ... put us [to] one side of Clark Field. We went down to the right and the First Cavalry Division came down behind us. They went in and took Manila. I don't know why they got the honors to do it, but we go down there and we're out at the end of the line there; we're fighting our way ahead. [laughter] ... Maybe I told you; did I tell you this? ... We're sitting there on a hillside, a few of us sitting there, and here, up come these guys. They're out souvenir hunting, some of these guys from the rear echelon. They come out and they say, "Hi," we said, "Hi," and kept going. Next thing, we hear shots being fired. These guys come hightailing it back. Nobody got hit. [laughter] He says, "They're shooting at us." "Yes, they're Japs." "Why didn't you tell us?" "You didn't ask us." You know, that's how we felt about them. That's how bitter we were about them, [laughter] but, then, we ended up taking Bataan, and then, ... they pulled us back and reorganized and they redistributed the guys again. I ended up with the 185th Infantry. From there, we went down and start island hopping down. We went to Panay, Negros. Negros was where we really got hit with everything and, at that point, I had another run-in with the military. [laughter] Oh, by the way, while we're on New Guinea, New Britain or something, the order comes through, I saw it come through there, it said, ... "All second lieutenants, if they have a six-month record of satisfactory performance, they automatically get promoted to first." The end result was, I had five months of satisfactory and the rest of it was from up in Hawaii and that, and so, I didn't qualify. I told the guy, "What the hell's going on?" He said, "They said six months. You're not six months." Okay, so, I remained a second. ... But, then, we went on all these island hops. ... The biggest one, Panay, the town called Iloilo there, I remember, we went in and took that one. It was not too much trouble, but we did a lot of scout work out there and the Japs didn't bother us too much. Then, we prepared for another one. We went to Negros, and that's where we ran into opposition and we had a time there.

SH: Why do you think it was so much more difficult?

JT: Well, it was a bigger island and they, evidently, had gathered their forces somewhere there, and we went up there and that was where I got in trouble again. We were up in a hill somewhere and ... we had [been] given a lecture before we went up there. The night before, the Colonel says, "Land, once taken, will not be given up at any price." Great, I'm a hero, and so, we go up there and ... we're up in a hill and, all of a sudden, mortar shots started landing [to] one side of us there and, the next thing I know, they're landing back here, and I get the Captain on the horn. I said, "Look, Captain, ... they've got us bracketed here. We'd better do something," you know. ... He says, "Is that something you learned at Benning?" He was ...

Susan Davenport: National Guard.

JT: What do you call it? A National Guard man, as most of those outfits were out there, and I don't know what I said to him, it wasn't nice, and hung up on the walkie-talkie, and then, we got hit with everything. I mean, they had these ninety-[millimeter] mortars that they laid in all over us, and, finally, it got so bad, the men were getting up and running. Captain never yelled [to] anybody, never did anything, wasn't heard from, and I said, "This is nonsense." So, I told the guys, sergeants, "You take ... your squad. We're getting low in," and I said, "Now, you get out. We'll reform back there," sent the second squad back, third squad. Then, they had delivered a rookie up to me as a replacement. When he first come up, I said, "Dig a hole over there and stay in it tonight. We'll straighten things out in the morning." ... He got wounded in the process, not bad. He was a walking wounded, but ... he and I were the last ones out of there. We went back. Then, I got with somebody. ... Meanwhile, my friend, Andy, ... he had the, I don't know, Third Platoon, I guess, a rebel guy, yes, (Otho Bruce Andrews?). Andy did the same thing as I did, had his men go back one squad at a [time]. We get back. Well, I took one man and we went back, after it was all over, walked back to where ... we had been, ... to see that ... we didn't miss anything, and I went up there and I'd come on back. There was no problem. "Colonel wants to see you." I get up there and there's Andy. They already had him there. So, he says, "You, too?" ... The company exec officer, he was there, too, three of us. "You're relieved of command." "What for?" "You fled in the face of [the] enemy," some such thing. So, we had a few words of discussion and they just said, "Get your stuff," and that was the end of it. So, they reassigned us to the back area and, the next thing I know, I got reassigned to a Signal Corps depot near Manila, and I got in trouble there, too. ...

SH: Before we go to the Signal Corps trouble ...

JT: The Signal Corps, ... they were back there. ... I guess he was a colonel, he comes over to me, he says, "You ought to go over there. They're having a ceremony." I said, "What's going on?" He said, ... "We're awarding a Bronze Star to one of these guys." I said, "What did he do, write out a requisition under fire?" ... He laid it into me. [laughter] ...

SH: Where was the Signal Corps at? Are you still on Negros?

JT: They were staying at a depot there and everything else. ...

SH: At Negros, on that island?

JT: No. This was when we got back to Manila. I mean, they flew us back. Andy and I went back. I had a half a dozen beers in there, something that I left somewhere back there, and, when Andy and I left, we took the beers out of this icebox back there and we got on a plane and went to Manila. [When] we landed, we didn't have any beer left, [laughter] but one of the things, while I was there, they had me working as an officer of the day and you had to go out and inspect all the places where they had stuff stored. ... I drove to one, drove to another one. I left this one. Well, I got about a hundred yards away and I hear shooting start. So, I just hit the gas. [laughter] This is going to be on record; I'm dead. So, I just went back, went back. They said, "What happened to you?" "Nothing. Why? What's the matter?" They said, "There was a shooting down there." "There was?" [laughter] So, the end result was that nobody got killed or hurt, but ... these Filipinos were raiding these things and taking the material. ... I wasn't going to get shot at that one. So, that was it.

SH: Where were these National Guard units from?

JT: New York State, all of them. I mean, I was with the; ... well, wait a minute, the 165th [Infantry Regiment] was New York City, 108th [Infantry Regiment] was Upper New York State, 185th [Infantry Regiment] was California. ... So, that's about a summary of my war effort, such as it was, [laughter] and I'm still a second lieutenant.

SH: Are you?

JT: Yes. [laughter] So, I come out [of the Army]. When they finally discharged us, you know, oh, I had a chance; one of the guys from the 185th said, "Maybe we can get you back. We're going up to occupy Korea. I think we can get you back there," and I said, "No thanks." This was it. We heard the war was over in Manila. I heard this. ... The bombs had been dropped and everything. "Why, I'll stick around here." ... So, they went up, and I thought some nut in Korea was going to end up shooting me up there, so, I stayed where I was. Eventually, I got on a boat and came home. ... We get to California, ... back to Camp Stoneman. When we were there going overseas, there was a second lieutenant from the regular Army. They used to take these (red?) career men and made second "louies" out of them, and so, they'd make more money, you know. ... After the war, they were going to go back to being enlisted men. This guy marched us down to the boat and everything. When I come back, the same guy shows up; he's now a captain. ... So, when we go up, I said, "Are you ... so-and-so?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Was it a tough war?" [laughter] I mean, so, that was Tinsley's career. ... They'd come back on a boat. We eventually made it back across country, and [I] get to Fort Monmouth, [Eatontown, New Jersey]. I'm ... ready to discharge. They get us all in a big room. "Anybody, all you people, sign up in the Reserve," and I refused. I mean, there was another guy, he was also infantry, and he refused, also. "Anybody who hadn't signed up will remain here." Everybody walks out but him and me. [laughter] ... The guy says, "Well, we'll make you a first lieutenant." I said, "Don't do me any favors." I said, "All I want is to go home." [laughter] ... The other guy was the same way. He says, "No way am I going to mess with this." We went home later that night. ... They let us go. They were just trying to ... exert a little pressure to sign up in the Reserve. Well, we didn't. Well, a lot of the guys that had signed up got called back ... for Korea, and there was a guy in the apartment next-door to me. He had come through. [laughter] I don't know what he was in, but, all of a sudden, he gets called back at Korea. We're back there and he comes over

[and says], "How the hell can they do this?" I said, "Just go out and protect us civilians now."  
[laughter] So, that was it.

SH: Did you see any of the American POWs that were taken out of Tarlac?

JT: No, I never saw them at Tarlac. We never got to see them, but I did see other guys at different [areas]. ... There was a college in Manila that we just went up to visit. We talked to some of these people, but it was just on our own. We went up there. ...

SH: Like Santo Tomas?

JT: Santo Tomas University, they called it, yes, that's right. [Editor's Note: Santo Tomas University in Manila was used as a POW camp from 1942-1945 during the Japanese occupation.] That was it, but that was when we were there. I saw MacArthur show up for the trials there, in Manila, and good, old "Dugout Doug."

SH: What did you think of General MacArthur before?

JT: I thought he had the colossal ego, but he was good, no question about it. ... I saw him come in there, I mean, with the, what do you call it? crush on his hat and everything else. ... Yamashita was being tried and he showed up for that trial. [Editor's Note: Japanese General Tomoyuki Yamashita, known as the "Tiger of Malaya," was tried in Manila in 1945 for war crimes committed by his subordinates.] I mean, we went down there just to see if we could get in. We never got into the room where the trial was going on, but MacArthur showed up when this other guy and I [were there] and they were there. ...

SH: What was the reaction of the crowd when MacArthur got out of the car? What did people do?

JT: Oh, they saluted him all over the place, but, I mean, they looked at him in awe, you know. He was, "Move over, God; here's Doug." I mean, that was [him], but, oh, we had an occasion, one time, when one of these, where the heck were we? New Guinea or something, but there was a General [Walter] Krueger, [Sixth Army commander, who] was a three-star and he should have been ... in charge of everything out there. Well, MacArthur ... had him as a sort of deputy and this guy showed up one time, we were on some island, and ... he asked, he said, ... "How's the food?" "Horrible," you know, and ... this mess sergeant got up there, "Look, we haven't had any meat on here, on this island, in a month," or something. Well, he left the island and, about a week later, a boat comes in. It was full of steaks, and so, we were out having barbecues. [laughter] I mean, it was a crazy thing. General Krueger, he was a soldier's soldier. I mean, he was. The only reason he didn't make it up to the top was he was born in Germany. [laughter]

SH: How hard was it to keep the morale of your men up?

JT: Well, it was tough ... when we're down around New Britain there. That was where we were getting "nowheresville," doing nothing but training and a little patrol activity, nothing going on. ... They had a raffle, ten-day leaves to Australia, and they had two [allotted] in a battalion, or



something like that, or three, and one of the three guys who got it in our battalion refused to take it. He says, "No way. I'm not going to get involved in any traveling or anything else." That was it. ... There were some weird things happened. Some of the people there, I mean, there are guys who ... just didn't want to do a thing like that. I mean, I don't know whether a guy's being true to his wife or what, but he just didn't want to go to Australia. He could have sold that for any price. I don't know what ever happened to the thing. ...

SH: I was just going to ask; did he sell it?

JT: I don't know, but he should have. We had one guy, one guy got killed by a caribou.

SH: Really?

JT: It went wild. The thing got wounded some way and went wild and got him and killed the guy. Jeez, this guy had everything happen to him. He was a tough-luck person. ...

SH: Did you have to censor any of the mail that was going out?

JT: Well, we had to censor mail going out. I mean, the officers did that. ... There was always a guy trying to tell; ... we're not supposed to give the location, where you were, and we had some awful crude attempts at it. I mean, you'd tell a guy, "Look, this is nonsense here. Write it over. We can't send it out," but we could send uncensored mail; officers could. ...

SH: Did you get mail regularly?

JT: It was pretty good. I didn't have any complaints about it, but, occasionally, you'd be moving and you wouldn't get any mail for a month, you know, that kind of thing, but you knew it was because of transfers and being moved around.

SH: What about news of what was going on in the European Theater?

JT: Well, [when] the invasion happened, we were ... still in Hawaii. I remember Captain (Potter?) coming in and saying, "Boys, the war's going to be over and we'll be home by Christmas. They're just invading Europe." I mean, that was it. ...

SH: How was the death of Roosevelt taken by the troops? Did that affect them at all?

JT: Well, ... most of them seemed to like him, but there was a few guys came in [saying], "I'm glad the SOB's dead," you know, and that kind of thing. ...

SH: What did they think of Truman? Did they have confidence in him?

JT: No, a lot of people didn't think much of Truman. That's the funny thing. I think Truman was one of the best. ... I think the guy was the first honest man we'd seen in the White House, and ever since. [laughter] ...

SH: Was there a reaction when the war was finally over in Europe?

JT: Yes, we didn't believe it. Why, we were in Manila and word comes that Japan surrendered. I said, "Oh, tell me about it in the morning." You know, I just didn't believe it, been over there for over two-and-a-half years, you know. ...

SH: That was when you heard that the war was totally over.

JT: Oh, the next day, I believed it. ...

SH: I meant, what was the reaction when you heard that the war was over in Europe?

JT: Well, we were wondering what was going to happen with us, over there, ... but the Japanese didn't surrender, that was it, right away. ... Eventually, they did, but it was [awhile]. ...

SH: Did you feel that the war in Europe took precedence over the war in the Pacific?

JT: Oh, yes. I mean, there was no doubt with us that they were going to finish Europe first, and then, come out and [finish the Pacific Theater].

SH: That was something you were aware of and accepted.

JT: Oh, yes. I didn't think anything about it. We were just more concerned with staying alive out there. ...

SH: Before the war ended in the Pacific, did any replacement troops come from Europe to the Pacific?

JT: They were starting to come in, when the war [was over]. ... I sat around for a couple of months, I guess, before I got on a boat, but, in that interval, some troops had arrived from Europe. ... I don't know why they would send them over. I guess they had been underway; as soon as the war was over, they were underway and they landed them there, and then, had to send them home anyway. ...

SH: When you are doing all this island hopping and going from place to place, did you ever have any interaction with any of the native people?

JT: Oh, yes. ... I mean, they were friendly. ... They acted like mascots. We used them for different things, but they were all right. They were definitely, you'd say they were down a scale on the, what do you call it? on the development scale. They just seemed to be a notch below, ... but they didn't fight. They didn't give us any trouble.

SH: How did the Filipino people treat you when you went in?

JT: Well, everybody, every Filipino, was a member of the Underground, you know. They were all heroes. I mean, I had an episode, one time, where ... they had Japanese prisoners, while I

was at the signal depot. They had Japanese prisoners out there, working, doing something, and this Filipino was giving them an awful time, was starting to swat them with something, you know, and all. I went out and stopped him. ... I mean, they did it. When I went out to the Filipino, I [said], "Lay off, will you?" and that was [it]. The guy backed off. ... Hell, those poor Japs, they were no better off, ... no worse off, than anybody else.

SH: How soon did you realize that some of the Americans that had been on Bataan and Corregidor had been taken to Japan as prisoners?

JT: We didn't know. We just didn't know about anything like that. We had heard rumors about an encampment, a prisoner of war place, in the Philippines, somewhere between Manila and where we landed, and we found out, afterwards, that it was Tarlac, which is just north of Clark Field, and they were off to the side and we went down here. We were probably within five miles of it or something. ... This Ranger group went in there and released those guys. ... There were an awful lot of experiences on some of these hills that we had to take and all that in the Philippines. Some of it was pretty rough stuff. ... We had a guy named Joe Stroudlic, who was an expert at chess. He was with the 108th Infantry. Well, Joe would sit there, laying on a cot, when we're doing nothing, you know, set up a chessboard and we'd, two or three of us, be there playing him. ... He'd say, "Move this there," and he'd beat us all the time, but Joe, I still remember, we went up to this one hill and we came up there to replace some of the guys, and then, we moved in. ... They were carrying Joe out, and he had been up there, I said, "What happened to him?" He says, "Well, he was up there and, every time a shot was fired, [Joe said], 'Missed me again, you son of a bitch,' and this kind of thing," and he got a physical, what do you call it? exhaustion, from [having] no liquid.

SH: Dehydration.

JT: ... They [the medics] carried him out. I thought he was wounded. It wasn't. That's what happened to him. He never came back. ... Some of the individual episodes of guys, you never know how a guy's going to react. ... The worst one I heard of was (Louie Francovilla?). This was with the 165th. ... He was "over the hill [absent without leave] in Hawaii and they heard they were going south to make this landing. So, he comes back; all is forgiven. They give him a big lecture about all this. ... [They said], "We'll forget about it." He goes down to Makin, becomes a hero. He climbs on top of a tank and was doing all sorts of things. ... Well, on that tank, I'll tell you another one, but (Louie?) is up there doing all this crazy work and ... he becomes a hero. He got back to Hawaii, he goes "over the hill" again. [laughter] ... Andy, my buddy, in the 185th, out on patrol, [there were] two tanks; he's in the front one and loaded with men and they come up there and there's this hill there and this thing [the tank] went around the hill. ... Andy calls a stop. ... All of a sudden, on his thing [tank], we're talking about what to do next, this colonel, back there on the hillside, says, by walkie-talkie radio, "Get back on those tanks. You're supposed to go to..." He says, "Hold your horses, Colonel." He said, ... "We're being shot at, not you." That's what he said to him, and so, he says, "Okay, send the tank around there." It got hit with everything, machine guns, everything else. If you'd have been on top of that tank, everybody would have been wiped out. When he got back, the Colonel never said a word to him. ... I found there was one general thing, that [in] these National Guard units, the officers were poorly trained. They, evidently, read a book and got promoted, and I knew a bunch

of them who were just stupid, the stuff they did, and we deliberately didn't pay attention to them. That's all. ... They seemed to be jealous of all us guys that came from [the Infantry School at Fort] Benning, and, there, they said they had gotten their commissions through the National Guard and "Series Ten" thing, they called it, and they wouldn't listen to anything that we said, or at least didn't listen to anything I said. [laughter] ... One of the things that I got after them [about was], one time, we come up to one hill where we couldn't take this hill, [so, we] call for an air strike. In comes this plane and it comes down and it drops napalm, you know, the flamethrower stuff, a big can. It hits the bottom of the hill; all the way up the hill, this big, enormous flame. ... Later on, we got there and I says, "Why didn't the Marines on Tarawa use napalm on those things, instead of sending men in there, one after another?" and I never got an answer about why they never [did]. [Editor's Note: The Battle at Tarawa, in 1943, produced a high number of casualties, costing the Marines approximately one thousand lives and three thousand wounded.] In a lot of places, they could have used it. That was me, fighting the Army. ... Some of the things they did; there was a guy named, they called him, what the heck was his name? Something Smith, some name Smith, was in charge of that whole operation in the Gilberts. He relieved the same general that had the party for us in Hawaii. He relieved him because he had a couple of men who were out there going down and shooting the top of every tree, and he came over and says, "What are you doing?" "We're looking for snipers," because a sniper had gotten the Colonel of the 165th Infantry, walking by himself, way behind the line, "Boom," right between the eyes, and he relieves him of command. [Editor's Note: Mr. Tinsely is referring to an incident during the Battle of Saipan in which US Marine Corps Lieutenant General Holland "Howling Mad" Smith relived US Army Major General Ralph C. Smith, commander of the 27th Infantry Division, of command.]

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: I put it back on. I just wanted to make sure.

JT: "Howling Mad" was the guy, and he ... lost a few thousand Marines, killed, in Tarawa, [by] just sending them in, sending them in. They could have used this napalm and come down there on those cement things they had. He's the same guy who was in charge at Okinawa, was it Okinawa? [Iwo Jima], where they had the tremendous, same kind of battle. He did [the] same thing, "Just send them in." He was a butcher. It was absolutely nuts. "Howling Mad" Smith, that was the guy. Oh, he was stupid. Jeez, that used to get me. I used to fight with the Captain all the time. ... [laughter] I didn't think he was too bright. ...

SH: Was the Captain from the National Guard as well?

JT: ... Oh, yes, the Captain. [laughter] ... He didn't say a word while we were being bombed and everything else. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

JT: ... We had an episode, one time, where they were bringing some beer and putting it on a ship. I was ... the ship's loading officer that time and the guy running the thing would take a whole thing (loading net). It would go down one deck and they'd stop and take a bunch off.

They'd go down another deck and they'd [lose more]; by the time they got to the bottom, it was about ten cases left. [laughter] ... A lot of guys got drunk and they had a big thing. [Since] I was in charge, they called me in on that one. ... I walked in and I walked into that meeting with him, ... he was a colonel, and I didn't even salute when I came in. I said, "Here I am. What do you want?" and, oh, he looked at me funny, you know. [laughter] The next thing you know, he was after me for something, but ... he was National Guard, too. We had some weird, weird experiences with those guys [National Guard officers] and they just ... didn't have it. I mean, they ... had been playing games all their lives. They didn't know; they couldn't separate the real from the games.

[Editor's Note: The following addendum was written by Mr. Tinsley during his review of the transcript]:

I was sounding off about some of the National Guard Officers. What I encountered with many of the National Guard Officers was a resentment against the "ninety-day wonders" who were commissioned at Fort Benning in the Infantry School. Not all, but many of the rank of captain or more, specifically higher ranks, had achieved their rank in peacetime, many joining the National Guard to supplement their income because of the Depression. Often, their status as civilians earned them promotion to a higher rank militarily. *C'est la vie!*

On more than one occasion, I was given the most dangerous assignment, never the easy one. I never complained about it, but, later, on reflection, a pattern emerged. Without going into war stories, I have not changed my opinion over the years. On one occasion, our duffel bags were delivered to a location in the rear. The Captain went back in his jeep, picked up several of the bags, leaving mine laying there. His comment, "He can pick it up himself," no further comment. Among other things, I lost a camera, plus a lot of good pictures. Before this sounds like a gripe session, I'll change the subject.

[End of addendum.]

SH: Were they a lot older than you were?

JT: Yes, most of them who were captain and above had been in the [National] Guard for a long time and they'd gradually gotten up there [in rank]. Those guys shouldn't have been in charge, ... or they should have sent them back for a very intensive retraining.

SH: When you were moving your troops from island to island, were they Navy ships that you were on?

JT: Yes, Navy.

SH: Okay. It was not the Merchant Marines that were taking you.

JT: No. ... Actually, everything I traveled on was Navy-controlled then, even the first one, the [USS] *Munargo* [(AP-20)], when I went over on that. ... We were on some weird things. We got out [to sea], we didn't know where we were going, but, when you moved around, these LSTs,

they were very shallow, so [that] they could bring them in and beach them and unload them, but they get out in rough seas, oh, God, [laughter] and I got seasick very easy. [laughter] ... I had a sergeant, platoon sergeant, from Wisconsin. That son of a gun is out there, no matter what the sea was, nothing bothered him, and I'm out there hoping the war'd get over [quick]. ...

SH: What did you do to keep busy? There was a tremendous amount of nothing going on, from what I understand. What did you do to keep from being bored?

JT: Well, when we got on different islands, the first thing we would [do is] send out patrols, all the time. That was one of the things, and then, we'd try to have some sort of training where they set up targets or something, shooting, whatever it was. ... When you were on these islands, it was kind of boring at times, yes.

SH: What about on the ship? Was that boring?

JT: Oh, you'd get on the ship, ... we had regular exercise and everything else. ...

SH: Would you finally get your "sea legs" or would you be sick the entire time?

JT: No, no, I got over it quick. I'd get sick and I'd get over it. ... Like, when I first started going overseas, I went in at dinner, sat down. They had the black stewards working on the boats at that time, and the guy comes up to me [and says], "You don't look so good, sir," and I said, "I don't feel so good," and out the door I went, over the side, but, the next morning, I made breakfast. I was all right. Don't ask me how. That happened on the sailboat, you [to his daughter] remember, down there, but I'd get over it real quick.

SH: Did you have chaplains with your group?

JT: Yes, we had one chaplain, who, [laughter] oh, God, nobody liked him, but he thought he was holier than thou, I mean, although we wouldn't pay any attention to him. But, some of them were good. They told me that, this story I got second-hand with the 165th, they had a chaplain there who was, I don't know what the heck; he was a Catholic priest. ... He was there and, when he got down there, they started shooting and they had him pinned down and he sticks up his head and [said], "Stop shooting, you son of a bitch. It's the chaplain." [laughter] I still remember the guys telling me that story. I didn't see it happen. [laughter] ...

SH: What about the medical care? Did you have good medics and good medical facilities?

JT: ... The platoon medics, the ones who were with you, were good. The rest of it, I don't know, because I only know when I went in ... sick and I had this fever and they took me off the boat. They fixed me up. They had pills for everything, you know. We didn't worry about water. You'd fill it from a river, throw a halazone pill in it and drink the water; nothing happened. I did get malaria. ...

SH: Did you?

JT: I got yellow jaundice out there, also.

SH: Was it Atabrine that they gave you?

JT: Atabrine, we had, yes.

SH: You had to take that all the time.

JT: Yes. ...

SH: You talked about the lottery for that one leave.

JT: Yes.

SH: Were there other leaves that you were given, R&Rs of any kind?

JT: No. I spent two years, after Hawaii, ... over two years, in the South Pacific. When I got back and was discharged, I had three months of leave coming to me. So, I was cleared up in December. ... I was still on the payroll until March and I was back in school. So, that helped that, yes. [laughter]

SH: What about any kind of USO shows or Red Cross interaction?

JT: We had no reaction. There was one gal [that] showed up down there. She was just after all the boys. ... The guy in charge, I don't know who he was, he says, "Get that slut off the island. She's ruining the morale of the whole outfit." Some of them, they went out there, but they were usually a close-knit group. ... The best one I ever saw was, what the heck was his name? Little Jack Little on the piano and who was the guy, ... the dancer?

SD: Gene Kelly? Fred Astaire? ...

JT: No, not Fred Astaire. ... They put on a good show, I mean. ... Where they found a piano from, I don't know, but ... Joe, what the heck? He was in the one with the three [characters], *The Wizard of Oz*.

SD: Jack Haley? Ray Bolger?

JT: Bolger, Ray Bolger, that was it. [laughter] Yes, he was good.

SD: Where was that? ...

JT: Joe E. Brown showed up down there.

SD: So, they did have USO shows.

JT: Joe E. Brown showed up and wanted to borrow a rifle.

SH: Really?

JT: And the guys were going to give it to him. He says, oh, he lost a son in the war, you know, and he wanted to go out there and take his own shots at them. ... One guy loaned him a gun. ... Some officer caught him and [said], "No, guy, no, you can't do it," but ... he was not afraid. He wanted to take a few shots at them. He was no kid.

SH: Where were you when the USO shows caught up with you?

JT: Hawaii, first. They showed up there. That was the real deal, and the next one I saw was New Guinea, I think, and then, I don't know who else. ... Some of them [USO performers] were around, but, for the most part, they tried to keep them in comparatively safe areas. [laughter] ... We had a ... USO guy, ... there was one guy there, I don't know whether he was from the Salvation Army originally, and this guy engineered a way to get Coca-Cola into jugs and he mixed it up and he handed [it] out free to everybody. [laughter] Jesus, he was good. I don't even remember his name, but ... he was a good-meaning guy and was all right.

SH: You talked about how, while loading the ship the one time, the beer disappeared.

JT: Yes.

SH: How often would you have access to beer?

JT: Oh, they usually managed to get beer to us.

SH: Did they?

JT: Yes, ... but it was rationed, also 3.2 beer.

SH: How did they pay you while you were in the Pacific?

JT: Well, I had most of mine sent home. I kept some. I played a little poker with it, or something like that. ... I had a good friend there, ... Ken Manley. Ken was the best card player I've ever seen. We used to play a lot of bridge with the [fellows] and, whenever I got him as a partner, we won. I mean, he was just good. He played poker. ... They'd have the battalion finals and the regimental finals, and that's where the big money went, [laughter] and Ken always managed to win. ... I [will] put it this way; he never lost, and, when he was coming back, ... he went up with the occupation forces in Japan, came back on a boat, and they said he really cleaned up. ... I got out there to Los Angeles and I look him up in a phonebook, trying to find him, and I see Manley and (Meek?). They rented industrial equipment, bulldozers and all this stuff. He got that dough from somewhere, and I think I know where he got it, because, ... God, he was good, but he wasn't cheating or anything. He just was a good card player, a good poker player.

SH: Did you ever have people who just could not go on or who refused to follow orders?



JT: Oh, I never had anybody who wouldn't follow orders. I had one guy who went "over the hill." ... He was the greatest scout we had. We'd go out on a patrol, he was always the point. That son of a gun could smell things. He'd go out, he'd look around, he says, "Over there," and, sure enough, there was something over there. ... He just had this instinct, but, after awhile, he went "over the hill." After I left, he went "over the hill" and the guys told me and, if I'd have been there, I'd have said, "Keep going," I mean that, because he was so good. ... I'm just trying to think of the different characters. The one episode I remember, when I said that's where we got shelled so bad, [we] had Genaro Lozano, a Mexican, still remember his name. The mortars started landing near him. When it stopped, he ran over to be close to his friends, and then, when he came back, you know, after the next barrage, he came back and ... there's a big dud in his foxhole, great, big, ninety-millimeter mortar. If he'd have been in there, it would have killed him. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

JT: I was making eighteen hundred [dollars] a year, and you had to pay for your meals. ... If you ate in the mess hall, with the officers' mess, you had to pay for that.

SD: You paid for that?

JT: And I got a bill one time, sitting in a foxhole, somewhere, [laughter] that was from Camp Roberts. That's what it was, because I was in and out of there. ... I had owed them for twelve meals, that mess. ... I turned it over, wrote on it, "This must be a mistake," and sent it back. [laughter]

SD: That's the kind of military stuff [that] drives me crazy. ...

SH: Was your wife able to save money while you were gone?

JT: Oh, yes, ... not an awful lot, [laughter] but, ... when I got back, I bought a Buick convertible, when they first came out, and that was a beautiful car. ... Now, about guys going goofy, I don't remember any case where that happened; I know where guys were scared like hell, but ... none of them ever went goofy. ...

SH: Were most of the guys in your platoon also part of this Guard unit?

JT: Were they what?

SH: Were they also part of the Guard unit?

JT: Yes. Well, a lot of them were; some of them were drafted, some were the ordinary National Guard people. ...

SH: Where were they from?

JT: All over. ... I had one platoon sergeant who was from Wisconsin. I had one guy from California, a sergeant, and I had one fellow there that he was in the Signal Corps, what do you call it? OCS, in the Signal Corps. A week before he was supposed to get commissioned, he got in trouble. He went out and got drunk or something and he ended up as a private, down there with me, and, as soon as I had the opportunity, I made him sergeant, because he was good. ...

SH: Did you feel that your training prepared you for what you experienced when you got over there?

JT: [Fort] Benning did a good job. I wouldn't say anything about the rest of it. I went to a bunch of schools out there in Hawaii. I went to a jungle school, I went to a ranger school and there were all sorts of things that we did, but the OCS, they did a good job, I have to say that, the Infantry School, but we had all sorts of experiences. [laughter] It's tough to remember them. I mean, I remember certain things that happened and ... I forget ... exactly where they happened, ... because I was shot at a few times and I don't exactly know where it happened. So, it muddies the waters, in terms of giving you a nice, neat sequence.

SH: Right. What do you think was the most perilous moment for you?

JT: That thing when we were being shelled. One of those ninety-millimeters landed within two feet of my foxhole, threw dirt all over me and, after it stopped, the medic came running over. I said, "Get the hell out of here. I'm all right," I mean, but I was covered [with dirt], what a big hole right there, jeez. ...

SD: Never got wounded.

JT: I remember machine guns chipping off wood over my head while I'm out looking to see where it's coming from. I remember that, and, as the Aussies said, "Don't worry about the ones that miss you, Yank," [laughter] and that was it. ... You never know how close any of them were.

SH: You talked about the different illnesses that you had, but what about the snakes or the bugs?

JT: Saw two snakes ... in all the islands.

SH: Really?

JT: I was on twenty-three different islands and I had seen two snakes. One was on New Britain, one was in Guinea. ... The one on the beach at New Britain, they rolled a log over and there was this snake, ... all pale colored, everything, a big, long thing, skinny. I don't know what it was, but they killed it. ... The other one was out in the jungle. I mean, that was the only one I ever saw out there at all, but we never worried about snakes. ... You know, they're not in Hawaii, I mean, all the islands there. ... Let's see, where else?

SH: Did you ever get a chance to go swimming?

JT: Oh, yes, very often. We were defending beaches most of the time, so, you're always down there swimming.

SH: That was what I wondered, did you get a chance to do that?

JT: Oh, yes.

SH: What about hot meals or showers?

JT: Oh, yes. They did a good job. ... Now, Ken Manley, this guy I was telling [you] about, the card player, he was the mess officer for us and he'd come up there, sometimes in the middle of the night, and they'd come up and have hot meals for us. They were good. They did a good job, and we had one guy in the kitchen, he wanted to get up and see some action. So, they said, "Okay," and they sent him up [laughter] ... and a bullet hit his helmet and spun it around on his head, when he was up there. He was happy to go back to the kitchen. [laughter] Actually, it had put a hole in his helmet and it didn't scratch him at all, just spun the thing around on his head. [laughter]

SH: The war ends, and you said you did not believe it, were you in Manila when you heard that?

JT: Yes, I was in Manila. We listened to the radio, "They have dropped this big bomb there," and then, ... a couple of days later, they dropped the second one on Nagasaki. ...

SH: Did you hear about it when it happened or was this afterward?

JT: It came in the news, I mean, as they used to get news on the radio.

SH: Did you understand what the "big bomb" was?

JT: No. I know it was an atomic bomb. That's what they called it, the atomic bomb.

SH: Did you have any sense of what an atomic bomb was?

JT: Yes. I mean, ... I asked Joe Jackson. He knew all the answers. ... We knew that ... it had something to do with fission and all this stuff.

SH: Did you?

JT: But, we really didn't understand it, of course. ...

SH: How long after the surrender is it before you finally get to come home to the States?

JT: Oh, it was three or four months, I guess. That happened when, in August, wasn't it?

SD: I think so.

SH: The surrender is in August.

JT: August, and, yes, well, I got back and, ... in December, I was in ... [Fort] Monmouth, getting released from service.

SH: What did you do for those three months after the surrender?

JT: Waited for a boat. [laughter] ... I'm not being a comedian, but that's all we were doing. So, that's when ... I said I was doing this work [as] officer of the day, where I went out and I heard all this shooting behind me there. That was after the war was over and I wasn't about to get shot by some Filipino [laughter] ... after the war was over.

SH: I see. I understand now.

SD: I didn't get that before, either, okay.

JT: Yes.

SH: What did you do to stay busy? You were in the Signal Corps now, right?

JT: Yes. I didn't do much of anything, except; I'm trying to think [of] what we did do. ... I learned how to use a forklift. I went to one of the warehouses there and I learned how to use a forklift and we did that kind of thing. We went around, just checked things and looked busy. [laughter] ... That one, I remember, yes, because I was out there learning how to make the thing go up and down and all. [laughter] ... We had a thing there where they had set up an officers' club ... where we were located and they brought in stateside liquor, and so, we'd go in there and have a drink, and all we did was [drink]. [laughter] Jeez, there was a guy named Dick (Dollof?), from Maine, and who the heck else was there? There were three of us used to go in there and we'd sit down and start drinking, and the guy ... that ran it all, we knew him, was an Irishman. I don't know what his rank was, but he ran the liquor supply and everything, and he got sick one day and they took him to [the] hospital and the doctor examines him. The guy, he's suffering from acute alcoholism. [laughter] The guy used to sit there and drink all day. [laughter] I mean, he could hold it pretty well. He was a functional alcoholic. I don't know what ever happened to him, [laughter] but (Dollof?) was from Maine. I'll never forget him. ... We did a lot of things in there, in that officers' club. Oh, there was (Betts?); the guy's name was (Betts?). ... He had studied piano. He was part of the Signal Corps and he had studied piano for a long, long time and he had to make a decision whether to professionally become a musician and everything, and he figured he was just short of getting to the top. So, he never [went pro]. He just used it and got into teaching and that kind of thing, but ... the reason I found out, they brought an orchestra in one time, in this officers' club, and the guy's playing the piano there and I see him sitting there. ... Finally, after awhile, I went over to the guy and said, "Look, would you move over and let me take this other guy?" ... He sat down and he could play. I mean, he was good. ... They played *The One O'Clock Jump* and he did that first eight bars ad lib, and he used to play Chopin all the time, for me.

SD: Favorite.

JT: I mean, we'd be in there drinking and he'd be playing Chopin. [laughter] ... He was from New Jersey, somewhere, but he was, I mean, an expert piano player.

SH: Did you run into anybody from Rutgers?

JT: ... One guy, a guy [who] used to be center on the basketball team, a big guy.

[TAPE PAUSED]

JT: Let's see, Frankie Brock was my buddy there.

SH: We are looking in the 1943 Yearbook.

JT: Yes, let's see, there's a picture there [of] basketball. No, it's hard to tell. I see Frank Hill on the end there, ... Sid Sewitch, yes, I knew him very well; Ross, Glowacki, Glowacki, Glowacki. No, I don't recognize him. ... He's not here. I'm trying to [find him].

SH: This would be when they came back.

[TAPE PAUSED]

JT: He was just coming over and I was sticking around, waiting to be reassigned, in a "repple-depple," [replacement depot], as we called it.

SH: When you decided to get out of the military and not take up the Reserves, you knew you wanted to come back to school.

JT: Yes. That was it. I wanted to get back, because I still hadn't gotten a bachelor's degree.

SH: Had you been in contact with the University at all?

JT: Well, I [had] come down to find out when classes start and everything, when I got back, and I started at the midterm there, in Spring '46 to '47. ... I started back then and ... I finished sometime in ... the following fall, because I went through the spring, and then, summer and I finished up all the requirements and they had a special ceremony, ... not like a regular graduation, no speechmaking or anything, but they handed us the degrees ... over in the chapel [Kirkpatrick Chapel]. ...

SH: In 1947?

JT: That would have been in September of '47, around then. ... Then, I came back, oh, some years later, and decided to get a master's, which I did. Then, I subsequently kept taking courses, pecking away at a PhD, which I never finished. I finished all the course work, but I never [got the degree]. I had a dissertation picked and I was working on it, and then, I went overseas, to Guam. [laughter] That was the end of that.

SD: Married my mother. ...

SH: What was it like to come back to campus after the war?

JT: Oh, it was a sad moment, in a lot of ways. We had come back and you'd run into guys that you knew and say, "Glad you made it," and everything else, you know, and then, saying, "Oh, did you hear about So-and-So?" and it was a tough thing, because you knew there were so many guys who had been killed, and I don't know about being maimed. There were a lot of them, too, I guess. ...

SH: You had talked about one of your classmates, Emil Potzer, Jr.

JT: Potzer, yes, Emil Potzer, ... we were good friends. He was the only guy I ever knew who spent twenty-eight hours a day. I mean, he was working for a living; he was playing football there on the team. He was a good football player, ... but he worked in a restaurant downtown. I guess ... that's how he got his meals, and then, we had ... an intramural basketball league there. So, I put together a team and ... Potzer was on it and Joe Horvath, what the heck? was a football player, a bunch of us got together. We won the thing, the intramurals. I mean, we had a good team.

SH: You were kind of like the Scarlet Barbs. You were not a fraternity, but you were something close.

JT: Yes. Well, that was it. We just had a team and we had a good team. I think we could have beaten the varsity, I mean, [laughter] because we were all guys who had played, but never decided to play for the school. They just didn't want to spend the time.

SH: I just remembered, from when we were talking off the record, that you had said Potzer was one of those who were lost.

JT: Yes.

SH: It is nice to record memories.

JT: Potzer. I saw a picture in ... something that John Archibald sent me, somebody. It was one of these blurbs they put out and in there was a picture; I'm trying to think now how this worked out. Oh, there was a guy in there, the Class of '44, who retired as a four-star general.

SH: [General Frederick J.] Kroesen.

JT: Is that [him]? I didn't know him, but, I mean, he went through the ROTC and he ends up a four-star general. That's getting up there, and I never knew him when I was here. He was a big guy, physically, I can see that, but I didn't know him, but that's pretty good. [laughter]

SH: He is a great person, he and his wife.

JT: Have you had him in here for [an interview]? yes, okay. ...

SH: Are there other people that did not come back that you would like to talk about?

JT: Well, ... I don't know how many of my class didn't come back. I just don't know. ... When I came back in '48 for the ... fifth class reunion, and after what happened to (Ken McDonald?), I said, "Never again. I'm not going back for one of those things." So, I have no idea who died. I know of some of them, because they used to sit up in the; what the heck was this guy's name? A couple of them used to sit up there and I'd be on the bench and they'd start, "We want Tinsley. We want Tinsley." [laughter]

SH: Your fan club.

JT: We're playing a game one day. The guy next to me, he went on; ... what the hell was his name? He became a sportswriter up in New Jersey somewhere, but he's sitting next to me and he's holding a basketball here. Well, there's a little scrimmage out in front for the basketball. I punched the ball and, all of a sudden, they've got two basketballs out there. [laughter] The coach looks at it, says, "Tinsley." "What did I do?" [laughter] but I ran into Frankie Brock. ... He was on the basketball and baseball team. He was good, but Brock and I were good friends, went to a picnic, while I was working for Tidewater Oil in New York, went out there and he shows up out there. He's with the Public Service. I don't know what he was doing. ... All of a sudden, I hear, "Hey, Tinsley," and I went over and [asked], "What the hell are you doing here?" you know, and we just had a picnic going. ... By chance, I happened to meet him. I met one fellow that I was in OCS with, Bob Dehler, big guy. I'm walking down the street in New York and a guy calls my name and I went over, "My God, what the hell are you doing here?" So, he made it, I mean, but, out of the ... graduating class at OCS, he was one of them, jeez.

SH: You talked about how bittersweet it was to see your friends while still knowing that so many of them were not back at school. Did most of those who survived come back to school and finish their degrees?

JT: ... A lot of them did, I know, but there's a lot of them [who had] finished. See, a lot of my class went through and finished. There's the pictures of them. They got their degrees and they never came back. The only ... time I saw them was at that class reunion, but it wasn't like we're just back off the boat, you know. ...

SH: What was campus like? Did you live in married housing?

JT: ... What was her name? She was down College Avenue, just a block away from the gym. She had a house, she had several rooms and she was renting them, and we stayed in one room there and had that until I graduated. ... We used to go over to the cafeteria and eat all the time, great meals. [laughter]

SH: Just for the record, considering the facial expression, that was not true. [laughter]

JT: ... I used to spend a lot time in the library when I was here. ... When I went back for the master's, there used to be a blond gal [who] sat at the top of the stairs there and she'd check you [out] and you come up from the stacks downstairs, to see that you weren't taking stuff out of there that didn't belong to you, you know, and everything else. ... I walk in there, she looked at me, "You." I said, "What the heck?" "Why didn't you ask me for a date?" she said. [laughter] I said, "I didn't know anything. I didn't have any money anyway." [laughter]

SD: How funny.

JT: But, that was one hell of a compliment, boy. [laughter] God, she used to sit there and she was over in the library just visiting, I think, ... but she points to me. [laughter] "What the hell did I do?" ...

SH: Were you a different student when you came back after the war?

JT: Well, I wanted to get through as soon as I could. That was all it was, but, ... no, I was always a very earnest student. I mean, I say earnest; I wanted to learn. I mean, that was it and I never felt I'd gain anything by cutting school or anything like that. ... I used to read. I was an inveterate [reader]. I still am a reader. ... I took all these courses with Peterson, that's in addition to being an economics major, and we had to read book after book for him in philosophy, jeez, and it was worth it. I mean, I spent an awful lot [of time reading].

SH: You did not change your major or anything. You stayed in economics.

JT: No, I stayed right with it and come back, and Dean Agger was still there and he taught a course that I took with him. ... He was a great, old guy, a Scotsman. ... I remember, I met a couple of guys there; oh, it was when I was at graduate work, I met some guys. What the heck? Don Tailbey, he went on and got his doctorate in economics. ... Let's see, Nick Balabkins, he ended up teaching up at Lehigh. ... He got his PhD. There was (Sam Rosenblatt?), and I knew a lot of these guys. ... That was in graduate school, though.

SH: Did you expect to go right to graduate school after you had graduated?

JT: No, I had to earn a few bucks. [laughter]

SH: What about the GI Bill? Were you using that?

JT: I used the GI Bill, but, when I came back to get the master's, I was told by somebody in the VA [US Department of Veterans Affairs] that, "You didn't indicate you wanted to take graduate work. Therefore, you were not eligible." So, I told them what they could do with the VA and I went out and I paid for it all myself.

SH: Oh, my word.

JT: I know. ... Everybody said, "You should have gone and complained. Somebody was telling you wrong."



SH: Yes, for sure.

JT: But, I was not in a mood to argue the thing. "Oh, the hell with it," I mean, you know, that kind of thing.

SH: After you graduated ...

JT: Yes, then, I went to work. ... I got to work for Tidewater Oil and I was there for, oh, I guess, six years or something. Then, there was a mix-up over there with a vice-president in charge of the company. He expected to be made president. He had been ... vice-president for a long time and J. Paul Getty, ... [who] owned the company, he puts his son in as president. So, B. I. Graves opens up a consulting office and he was looking for some help, and he found it. [laughter] ... I went over there with him, on Wall Street, B. I. Graves Associates, and I stayed there with him for awhile, and then, ... I was doing great. I mean, I had a good job, the pay was good, the hours [were] right. I mean, everything was good and I couldn't say a bad word about Graves. He was a neat guy and what happened was, I got to thinking one day, "I'm going down the same road my father did, spent the rest of his life going to New York and working in New York," and I walked in one day and said, "Mr. Graves, I quit." "Huh? What's the matter? Is it a matter of money?" ... I said, "No, no." I told him, I said, "Look, ... I saw what happened with my father," and I said, "It's not going to happen to me." ... Finally, we come up to a point and he says, "Will you hang around long enough to get a replacement?" I says, "Yes, I know two guys out here who'd like to have this job." [laughter] I sent them in. One of them got the job. [laughter]

SH: You had them in the wings, waiting.

JT: ... I had a great deal on that, and he had offices in New York and San Francisco. He'd go to San Francisco and I'd stay in New York. ... I got to meet an awful lot of people in there. If there were a top dozen men in the oil business, he was one of them. ... His friends used to drop in all the [time]. He had a desk, ... his desk was here, he had another desk over here and it was an icebox. [laughter] He'd open it up. ... He went out to San Francisco one time. He had hired this gal, his secretary. I come back into the office one day and she's bombed out of sight. She went out and drank, and I talked to her, "Look, you're in no shape. ... Just go home, get straightened out, come on back tomorrow." Well, Graves came back and I said, "Look, you've got a problem here." I said, "This gal, I think, is an alcoholic," and, sure enough, I mean, she was going out, sneaking a drink, and so, he says, "Well, you tell her. ... You fire her." "Nothing [doing], you hired her, you fire her." [laughter] I mean, that was it. So, he did. He called her in and said, "You have been misbehaving and we're not putting up with it and that's all." [laughter] So, that was when I went back and I got home and didn't know what to do. I mean, ... all I know is, I wanted to get out of New York first. Then, I began thinking, "Now, I want to go to school. Now, if I had my own business, I could still go to school, time everything so [that] I [could go to school]," and I found a liquor store that was for sale in Madison, New Jersey. So, I went in and bought it. ... Wilner's, it was, Wilner's Liquors, they had a chain of them, all over the place, and Bill Wilner and I got [to] talking in there. He had been in the infantry in World War II. So, we became very friendly, and so, we're kindred ... spirits. So, I got a good price, I thought it was a

good price, on the liquor store, bought it and a fellow I worked with in the office in New York had retired. [I] called him up, "Would you like to work in a booze shop?" you know. "What's involved?" I said, "Well, you work your own hours here." So, Ed Graff came over and helped me out a few days a week, and then, I found (John Bradshaw?), who was big in the local fire department. ... So, every week, once, one day of the week, we'd fill them up with beer. I mean, it was a good sale. So, that's the way it went. ...

SH: Did you live in Madison?

JT: Yes, I moved to Madison. I was living in Clark Township, moved up there, got a house and I figured, when my son was just starting out, I said that was a good school system, too. So, he started out there, ... but it was a fun thing.

[TAPE PAUSED]

SD: Fairleigh Dickinson. ...

JT: Yes. Well, that happened after I had the liquor store.

SD: Well, during, though.

JT: Yes. It was while I had it.

SD: Yes. ... You didn't sell that until we moved out of state. ...

JT: ... This estate came [up] for sale, the Twombly Estate, and Fairleigh Dickinson bought it, and then, Sam Pratt came over. [Editor's Note: In 1958, Fairleigh Dickinson bought portions of the Vanderbilt-Twombly Estate to establish its College at Florham Park/Madison, New Jersey.] He, Sam Pratt, was made the dean and he said [he wanted] to set up shop there, and what happened? ... We had him down to Kiwanis one day, to give a talk about Fairleigh Dickinson. He was trying to spread the word around there and I got [to] talking to him afterwards and sort of dropped a hint, "Well, I'm taking graduate work. I'm working [in] a PhD program at Rutgers," and that's how I ended up; ... I became part-time, and then, we got a guy, what the heck was his name? [He] was teaching up there. Here's how I got in, really. He was teaching, it was economics and something else, and he was full-time faculty, but he was an Englishman and there's something wrong. They found something wrong with his visa, that he wasn't supposed to take a full-time job or something. So, they had to can him and I was doing part-time [work] and I knew him partially. ... They asked me, would I take it over? I said, "Not if it means his losing a job." "No, no." So, I talked to him about it and he said, "Yes, that's right. I'm through up there," and everything else. Well, he went on and he was just like me. He was working toward a degree, and he finally got the degree, and he ends up at Columbia, the dean of the College of Education [Teachers College?] at Columbia, Harold Noah, a really good man.

SH: Oh, my.

JT: So, I got a three-page letter from him back there, that he wrote to me after he got that, and so, ... he was good, an Englishman. He knew what he was talking about. He was good.

SH: You got your master's at Rutgers.

JT: And I was working for my PhD at Rutgers, too.

SH: You had your liquor store and you were teaching at Fairleigh Dickinson.

JT: Yes, that's right. I kept busy.

SD: ... Have a family.

SH: And you had a family. [laughter]

JT: Yes. [laughter] ... I had to get out of New York, that was all. ... My brother told me, he says, "You're nuts." [laughter] I mean, that was it.

SH: What did your brother do after the war?

JT: Well, he ended up as a financial vice-president [of] Blue Cross/Blue Shield, up in Syracuse, but he had worked for the ... Union Labor Life Insurance Company, and then, for another insurance company, and he had worked for New York Life, ... but he worked his way up, and then, he moved up to Syracuse, and then, he retired from up there.

SH: Where did you go from being at Fairleigh Dickinson?

JT: ... He put in one year at Rutgers, as a freshman here, and ... the rest of his time he did at night school, and he became an accountant and he never got his CPA, but he was always in a responsible job and worked his way up. ... Then, he ends up at this last thing with Blue Cross/Blue Shield.

SH: Where did you go from Madison and Fairleigh Dickinson? Where does your career take you?

JT: ... Where did I do what?

SH: Where did you go after Madison, Farleigh Dickinson and the liquor store?

JT: [laughter] Oh, it's a long story. I went to Guam, [laughter] but, in the process, I mean, I got a divorce and that was in the mill for awhile, and then, I remarried and went to Guam. [laughter]

SD: We all went to Guam. [laughter]

JT: Yes.

SH: I assume that you inherited a family.

JT: Yes, sort of. [laughter]

SD: He lost his own. His son didn't stay (too long?).

JT: But, I sold the liquor shop. I think that was a mistake, because that was doing real well and it's the only reason I could do some of these things. ...

SH: What did you do in Guam?

JT: I was, quote, "chief economist," [laughter] and I became the same thing at the Virgin Islands, also, after that. I came back and went down there, looking for work. [laughter]

SH: You went down there to look for work.

JT: Yes. Well, I came back; I quit. I had a two-year stint in Guam, contract.

SH: You were working for the government.

JT: Yes, the government of Guam. Then, I came back looking for a job and, while I was still there, I came back to Washington, DC, to an economic association meeting, and picked up a job with Harrisburg Area Community College. ... I was there for three years, and then, we decided we wanted to go back to [the] islands. "Let's go to the Virgin Islands." So, I quit my job there. I had tenure, I had the whole bit and I was chairman of social science and public services, and so, I quit the job and went down there looking for work. She (Sue) came down sometime later. Three days, she's got a job singing in a bar somewhere and I'm still looking for work. [laughter] ... Yes, so, it was crazy. ...

SH: How long did you stay in the Virgin Islands?

JT: Ten years, I guess it was. ...

SD: He was assistant dean of the college, too.

JT: Then, where did we go after that? You were involved in that. I mean, we left the Virgin Islands. I took a job teaching economics for the University of Maryland in their Overseas Division; first assignment, Germany.

[TAPE PAUSED]

JT: I worked for the University of Maryland, their overseas program.

SD: Yes, teaching American servicemen. ...

SH: Okay, I think we need to go back there. In Guam, who were you working for?

JT: [In] Guam, I was working for the government of Guam, Chief Economist.

SD: Local.

JT: Then, we come back from that [and] I had the job at Harrisburg Area Community College.

SD: Pennsylvania.

JT: Then, I went to the Virgin Islands and I ended up with a [job there]. I worked for the college for awhile, University of Maryland, and then, a job opened up as an economist when a new governor was elected and I ended up going down there with him. I stayed there until the governor died. They had a new governor and they had a bunch of new people come in and this fellow come in ...

SD: Amadeo.

JT: Amadeo Francis. He had been in Puerto Rico, a local guy, and he came in and took over the job as the head of the Department of Commerce, and he and I didn't hit it off. So, that's when I called up University of Maryland and said, "Are you looking for anybody to teach in [your] overseas program?" They said, "Come on up ... for an interview." I went up, and that was Friday. I went up on Monday and I had the job. ...

SH: Where is this teaching, overseas? Can you explain more about it?

JT: Went to Europe for one year, teaching college courses for the University of Maryland in Germany and Spain, 1980 to 1981, then, transferred to the Far East, 1981 to 1982, Guam and Okinawa.

SH: Now, you were teaching in ...

JT: Military bases.

SH: Okay; high school?

JT: College courses, for the University of Maryland overseas program.

SH: College courses to servicemen, okay.

JT: It was regular college, University of Maryland courses, yes. It was full-time. ... It was all at night, but I'd teach Monday through Thursday and I had Friday night off. So, we had long weekends and Ruthie and I would take off and we traveled all over the place down there. ... Well, let me see, ... what else happened there?

SD: Germany; tell her all the places ... that you went, where you taught. ...

JT: Oh, yes. ... I taught over in Europe, I taught in Germany, I taught in Spain, and what the heck else? Did I do any for Germany? No; yes, yes, I lived in Germany. ... I taught in Germany for awhile, too. That was it.

SD: Okinawa.

JT: And, in-between, I had these [long] weekends, so, we would drive all over. Europe's small and we went all over the place over there, and that went on for some time. When I got to be sixty-five, I retired, and that was it. I mean, we went back to the Virgin Islands and bought a boat. [laughter]

SH: You bought a boat, the man who always was seasick.

SD: We had the boat beforehand. They were living on a boat. I can remember him getting off the boat with his briefcase to go to work. ... We didn't have a house; we had a boat.

JT: So, it was quite an experience and we've been to a few places, I mean, and, when we came back from Guam, by the way, we came back around the world. ... The deal was, they took me and the family out and back first class. So, we changed the first class to tourist class, came back around the world. She had read *Caravans* [by James A. Michener], so, we ended up in Afghanistan. [laughter] That was the only reason we did that. We went to, oh, good Lord, went to Israel ...

SD: Iran.

JT: Turkey; we went all over the place.

SH: What years were these?

JT: This was ...

SD: Is it okay if I talk?

SH: Introduce yourself to the tape.

SD: I'm Mr. Tinsley's stepdaughter, Sue Davenport. ... It was 1968 that we took that trip, ... three months of 1968, in the summer.

JT: ... Let's see, 1970, I quit. In '82, I quit.

SD: Right.

JT: That was because I was sixty-five years old. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

SH: What courses were you teaching, economics?

JT: Yes, and business courses.

SH: And business courses.

JT: Yes, some. ... I was primarily economics, but I could fill in on marketing and basic ("E"?) and business courses. I mean, that's no problem and I had a lot of fun with that. I once had a lieutenant colonel, a major [and] two captains as students, and I had a lot of fun with that one, talking about the military, I mean, the organization of the military and ... the Catholic Church, where you have one guy at the top calling all the shots and it's all top-down. ... I said, "That's the worst organization in the world." [laughter] ...

SH: Now, you could say anything, right? [laughter]

JT: Yes. So, I had a lot of fun with that, but I had some good students. There were a lot of guys there. I had men and women in the Armed Forces, I mean, that were in there. It was a lot of fun. ... In Germany, I had to drive to a place called Hahn, [which] was an airbase, which was about fifty miles [away], and I had to do that twice a week, and the other two nights, I went over to Frankfurt. ... So, I did a lot of driving and I'm trying to think of other places we went; oh, my God.

SD: You went back to Guam.

JT: I went back to [Guam]. Oh, after the first year in Europe, I was there for two years, ... I had a four-year contract, and, for two years, I was supposed to stay in Europe. I mean, in fact, the four of us [were]. I went one year and I heard there was an opening in Guam. We had been out there for two years previously and none of the teachers out in the Far East wanted to go to Guam, because it was US territory and they had to pay income taxes once again, and, if they're out there long enough, they didn't have to pay any income tax. So, I asked to get transferred and it was very simple, "Sure, go ahead." So, I went back to Guam.

SD: Twenty years later. ...

SH: What was it like to go back after that long?

JT: It was fun. ... In fact, I hardly got there, I was in the airport, and some gal says, "Hello, Mr. Tinsley." She remembered me from before, thirteen years before. [laughter]

SH: Oh, my word.

SD: ... They had implemented a lot of the zoning, a lot of his economic policy, had been implemented on Guam.

JT: I wrote a five-year plan for them and they put some of it to use. So, that was good.

SH: That must have been nice.

JT: I find out that fifteen years later. ...

SH: Now, again, you were teaching college courses on the American bases there.

JT: Yes. I was teaching at Andersen Air Force Base and down at the naval [base].

SD: Nimitz.

SH: Did they provide your family with housing?

JT: Yes. We ended up on Nimitz Hill.

SD: That's the Navy base.

JT: That's where the Navy had a place. So, we were in, ... in effect, military quarters there, and where the heck else did we go? Good Lord; in Europe, they didn't provide for a place to live.

SH: Really?

JT: So, you had to find your own place. So, we'd go out in the village. We went out in Germany. We went to one place and I had learned enough German, between Ruthie and me; we wrote out a note, "We're looking for a house," and so forth, and, "I'm a college professor," and so forth, and passed the note to [them]. ... Like, if anybody saw that in the US, they'd come out with guns blazing, you know. [laughter] ... One woman said, "Come back," and showed us a place to go. We went up and this old aunt had lived with them and she had died or something and they had an upstairs [apartment] available.

SH: How many children did you have in tow when you were making these trips?

JT: In tow. [laughter] I have one son, from my previous marriage. He was not with us. Then, I got her, [Susan Davenport]. [laughter] ...

SH: And your brother?

JT: And her brother. ...

SD: But, we weren't with [them during] the University of Maryland [period]. We were grown up at that point.

SH: Were you?

SD: We were on Guam with them.

SH: Okay.



SD: And I was in the Virgin Islands with them. ...

SH: I thought it would be an adventure to take your children, like you did.

SD: Well, around the world, we all went.

JT: Yes, that was an adventure, all right.

SD: I was fourteen.

JT: Yes, she was ... just out of junior high, ... or just at the end of junior high.

SD: My brother was eighteen.

SH: Wow.

JT: He got in his first year of college. Bruce got his first year ...

SD: On Guam, yes. So, we did that around the world trip. ...

SH: A great new perspective for your children as well.

SD: Yes. Everyone should have to do it.

JT: So, I've had a checkered experience, let's put it that way.

SD: Very rich.

SH: I think it is tremendous. I am so thankful that you were able to come and talk with us.  
[laughter] I am, I am.

SD: ... He used all his Rutgers education. [laughter] All his life, he did.

JT: Yes. ...

SH: What was your dissertation going to be on?

JT: ... I had it accepted. I mean, that was already accepted. It was [on] the public authorities in the State of New Jersey. I put that [forth], but I found there were something like three hundred public authorities within a couple of miles, draw a circle around New York City. ... They all come in where they don't know what to do, so, they ... set up a public authority, which operates separate from the tax system. ...

SH: Maybe you should go ahead and write that.

JT: ... It was a great idea, ... but, no, I don't think you write dissertations at age ninety, ninety-plus.

SD: Why not?

JT: Do you realize how long that would take? [laughter] No, I ran into a fellow from Drew University that I became very friendly with. ... He got involved in the same thing, only he was writing about it from a political standpoint. ... You've got a garbage authority, water authority, all kind of authorities. ... An authority's just a separate entity, separate from the government, but independent in its own way, and they collect fees for everything and they make more money than the governments do. [laughter] ... I figured the State of New Jersey, twenty-one counties and they each have a bunch of authorities, Jersey City has an awful lot of them, ... but that's the politicians' excuse to ... set up some friends in business. ... It's a very interesting thing to study, I mean it. ... I'm sorry I ... never finished it. I mean, I wish I had. ... So, you can't have everything. [laughter]

SH: It sounds like you got a lot. I really appreciate it, and I thank Sue for being here.

SD: Thank you. We're thrilled he could do this.

JT: So, you mean I'm off the air now?

[Editor's Note: To aid readers, Mr. Tinsley has furnished the following chronology of his post-war life and career.]

1946/47 - Student, Rutgers - B. A. Economics  
1948/50 - Economist/statistician, Tidewater Oil Company, New York City  
1950/52 - Petroleum consultant, B. I. Graves Associates, New York City  
1953/54 - Student, Rutgers, M. A. Economics  
1954/66 - Owner/proprietor, Colonial Liquor Shop, Madison, New Jersey  
1958/66 - Assistant Professor/Chairman, Social Sciences Department, Farleigh Dickinson University, Madison, New Jersey  
1966/68 - Chief Economist, Government of Guam  
1968/71 - Chairman, Social Sciences & Public Service Division, Harrisburg Area Community College  
1971/72 - Budget Analyst, Government of the Virgin Islands  
1972/75 - Assistant Dean for Continuing Education, College of the Virgin Islands  
1975/80 - Chief Economist, Government of the Virgin Islands  
1980/81 - Lecturer in Economics, European Division (teaching at US military bases), University of Maryland  
1981/82 - Lecturer in Economics, Far East Division (teaching at US military bases in Guam, Okinawa & Japan), University of Maryland  
June 1982 - Retired, returned to the US

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

Reviewed by Chris Treble 3/4/09  
Reviewed by Kristie Thomas 3/4/09  
Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 3/30/09  
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 4/10/09  
Reviewed by John F. Tinsley 5/1/09