



**NEW BRUNSWICK HISTORY DEPARTMENT:
ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WW-II
INTERVIEW WITH CLIFFORD P. KINGSTON**

An Interview with Clifford P. Kingston, for the Rutgers Oral History Archives of World War II. Interview conducted by Sandra Stewart Holyoak and Shaun Illingworth and Bojan Stefanovic in Sherwood Forest, Maryland, on November 3, 2000. Transcript by Domingo Duarte and Lauren O'Gara and John Eiche and Clifford P. Kingston and Sandra Stewart Holyoak. Permission to quote from this transcript must be obtained from the Rutgers Oral History Archives of World War II.

Shaun Illingworth: This begins an interview with Mr. Clifford Kingston in Sherwood Forest, Maryland on November 3, 2000 with Shaun Illingworth ...

Sandra Stewart Holyoak: Sandra Stewart Holyoak ...

Bojan Stefanovic: ... And Bojan Stefanovic.

SI: You mentioned before the interview began that you were originally born in Newark. How did your family arrive in Newark?

Clifford Kingston: Most of what I'll tell you about my childhood and my parents is from what they had told me while I was growing up. I have a middle name, Palmer. I have cousins that are named Palmer. My son has a middle name, Palmer, and one of my grandsons has a middle name, Palmer. The Palmers were one of four families settled in (Stonington?), Connecticut before the War of 1812. The other families were (Minor?), (Cheeseborough?), and Stanton was the fourth one. Anyway, there's a little monument in the town square that tells how they resisted the British when they tried to land with their two canoes. So, there are plenty of Palmers there now, but most of them are in the cemetery. We've been there a few times, but we don't have any direct connection with it at all. The original Palmer, from England, probably came around 1650. My grandmother, my grandfather George Washington Kingston's wife, was Emma Palmer. My grandfather lived in Staten Island near New Richmond. Although, he has an English sounding name, he was actually Irish. However, when a cousin of mine was studying our family's genealogy, it turned out that Staten Island at that time had a lot of Dutch, so, the family isn't totally Irish. The Deckers are in there. ... Anyway, my grandfather is one of thirteen children. He was somewhere in the middle of the birth order. His older brother got the urge to get rich quick, and he went by clipper ship to California for the Gold Rush. He never was heard from again. I don't know what happened to him. I don't know what happened to my grandfather's other

brothers. He may even have a sister, but I never heard that he did. Anyway, he was an uneducated, powerfully built man with a great personality. He decided to go into business for himself, and he started selling seafood to hotels and restaurants; for example, fish, oysters, or clams. He began in Staten Island, but, like so many things that have happened today, the Raritan Bay is in terrible trouble because of pollution, anyway, the oysters ran out. ... So, he moved to Newark, and took his business with him. He became very successful and, according to one of my cousins, ... he was forty-five when he retired. There were no income taxes. He was worth a million bucks. He owned eight rental houses, and just sat around. His wife said to him, "Why don't you go travel the world, or do something?" He didn't do that. He got so lonesome that ten years after he retired, he decided to go back into business. He lost it all. Easy come. Easy go. So, my mother's family lived in Newark, and that's why I was born in Newark. My parents were married in 1917. My dad was thirty-five and my mother was seven years younger. She was from a German family. She was very easy going, loved nature, could sing, and yodel. When I was young, she used to yodel for us. We'd go out in the yard, and she would yodel. As she got older, and we got older, she wouldn't do it anymore. I always liked that. I can't yodel. I've tried, I just don't have it. I don't even carry a tune.

SH: What was your mother's maiden name?

CK: Her name was Margurite Sommer. She was the oldest of five children. She had three sisters and two brothers. They have all passed away. The brother who was in WWI on a Navy sub-chaser, unbeknownst to us, set up a small trust for his remaining brothers and sisters. They had all passed away. So, he married a second time after his wife passed away, and he lived in Paoli. Then, they moved, as retirees, to New Hope, Pennsylvania. So, we heard when his second wife had passed that he had made this financial provision, and it wasn't a lot. PNC Bank in Philadelphia handled it. Please, don't ever let anybody leave anything to you (that were they are the trustee?). The lawyer that drafted the trust had died. It was a very tiresome situation. My sister in Red Bank knew his second wife, and sent her a Christmas card and received no answer. She finally called up the New Hope police, and they said, "We'll call you back. The house is for sale." Nobody knew anything. So, he left funds for our boat. We named the boat, "Sommertime." My wife's suggestion. We only use the boat in the summer. My mother told me that until she was three, or four years old, she didn't speak English. Her grandmother, mother and husband, all lived in Newark in an area called Hillside. It was not in a different town. It was an area of Newark. I'm sure it was called Hillside. Anyway, I was the first-born. Then, three years later, my brother, Dave, and two years after that, my sister, Elizabeth was born. She's the one who lives in Red Bank. My wife is a Douglass graduate, Class of 1946.

SH: Do you know how your parents met?

CK: No, I really don't. The eldest Kingston sibling was named Fred. Fred got married young. He was in business with his father. He was the bookkeeper. He was a very retiring individual. Do you remember the little Brownie characters that used to be drawn? He could come visit and in one hour draw those. He had a large family, but that part of the family was older. They went off on their own. He had four, or five kids. We didn't see very much of them. He lived in one of his dad's houses in Newark while he still had rental property. That side of the family didn't seem too healthy. They passed on in their fifties, most of them.

SH: What was the educational background of your parents?

CK: High school. However, my dad went to Woods Business College in Newark. His eldest sister, Emma, who lived in Montclair, was a schoolteacher. She went to a normal school to qualify to teach. Then, there was Grace. Grace was a practical nurse. In fact, she presided over my birth. ... She got married and George Washington Kingston, her father, didn't approve of the marriage. He proceeded to have it annulled, but she kept the last name, so, she was Grace Kate Kent. After she'd get off her shift, she would go over to Newark airport, and jump on a plane to Atlantic City. She spent every dime she had, and went home broke to her apartment. But, she was a jolly one. Then, there was Mary, who had a very severe digestive problem, and, because of this, she was little. She was only five feet, two inches and weighed, in her younger years, 100 pounds. She only drove Plymouth cars, and she would tell the dealer, "I can't reach the pedals." They didn't have any seats that moved. She used three pillows, so she could drive. She was a good driver. I'm kind of wandering, but that leads me to another thing. My dad was very athletic, football, baseball and many other sports. I'm not the athlete, but my brother, Dave, was. Anyway, my dad taught his sister, Mary, how to drive a Model T Ford, which they had purchased in 1912. The father bought it. ... The Model T Ford had three pedals. ... So, they were coming to an intersection, and there was a car coming the other way. I don't think there were any stop signs, or traffic lights. So, she finally got her foot over near the brake, but it was almost too late. So, my dad reached over and put his foot on top of her foot. He said, "Mary, the brake, damn it." That's a family joke. My dad's family consisted of Frederick, Emma, Grace, Mary, my father, Clifford Sr., and, then, Ruth. Ruth lived in Nutley, and raised a boy and a girl. The girl went to NJC, also. The boy went to [RPI] and became an electrical engineer. He lives in a retirement home in Connecticut. We don't see much of our family. My wife's family was living in Atlantic City. We used to go there every summer, and drag the kids with us, whether we were using the Volkswagon Beetle, or something better than that in the later years. Now, they're all gone. Everybody has passed. My sister is the only one living on either side of the family. My wife has a brother in Williamsburg and a sister, who lived in Albany, New York, another brother who lived in Danbury, Connecticut and, then, moved to Ormond Beach, Florida. That's the way it goes. People don't seem to retain their New Jersey residencies.

SH: Can you tell us what your father did for a living?

CK: When I was small, he worked for Denison Manufacturing Company in Framingham, Massachusetts. He had the Manhattan area as his territory. When WWI was gearing up, they sold tags, among other things. For example, the little cards that you write on. They have a ring in them, and two cords, so, you can tie them onto your luggage. He sold the government the largest order that Denison had ever sold because somebody had a government contract, or maybe, it was direct from the government in Manhattan. After the war was over, they said they wanted him to move Framingham, Massachusetts. ... We were living in Newark. ... He went up there for about six weeks, and, then they wanted to move the family to Framingham. He didn't want to. He said the wrong thing to the wrong people because after that, he was merely a bypass salesman. So, then he went to work for Henderson Greeting Card Company. ... After that, he went to work for another one, Norcross, ... but we were living in Long Branch by then. We moved to Long Branch [because] his dad had passed away at eighty-five, and it was his house, ... To settle his estate. We were the ones living there, my mom, my dad, and yours truly, and maybe, my brother

at the time. So, that was a new experience for us. When we moved down there, our area didn't have a paved street. I fell in the cesspool, because we were used to plumbing, I went out in my little wagon, and there was a big piece of slate flagstone over the hole ... I was curious. I lifted it up, and fell in. My mother came and bailed me out. She said, "I'm not going to put you in a bathtub. Stand still." She got the garden hose, and she flushed me. So, my father was irate because the people he bought the house from, built a new house three doors away. That's what happens when you're city people and don't know. Anyway, I survived. Thank goodness. We had dogs, a couple of English setters, and an Irish setter. My dad was great for gunning. ... We spent 1932 at Surf City for the summertime. He was without a job for three years during the Depression. He had an aunt, who had no children. She had been a Palmer, and her name was Aunt Lou (Egge?). Ever hear of a name like (Egge?) They had no children. Her husband knew somebody in Philadelphia politics. They were going to build a landfill. He went around a year, or so ahead, and bought up all the land. He then told us that we could have it, and he raised the price. ... They were very well-off. ... When she died, she left my father's family 10,000 dollars, which was a heck of a lot of money back then. This was in 1931. My dad had lost his job, so, we went to Surf City for one summer. It cost 300 dollars to rent a summerhouse for three months. That is where I learned to sail and I'm still sailing. So, anyway, the Navy was my choice, but I'm jumping around. ... You better get me oriented back to the 1930s, or the 1920s.

SI: How well did you know your uncle who had been in the Navy during WWI?

CK: During the war, when he lived in Media, Pennsylvania, and I was on a ten-day leave, I went out to see him with his first wife. We didn't see a lot of him because he had a Philadelphia territory and we were in Long Branch. Once in a while, there would be a family get-together, but mostly on my dad's side of the family. I would see my grandparents. My mother's father was a tremendous walker. I don't think he even drove a car. They'd come on the train, and get off in Long Branch. He would go to the bathroom, get a drink of something, and off he would go. He walked five miles, or more. He talked to anybody who would talk to him. He'd come back to the house before their train in the afternoon. Grandmother stayed home, talked to my mom, and to the kids. She would tell us about her own town, some of it, we didn't know, some of it, we did, but we listened politely. So, anyway, we made it through the Depression, and dad finally got a job. Esley, King and Statiford, a brokerage firm in Newark. He commuted on the train to Newark everyday. His income was twenty-five bucks a week, and when I got out of Newark College of Engineering, I went to work. I went to work for a Newbury store in Long Branch. It was hard to get a job. ... Anyway, I worked Monday through Saturdays, forty-eight hours a week. I was a stock boy. Guess what my pay was? ... Let's say eight dollars a week, and I was glad to have it. ... I drove a car. My mom had to feed me. I gave her half of my weekly pay. I didn't have a lot of dates on four dollars a week. I had a few.

SH: We need to back up a bit and talk about going to school in Long Branch.

CK: I walked. We lived on Washington Street. ... The house is still there. I walked two and a half, or three blocks straight up to Broad Street in Long Branch. St. Luke's church is on the corner, across the way was Broadway Elementary School. ... My mom was so busy with Dave and Elizabeth, I was kind of odd man out. My Aunt Emma and Uncle Ed used to drive down from Montclair. They would come and pitch in. They would drive up ... in their Model T Ford

coupe, ... and drive me down there. ... My Uncle Ed was very strong. He could break your hand when he shook hands with you. He wasn't a big person either, but he used to play football with my dad. I think they were on the same team in Newark. ... He told me something that I still joke with people about. The Model T Ford, like the Model A, had a gas tank over the dashboard, and gravity fed it down to the carburetor. When you came to a big hill, you couldn't go up it. You would have to turn around and ... back up, that way you would get gas in the carburetor.

SH: I have to say, I think that's the first time we've heard that one.

CK: I have driven a Model T Ford, ... and it was quite an experience with its two-speed transmission. The motor races until you go five or six miles, then ten miles per hour, and then it cuts into high gear, but you can't do that if you're on a hill. You have to be on level ground, or going downhill. Yet, they were great cars. ... Henry Ford got them down to about four hundred dollars. Every year it came out, he lowered the price. ... We have been to the Dearborn Museum. It is a very worthwhile museum honoring Henry Ford. You could spend two, or three days there. We only spent a day. That's a great place. Ford and Edison were friends. Ford picked up all of the Edison stuff from Menlo Park and moved it ... up there. Amazing things. Back to elementary school, I went there for four years, from kindergarten up to fourth grade. When I got to fourth grade, the superintendent of schools, Charles T. Stone, a very huge man from Maine, who had been in France for many years, moved next door to us. There was a rule that if you lived in a certain area, you had to go to a certain school. Well, I can't remember the cause of it, but my dad was very small and Charles T. Stone was 245 and six feet three inches. Anyway, ... there was a school that was further away than the Broadway School called Gregory School. My dad didn't want me to go to the Broadway School. ... I can't remember why. Anyway, he applied to have me transferred to Gregory School, and was rejected. ... In a rambunctious moment, he called Mr. Stone, at home, went over, and told him the problem. He didn't want me to go to the school I was headed to because it was a bum school. ... So, he said, "I'm sorry, Mr. Kingston, but rules are rules." My dad said, "Mr. Stone, if you don't transfer my boy, Palmer, to Gregory School, I'm moving." Stone said, "I'll write the letter tomorrow," and he did. So, I went to Gregory School. When I was in grammar school, which was sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth grades, it was a long walk, or car ride, probably a mile and a half. ... So, it took us a half an hour to get to and from school. We had to go through a terrible Italian neighborhood. I mean, they would throw peppers at you, and the kids would gang up on you. ... You almost had to have escorts. I felt sorry for the girls. It was like running the gauntlet, and sometimes you would get hit, or beaten on. ... High school was tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades. So, I finally grew up, and on my seventeenth birthday, my dad bought me a Model A Ford. It was a 1929, two-door, thirty-five dollars in Newark. ... He gave it me on December 1 st , and I was one tickled duck to have a car because high school was further than the grammar school was. ... The kids who lived a quarter of a mile away from us, in North Long Branch, could ride the bus, but we couldn't. So, I was glad to have that car. About two months after we got it, the six-volt battery died. So, we had to buy a battery for six dollars. ... Then, I went to work in the summer for Esley, King, and Statiford as a board boy in the Red Bank brokerage office. You know what that is? The tape would go by, and you would have chalk, and you would write, "US Steel," or "Gillette," or whatever. You would write on the board the last price. The people who were in the brokerage house were sitting around smoking cigars. Boy, what a terrible smoke-filled room. Then, they would place their orders to sell or buy stocks. I didn't do much of that, for the most part I was a board boy. ... I had this Ford

to ride home, and there was a dirt road where my brother lived in Oceanport, where I can take some ninety degree turns, drag racing the car around the hills, and skidding the rear end around. Well, when I was back in high school, one afternoon, a nice day like this, I piled a bunch of kids in the back of the car. Now, the old cars that Ford made had elliptical springs like the horse and carriage. ... So, we went around the corner ... with these kids on the back, and the right rear wheel broke, right there at the turn, and dropped the car down on the road. ... I didn't have much money to get that fixed, and, so, it turns out at the junk yard there was a whole rear end for ten dollars. I put it in myself. I couldn't bend that elliptical spring back to get the shackle pin in it. So, again, we loaded the car up with a lot of kids, and I'm under there with a jack, and the shackle pin, finally got it in. We never put shocks in the back of the car again. So, that was an interesting story about cars. I still like cars. When we lived in Richmond, I drove about 35,000 mile a year in my traveling sales job, sales engineering.

SH: I wanted to talk to you about high school. What were you involved in?

CK: I tried out for junior varsity football. I tried to run track. I don't have a long breath, apparently. I couldn't do it in track and field. On the second game of junior varsity football, ... I got injured, so, no more football. Baseball interests me, and I played sandlot a little bit, but nothing spectacular.

SH: What about academically?

CK: I was in the middle-of-the-road.

SH: What was your favorite subject?

CK: ... It wasn't French. For a while, I think that the math teacher that we had, who was a statistician, ... his mind was just like a steel trap, and he would talk to the class ... about mathematical solutions. He was really an eye-opener. I mean, he was over the heads of all of the students. His last name was Toby. ... He had a very short, almost a crew cut with red hair. I don't know that I had a favorite subject in high school, to answer your question.

SH: Were you involved in Boy Scouts or any other sort of activities?

CK: Sea Scouts, not Boy Scouts. ... I liked Sea Scouts very much. In fact, one time ... Do you know where Branchport [Ave.] is in Long Branch? It is in the upper reaches of the South Shrewsbury River. There was a boat yard there. Seaman Boat Building, and there was a fellow, who was older than the Sea Scouts named Joe Smith, who worked as a ship carpenter there. He took on the troop, and we learned how to tie knots. We'd go to contests, and I was the one who tied the bowline, which is a good knot to know how to do. One time, he said, "Well, let's go down to Sandy Hook. At low tide we'll be able to paint the bottom of this boat. When the tide comes in, we'll roll it on the other side, and we'll paint it." This was a thirty-six foot wooden motor whaler from WWI that had been donated to the Scouts. It had some petrol engines, some of the old gasoline engines, ... farm equipment, too, maybe the cars, to prime them instead of having a choke up on the top of the head, there was a little cup with a valve on it. You would pour raw gasoline in there when you wanted to start it. Open it quick and get the starter to kick

in, and those fumes were supposed to evaporate and start the engine. Well, these engines ... were two six-cylinder engines, and one of them didn't work at all. So, we went down there on one engine, and we got one side of the hull painted. Now, we were expecting to go home that night, which was about ten or twelve miles down the Shrewsbury River, but a big storm came up. ... It blew the water away from, I think it was Spermaceti Cove, which is near a park area now on Sandy Hook. So there we were high aground, and the sun was going down. We didn't have anything to eat, nothing to drink, cold. We had a two-man wooden rowboat, called a wherry, which has ... a wine glass transom. I don't know if you've seen them, or not. They developed in New England somewhere. Anyway, when the tide came up at two or three in the morning, we sent somebody down the beach to contact the Coast Guard, and they couldn't pull us off. However, the wind did die later, and they had us out. Two of us out there, Carl Larson, and yours truly with that wherry, trying to dislodge that boat from the sand, and they then got the Coast Guard. I can't remember if the Coast Guard was able to pull us off, but the wind died down, which meant the tides came back up higher, and we got home the next morning, about noontime. It was a mile to my house, and I walked home. ... I was like a zombie. I mean, I was conscious, but ... no sleep, nothing to eat, nothing to drink, cold. My mother threw me in bed, and it took me a long time to revive. Anyway, that was my most illustrious Sea Scout adventure, but we did have a lot of fun ... meeting with other Sea Scout troops in Red Bank and Asbury Park, primarily. I'm not a real social butterfly. I'm not a big joiner. I usually join a couple of things, but not a lot of things.

SH: Was your family involved in church activities?

CK: Yes, my mom sang in church when I was younger, and my dad would only go to church on Christmas and Easter. ... He wasn't very enthusiastic, and his sister, Mary was very involved in church, and his other two sisters to a lesser degree, but he just didn't see that it was essential.

SH: As a young man growing up, you talked about the Depression and how it affected your father's job ...

CK: Yeah, without a job, without that Aunt Lou Egge's ten thousand dollars, which carried us for a couple of years, really, it was rough, but I never went hungry. I mean, I don't brag about it, but I'll tell you about it. I went to school. We used to wear corduroy knickers, and long stockings. My mom, bless her heart, would sew the knees where I would wear them out, and the same with my socks. My shoes weren't wonderful. We drove old cars, ... but you didn't feel it ... since everybody was like that, you know, it didn't have the contrast. Where if it were to happen now, it would be very noticeable.

SH: As you approached your senior year in high school, had your family expected you to go to college?

CK: Well, it was questionable. My uncle from Montclair, Uncle Ed, was a master woodworker. He had his basement full of lathes, drill presses, band saws, and a lot of hand tools. ... I'll show you before you go, I've got one of his footstools in the living room, but he interested me in things that were mechanical. Compared to my dad who couldn't drive a nail. My mother and I had to do ... what we could, but he was great on the sports stuff, and an excellent hunter. His big things

were ducks and geese. He used to go to Long Beach Island, and go hunting with the family, including (Paul Inman?), who was a native, and had lived there a long time. A couple of times he would take us, my brother and I, ... hunting with him, but not too often. ... They didn't pay too much attention to what the laws were. ... If they wanted to go out in the meadows in the summertime, it was illegal to hunt black ducks, but they would go. ... One time he took me down there near Surf City. I don't think my brother was along. We could see the game warden because it was flat, and you could see through the top of the grass, ... but he was too far away to know who we were. So, we decided to hoof it, the guide, who was in his twenties, ... I would have been about twelve or fourteen, maybe, my dad would have been in his forties. ... We hustled to get away from the game warden, and we made it, but I'll tell you my tongue was hanging out, carrying a 4/10, which is a small gauge shotgun. My dad was carrying his ten gauge shotgun, and the guide was carrying a gun. We ran, and we ran. ... I told you that I couldn't run track, why, I couldn't run through those marshes either. My dad said, "Come on Palmer! Come on!" We got away from him.

SH: How old were you then?

CK: About fourteen years old. I didn't have a gunning license.

SH: How long were you known as Palmer?

CK: I still am by the family and church friends. I use Clifford for business because it's easier for people to remember. ... When somebody in the family would say "Clifford" my dad would be the one who would answer. I'm a junior. That's why I answer to both.

SH: You had gone from high school to the Newark College of Engineering for a year.

CK: I rode the train. I was having a terrible time trying to do homework on that bouncing Jersey Central. Do you know what a camelback engine is? They were steam trains then. They would ride up to where the electric line from Philadelphia to Newark comes in. I can't remember where, Rahway? They'd drop the train, take the engine off, and pick the train up going the other way. They ran all the way down as far as Bay Head, but these camelbacks, two lines, New York and Long Branch railroads, used it. Pennsylvania used it, and the Jersey Central. Well, the Jersey Central had little short engines, and the reason they called them camelbacks was the boiler went all the way back to the tender, but the engineer rode in a little nucleus on the side of the boiler. He'd ride on the starboard side, and the engineer would ride on the port side. They were ... maybe fifteen feet shorter than the Pennsylvania steam engines. Then there came diesels. ... In Long Branch, near the Branchport Station, we used to take pennies out, and when they would be shuffling traffic in those camelback engines, flatten the pennies on the rail. You know you used to buy the Lord's Prayer on a penny, remember that? Well, we didn't have any of the Lord's Prayer, but we had a lot of flat pennies. Those camelback engines, I don't know why we don't use them. They were cheaper, and not as heavy as the Pennsylvania engines.

SH: Why did you pick the Newark College of Engineering?

CK: Supposedly affordable and close-by.

SH: Was there any interest in engineering for you?

CK: Yes, I liked it, but I didn't pass the course in physics, and I had done A, A, A, in high school physics, mostly because of the professor, I guess. He was super, and I thought I could handle it, but I didn't. Back then, tuition for a year was \$325.00, and my dad at the end of the year couldn't pay it. I mean, he eventually paid it over two, or three years, but it was tough. We were nickel and diming for quite a while. I guess we didn't feel it until he lost his job in 1929, so, from there until about '36 or '37. I got out of high school in 1938 and we were going through a tough time. Bless my mother, ... she's the one who handled the money, and she would bake bread ... to try and bring in a little income. Twenty-five cents a loaf, and she was a good cook, too, but she was slow. When we got married, my wife could whip up dinner in fifteen minutes coming home from her job, almost like fast food. What a contrast. Anyway, Long Branch was on a downhill. When we moved there, if it hadn't been for, you know Elberon, where the church of the Presidents is, down near Deal, some of the Presidents used to summer there but when we moved there in '25, why, it was already on the skids, and it went down. I wouldn't go live there now. I really wouldn't.

SH: As a young man in '38 and '39, what were you hearing about what was going on in Europe?

CK: Not a whole lot. ... I used to be out on my rowboat, which I built myself, and I saw the Hindenburg on its last flight to Lakehurst. It went by, a mile away from me, going down along the coast before it had that accident by the mooring mast at Lakehurst. We didn't hear a whole lot about it. ... It was either newspaper or radio, and a lot of the stuff that Hitler was doing, we didn't know it. I didn't know it.

SH: Was there any *bund* activity in your area?

CK: *Bund* activity? No, we didn't have any of that. I guess we need some of it now, with all the criminals running around, to get them straight.

BS: Do you remember where you were when the attack occurred on Pearl Harbor?

CK: ... I was out on the river, on the boat, and came home and found out about it.

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CK: We are Republicans, and they were Democrats, and they thought that we could have avoided the war.

SH: What did you think of the Lend/Lease program?

CK: I was away from home by the time Lend/Lease came about. ... Apparently, Roosevelt and Churchill concocted a lot of things that turned out to be necessary. The reason we won WWII wasn't that the Germans weren't good fighters, and that they didn't have good equipment, we just overwhelmed the hell out of them, mass numbers of machine and men. No way they could resist it indefinitely.

SH: Before Pearl Harbor, you were working at (Newbury's?) in Long Branch.

CK: No, that was then I went to work in Red Bank for a firm that sold carpeting, supplied by the mill of A&M Karacusin in Freehold. Well, there was a fellow who used to write, a Brit, named Boynton, and in WWI he had ridden caissons in the British Army. He had this carpet business, and he was a mill superintendent for A&M Karacusin, but he set up this retail business in Red Bank. There was a distributor named (McHelvy?) that had the franchise in Freehold, an exclusive franchise to sell new Karacusin carpeting, Oriental, very expensive. I've got one in the basement that was sold out when they didn't make them anymore, just before WWII. ... He had the store near the city hall. Are you familiar with Red Bank? There's Monmouth Street there, which is where they had set up. I went to work there as assistant truck driver, and we would deliver from Millville, to your area, primarily in Monmouth County. ... They were selling these seconds at drastically reduced prices instead of going for the ones that had passed inspection. I think he had some inside things going for him at the rug mill, but I used to drive the international truck. ... Eventually, I used to take the truck home to Long Branch, which was a big help to me because it was twelve or fourteen miles, or more. Anyway, I would drive the truck to the mill in Freehold, usually everyday when I wasn't making deliveries, and back the truck into the loading dock. They had an old guy there on an electric elevator to handle big rolls of carpeting, some of it was carpeting, some of it rugs. I would load up. They would call in the order a day ahead, or he would call the store in Red Bank and say, "I've got a couple for inventory. Send Palmer up here to pick it up." So, when I went to go in the Navy, ... the doctor looked at me, ... and said, "Kingston, what have you been doing with your right shoulder?" I said, "Nothing that I know of, sir." He said, "It's lower than your left one. What kind of a job did you have?" I said, "Well, I carried a nine foot-wide, twelve foot-wide, and fifteen foot-wide carpets on my shoulder from the rug mill to the store, or from the store to a customer," He said, "You're in."

SH: What were the immediate reactions of your family in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor?

CK: Well, my father pulled another smart one, and I'm able to talk to you today because of his intuition. He was a little too old to go into WWI, and he tried to volunteer as an athletic instructor, which some of his friends who were a little younger were able to do. So, he missed WWI, reluctantly, but for me gratefully. ... My dad thought, "Well, how can I protect this boy who is ... eighteen?" ... When they had the first draft, I came up close to the top. Eventually, I enlisted in the Navy before I got called. Two things happened to slow down my entry into the military service. One, he went to our family doctor, and he said, "What can I do to keep Palmer out of the draft? He is my oldest son. I don't want him to get shot." So, the doctor said, "Does he have an insurance policy?" "No, I don't have enough money for insurance policy." "Get one and have them send him to me for a physical." So, I went to the physical, and he wrote on the medical form that I had something minor wrong with me, which I really didn't. ... So, that moved me back on the list for the draft board, and then I left Armitage and Bayton in Red Bank. ... Because of my Newark College of Engineering drafting skills, so-called skills, I got a job at the Army Signal Corps at Fort Hancock. I worked in the drafting room there for about a year. I got another deferment, and, then, they were calling for more and more men. They're breathing on me by then. So, that's when my dad and I went up to the federal building at 90 Church St. in New York, and I enlisted. My dad said, "This boy knows about boats. We don't have to put him in as

an apprentice seaman, do we?" The guy said, "No, I can give him seaman first class," which was a few more dollars a month. We were working for forty-five bucks a month as enlisted men.

SH: Do you remember when you enlisted?

CK: I think it was May of '42. ... Another thing my dad arranged for was, he said, "Well, we want to keep him close to home. What have you got?" He said, "We have inshore patrol with people who have small boat experience. He would go to Tompkinsville, Staten Island, and he would drag the submarine net on his vessel. Open and close for who they want in, and keep the U-boats out." "Great". So, I went home, and I tied knots. I quit my job. They had given me a date, and I had eczema. I think it was mental, really, on my face. So, the doctor wouldn't admit me. In the meantime, they dropped the program of inshore patrol, and they dreamed up the operation for North Africa, which I had mentioned earlier. So, they sent me to boot camp. I wasn't even going to go to boot camp. Boy, was it hot in August in Newport, Rhode Island for three weeks. The dust on the drill field was just unbelievable. You almost choked. We went back two years ago, to Newport, Rhode Island, trying to find it. We couldn't find it. Then they send you home for ten days leave, and then they assign you to a ship. So, they put me on the *Ancon* in Boston, and she'd already done the run to Australia, and so, they were in the yard converting her to a Navy transport. Then we did North Africa, and then, we did a couple in the Mediterranean, and eventually, Sicily and Salerno. ...

SI: I want to go back to when you were a draftsman for the Signal Corps. First, how did you find out about this position? Second, what did the job entail?

CK: I don't know how I found out about it. What we were doing, they had about thirty draftsmen in the drafting room, and they had a supervisor named (Simms?), and they had an old guy named Hudson, who had been a draftsman forever. He must have been sixty, or close to it. What we were developing, or working on ... [was such] a waste of paper and time. We did the same thing over and over again, but I learned some lessons. I'm not real great on lettering, but some people could do these things freehand, just like it was coming from a machine. The Army was developing an airborne radar system, and they had these big trucks, and they had another truck like a trailer. One would have the antenna and the gear. The other would have the diesel engine power plant to generate electricity to run it. I think at Pearl Harbor ... somebody did spot the Japanese planes coming, and it was ignored, or it was thought to be friendly US planes coming to Hawaii. They were in an experimental stage, and they would take them out on the sand dunes in Sandy Hook. They would track planes that were flying in, to Newark, or La Guardia for practice and try to define it. Now, the British had the Loran, which we had on the *Ancon*. It was a little different than the airborne radar. I was there for fifteen months, and then I was going to the Navy. That was interesting, and it was a commute. There was a friend of mine who lived in Monmouth Beach, and he'd ride with us, too. Carpooling was essential because gas was limited, from Long Branch to work at Sandy Hook.

SH: Did they give you any kind of training to do this?

CK: No. They'd look over your shoulder, and if they didn't like it, they'd tell you to do it over again. Not specific. Not educational training. It's more of an artist job really, but you had to learn

how to use a t-square and we did that, ... we didn't have any calculators, we used slide rules, ... most of it was either a horizontal view or primarily a vertical view we were drawing. But sometimes, they would get somebody who was more capable, who could draw an isometric drawing of what they were trying to convey.

SH: Was there any security clearance involved in this?

CK: Oh, yeah. You had this thing around your neck, show it to the guard every time you went in, or went out. It was far more, I don't want to use the word crude, but it was at the beginning, because ... most of the people had never been in a world war. They used to be able to drive on Sandy Hook anytime of day. You can go there now because it's not military anymore, but this was all new. One thing I missed the boat on. ... When I worked for Armitage and Bayton, they were trying to build Fort Monmouth, you know what these double-decker wooden buildings looked like? They were trying to hire carpenters for ten dollars a day. I could drive a nail. I could saw a straight line, that's about it. I didn't go over and apply. I could have really made out for a while before I went into the service, but I didn't do it. I don't know why I didn't do it?

SH: In that six months before you did leave to join the Navy, how was your community gearing up for the war effort?

CK: Well, I'll give you an overall hindsight look at things. Right now, with the crazy things that are going on all over the world, terrorist things, Bosnia, ... and the pirates in Timor. They had something like 150 ships attacked by pirates in the last twelve months. With things out of control, there doesn't seem to be [a lot of patriotism], and I don't seem to have it either. The patriotism was very strong. I mean, I felt not only obligated, but I wanted to serve, and so did everybody else. Then came the Vietnam stuff, people draft dodging, going to Canada, and all that mud. Now, ... we have got the Naval Academy right here in Annapolis. ... So, there's a strong sense in Annapolis of military and government because of the Naval Academy. They're the biggest employer here, and a lot are civilians. They are cutting down on the number of enrollees they take each year, too. They're downsizing. Most of this is Clinton. ... I don't think that I would be comfortable serving in US military forces under the present conditions. I don't mean I would be a draft dodger, I don't think. I'm a law-abiding citizen, but ... I wouldn't have the gut feeling, "Yeah, I want to go," because the objectives are far different than when Hitler was running wild. ... I only know one guy who was so mad when we were in Charleston, South Carolina. He wanted to get out of the Navy, and he did it. We were living in double-deck wooden barracks, like Army barracks, while the ship was in the yard for repairs. This was before we went to the Pacific, and he was out on the town. ... I can't think of his name. ... This fellow was a fireman, worked in the engine room. I can't come up with his name. Anyway, around midnight was curfew. He came back about eleven o'clock at night. I was up on the second deck, and he came in, and he went over by the door, grabbed one of these big fire extinguishers, you know, the heavy ones. I think he was half drunk, too. He ran up and down the barracks spraying everybody and everything. In thirty days, he was a civilian. He got out of the Navy. Claimed he was a mental case. He wasn't mental at all. He knew how to escape.

SH: Did your family talk about the rationing?

CK: Well, I left my '36 Dodge. My dad had one that was a '35. We got "A," which was the minimum gas allowed. What was it, five gallons a week? Not much. He kept mine registered while I was gone, so, he had double the gasoline. ... I think that, in general, the people supported the hardships. They lived with rationing and begrudgingly, but it was for the boys.

SH: Did your mother participate in any of that knitting for Britain?

CK: No. She was too busy to do that. However, I did volunteer in an organization. I did belong to the Long Branch Demolay when I was young. You don't hear much about that anymore, and that was a good experience for me.

SI: Could you tell us about what drill instructors were like, and where they were from?

CK: I don't know where. It was only three weeks. ... They were hard on us, and they should be, especially that first week. This guy was ... in Newport as a Navy drill instructor, and they were taking these people off the streets, or off the farm, or who knows. You didn't have to be a high school graduate to enlist. Some of them are probably half way through high school when they volunteered to join. So, they had a mishmash of people.

SH: How far behind you was your brother in enlisting in the military?

CK: ... He first went to Monmouth Junior College for a year. He then transferred to Rutgers, and then he got into the Navy ROTC, and he was sent to Colgate, ... and then Plattsburg, New York. ... I think I was on active duty before he was.

SI: Did you travel by yourself to Newport, or was there a group from Long Branch?

CK: We traveled individually by train. ... I don't think we ever rode a bus. Everything was train, and there were a lot of trains, too. They were pretty much on schedule, unlike the crazy schedules that you have now.

SH: Where did you go from Rhode Island then?

CK: I went home for a ten-day leave. Then I went on the *Ancon* in Boston, where she was in the shipyard. She was built in Four River, Massachusetts about eight or nine years before I went on it. A relatively new ship at that time, but she didn't go very fast. She was 494 feet long. I used to know the tonnage, and I had some of her statistics. I have stuff buried that I haven't looked at for years. ... I think we could, at full throttle ... we probably couldn't do over fifteen knots?

SH: Tell us what it was like to be on a ship that was in the yard. What was your daily routine?

CK: It was noisy. There were welders, and sheet metal people all day and night. Sometimes we were trying to sleep through that. When it was daylight, they had us out there chipping paint. Boy, if you have ever chipped paint day, after day, after day, manually, no power tools. After you have finished chipping it, you paint it, and they move you over to chip some more. ... It was endless.

SH: What were you going to be assigned to do on the *Ancon* ?

CK: I don't know. I was a ... deck hand initially, and then, I found out about the different ratings, radioman, signalman, quartermasters, which was more related to my boating interests. They also have cooks and everything. The ship's crew was about 900 people, so, it wasn't a small endeavor, but the nice thing about being in the Navy, as opposed to being a foot soldier, you took your home with you. So, when we were overseas in England, or Morocco, or Sicily, you slept in your own bunk.

SH: When did you start your training for the quartermaster?

CK: On board the ship.

SH: While you were underway?

CK: Yes.

SH: Did your training begin in the shipyard?

CK: Well, they have manuals and you have six weeks to study, and take a test. If you pass, you move on up. Eventually, I was chief quartermaster. My dad was upset that my brother was an officer, and I was not. So, when I was in Rutgers, one of my fraternity brothers, I think his first name was Morton, we went over to 90 Church Street, and took an all day exam. ... It was the hardest thing. It felt like it had been written for an MIT Ph.D. It was harder than any exam I ever had at Rutgers. ... He passed. He was younger than I was, was made an ensign. I spoke to an officer and he said, "Kingston, you're too old to be an ensign." I said, "What are we going to do?" He said, "We're going to make you a lieutenant JG." He says, "Half a notch." When we lived in Richmond for ten years, I stayed in the Reserves. I was taking correspondence courses, and then, I got a letter from them, and it was signed COG, which means "Convenience of the Government." You would hear that all the time. They're upsizing, downsizing, or whatever they're doing. COG, and there's no reprieve from it. They gave me three months, or something like that because I was behind. I mailed them into Philadelphia, and they were graded. They sent it back to me. "COG, ... voluntarily retire your commission or we're gonna drop you." That's pretty definite. So, I dropped it. I never did anything more with the Navy while I was in Richmond. I did go on one summer cruise in Norfolk, Virginia, on a destroyer escort. I almost felt like I was getting seasick. I hadn't been at sea in so long.

SH: When was the *Ancon* finished with the shipyard?

CK: Let's see if I can retrace that for you. We came through the Cape Cod Canal. They thought they saw a sub, a U-boat. I don't know whether they did or not. Then, we went to Norfolk. After that, we messed around in the Chesapeake to set the magnetic compass on what they call a degaussing range where you calibrate what the error is in that latitude. Then, ... I think we must have started for North Africa from Norfolk. We were a troop ship then. We had these LCVP boats, ... these gray marine diesel engines, thirty-six footers, with a bow door that flops down,

and you can do beachhead landings. So, we went over there. ... I think we had ten boats, maybe twelve. One of our coxswains, who, after he landed his troops on the beach at Fedala, came back to the ship saying, "Oh, I was kicked in the butt by a General." He was stargazing over there. He got rid of his troops. ... He didn't go back to the ship for more, just on the beach, as a lark. George Patton kicked him in the butt, and he was bragging on it.

SH: How many trips do they make back and forth like that?

CK: For a landing, probably two, or three. Usually, the most hostile one was the first. You're trying to catch him by surprise. We come in at dawn, or just before dawn, and send the boats to shore. Fedala is actually not Casablanca. It is north about fifteen miles from Casablanca, but it was a deserted area. We had a lot of supplies that we had to off load, and it was lugger-bugger work to get the stuff out of the hold and in the boats to send it ashore. We had these cranes on the ship. One morning, Herb Smith, whose family ran a tugboat fleet in New York, he was kind of a strapping guy, but a nice, friendly guy, we were tired. So, we were looking over the ships rail to the shore, which is about a mile away. A plane flew by, and he said, "Ah, Luftwaffe." We sounded general quarters. We didn't know anything about a war, and right up on the bow of the *Ancon* there was a three-inch gun. The gunnery officer was up there. I don't know whether he got the Captain's permission or not, but they decided they were going to shoot at that plane a mile away. Herb Smith and I are standing on the rail, and the muzzle of the gun, no fooling was about the corner of the ceiling up there from us, about ten feet. I was deaf for three days. I couldn't hear a darn thing. I thought I was going to be permanently deaf because of the snap of the concussion from that muzzle, but, eventually, my hearing came back. If we'd been farther back, we would have been all right. ... I recovered anyway.

SH: What did you do on the trip from Norfolk to North Africa?

CK: I was still a seaman then. I wasn't a quartermaster at that time. We scrubbed the decks, picked up the trash, and cigarette butts.

SH: How many troops could you carry?

CK: I can't remember exactly, but I would hazard a guess. We stuffed them in ... I mean, the bunks were rotating between who is sleeping, and who is awake, and seasick, too, a lot of them. It was lousy for them, I really felt that, for the dogfaces, which was the Navy's term for soldiers. We, at least, had some space of our own, but they were just like sardines in a can. Anyway, I would guess that we took maybe 1200 troops, maybe 2000. I really don't know. It was a long time ago. Can I tell you one more thing about Fedala? We put the troops ashore, and we were at anchor. There were several different ships at anchor, maybe two dozen, maybe three dozen lying off the beach. I don't know how deep the water was, probably sixty, or seventy feet, and just before dark the ships started to get torpedoed. Our Captain, Paul Mather, was a giant of a man. How did he ever get in a sub? He used to be a sub commander for the US Navy. He told the Chief Boatswain, "We're going to sea, cut the anchor chain." Now, the anchor chain was no easy thing to cut. It probably took him fifteen, or twenty minutes. ... The chain diameter must have been at least three, or four inches. Without an acetylene torch, they were just manually hacking on it, trying to leave the anchor and the chain there, and get out of there. That's the time when

they did the highest speed that the *Ancon* ever achieved. We were successful, but we did see other ships that were sunk. We picked up from one of the other Navy transports a Catholic priest who stayed with the *Ancon* for a long time. They have five-year reunions. I've been to a couple of them, but my wife says, "They're drunken fools. Do not go there anymore." We did one on Long Island. We did one in Baltimore, and we did one in Annapolis, too.

SH: What was your battle station?

CK: I can't tell you at the beginning. I probably was on a gun crew. One of the ships that was fairly near us was a tanker to supply the fuel for the ships that were in the convoy. It was called the (*Wysnuski?*), and one of the torpedoes hit right in the middle of the ship. This was just before sundown. You could see when the torpedo hit the ship from the sunlight shining through a gaping hole. They hit an empty fuel tank. They're subdivided. Went right through her, didn't sink her, but tore a tremendous hole, sort of like the thing you're hearing about in the Persian Gulf where the bomb hit, gaping hole, but she didn't go down. However, they did sink, I think, four, or five ships, and what the U-boats had done was they had stayed on the bottom all day until they got the call and boy, they went to work in a hurry. I don't know what the wolf pack was, but my guess is they must have ten, or twelve submarines down there. What does the US Navy, (except our Skipper), what does the US Navy know about how to avoid a trap like that? I mean, there was no radio communication. There weren't any destroyers there to drop depth charges on them. That was when they were up near their peak, and they were sinking British and American ships left and right, a tremendous toll. The ships that were leaving from the East Coast to go to England for a while there, I guess a year, maybe, until we got on top of it with blimps, and destroyers, primarily. I don't think we used subs against their subs. Why, we were only getting about forty percent delivery on the other end. I mean, it was terrible.

SH: How big was the convoy that you were in, from Norfolk to North Africa?

CK: ... I would guess about thirty ships, and we probably did have a destroyer escort, maybe two of them, but not many. We didn't have the fleet that we built up during the war. At the beginning, we were using old "Four Stackers," WWI destroyers, which were rusting apart. That's why Roosevelt gave Churchill a bunch of them. They were junk, but at least they were something.

BS: At Fedala, how much of the beach did you see from your ship?

CK: From a mile away, you do not see a lot. I mean, you see the outline, and it was a sand beach, no mountains, or anything there, very flat country.

BS: So, much of what you know about it was from people coming back?

CK: Right, and from the radios to our radio room on board the ship. They would send back from their military, you crank up the generator and transmit, like field phones. Yeah, that's the way we got the news. ...

SH: Tell us what happened next. You cut the anchor chain and ...

CK: We went to sea. We only had two anchors, and we left one of them behind. I think the wolf pack must have left. I think they were a one-night stand. I don't think they stuck around. They did their thing, and they were gone. So, I guess we stayed to unload their supplies because the troops were already gone, and the supply must have taken ... maybe a week. Then, we came back to Malta, empty. That was the initial thing. Then, we made a couple of runs to Oran and Algiers in the Mediterranean.

SH: Is this the same, usually a forty-ship convoy?

CK: It varied. Some of them were even bigger than that, but zigzagging at night. You know, quartermasters and the officers of the deck, they have a plan for what zigzag course they're going to use. Then, during the night, lots of times at midnight, or some other time to throw off the enemy subs, you change the plan. I'll tell you even with a bright moon it is very scary to me. I have very good eyesight. I only use these glasses for reading, but when the ships don't all turn when they're supposed to, you have a problem of running into each other, and there were some near misses. You're on radio silence, you know, and that was very hazardous. Then, the destroyer escorts would run on the outside edges, and if they got a contact on their sonar, they'd stay there, and try to sink the sub, and the rest of the convoy would keep going. Never stop the convoy.

SH: During this time were you still working on changing your rating from deckhand to ...

CK: Yeah, I forget what the first Quartermaster bottom of the line is, I think it's third. ... Anyway, while I was on the *Ancon*, we had three different skippers, but none as dramatic as the original skipper, who was something else.

SH: Well, tell us about how you came to the Mediterranean. You said two more times to Oran. ...

CK: Yes, troop ship and then, ... we had an operation on the eastern side of the Mediterranean. I don't think it was Oran. We spent one summer there. Boy, was it hot, and I stayed away from the Casbah. Some of the people would go in there, and they would get robbed. They were half drunk, and Casbah is (vice?), in my humble estimate. I don't want any part of that, but the natives were... One time when we were there, we brought back, when Montgomery beat the Afrika Corps of Rommel's, and they sent us back with ... at least 800 prisoners of war. When they walked on the quay, like a concrete pier, the ships went up along side this thing, and moored there. The water was deep and they marched those guys down, under guard, and brought them on the *Ancon*. They were bronze. They'd been in the desert for three, or four years. Their goose step was some kind of precision. When I looked over the rail, and talked to some of my sailor friends, "How the heck are we ever gonna beat these guys?" What pros, here we are neophytes, we don't know what we're doing. We don't know about war, and these guys got captured, and we brought them back. Then, they distribute them in different areas of the East Coast somewhere. I don't know where they went, but that was a sight to behold, to see those guys coming down. You'd think that they were the victors. They were so impressive, physically and mentally. So, it was a real challenge. Montgomery wasn't the best general to get along with Eisenhower, and a lot of other people, but at least he did El Alamein, which helped turn the tide. If you have seen some of the historical things about why Rommel lost to Montgomery, it was Hitler's fault. He didn't give

him fuel. He was stuck. He can't run the tanks with no fuel, or little fuel, and he's far from home, too. Well, of course, so was Montgomery.

SH: What were the procedures in overseeing the prisoners of war?

CK: They were under twenty-four hour guard. I don't know how many armed guards there were. They would rotate the guards.

SH: Was it only German prisoners of war, or were there Italians?

CK: We never took any but the Germans. We only did, as I recall, that one trip. I don't think we did it another time.

SH: What were your orders as far as interacting with the North Africans?

CK: Don't get too friendly with them. They spoke French, primarily. I guess some of them didn't speak French, but it was French controlled, part of the French empire, and then they broke away after the war. The *Ancon* had the privilege of having several dignitaries come on board especially before D-Day. ... We had De Gaulle. We had Air Force generals, and everybody, when an operation was coming up. The King of England, I got some pictures, he was on board to inspect ... our ship's company.

SH: Tell us about how the job of the *Ancon* changed in the beginning ...

CK: Well, somewhere along, after we did Oran and Algiers, we came back to the States. We went into the shipyard, again. Norfolk this time. Norfolk was overwhelmed. The civilians at Norfolk were just overwhelmed by sailors, and ships, and problems. Police problems, prostitution, you name it, it was there. One of the things that turned out to be a standing joke was the sign that some of the civilians put on their nicely manicured lawns, "Sailors and dogs, keep off the grass," and they meant it, too. They would come running out of their house, and try to run the sailors off, because the sailors were away from home and uncontrolled. They were kids. Most of them were just kids. So, we spent a long time in Norfolk. Can I use a nasty word? This is what the sailors used to call Norfolk, "Shit City." They meant it ... because the civilians were not hospitable. The USO was about the only thing you could go to. You go to a movie show, but the USO was the only place that welcomed you. They were outnumbered like ten to one, and a lot of them worked in the shipyard, too.

SH: What was your duty when the *Ancon* was being refitted once again?

CK: Well, study your books for the class. We had to do the navigation charts, too. They wouldn't tell you where we were going, but everybody on the ship said, "Where are we going, Cliff?" You can't tell them on board your own ship, until you're on the way, and then, you can say, "We're headed for, you know, what port." Internal security, not to let the word out, and they wouldn't give you the information usually, until the navigator would have it. The captain would have it, then, the navigator would have it. A lot of times these were sealed orders, "Do not open until a specific date." So, they didn't know lots of times. ... We came back, and we became an AGC, the

first one. There are others now, even under sail. The Navy called them *Mt. McKinley* , *Mt. This* , *Mount Olympus* , several names, but we were the first one. We just kept the name *Ancon* . Then, we did Sicily next, and that was the only time I was seasick. A tremendous storm came when we were going to invade Sicily, not too far from Palermo, east of it, as I recall. Boy, that night on the way to Sicily from North Africa, which is not a long trip, I don't know maybe eighty to one hundred miles, twelve and fifteen foot seas, head on. Now, I can stand a roll. You can grab something to hold on to, and that doesn't bother my stomach. But my bunk was forward, and when the ship is going up at twenty degrees, and there's no wave there to support it, and it's going down twenty degrees, especially after dinner, I was sick. I threw up a couple of times, and I felt a little better. That's the only time I was sick in the Navy.

SH: Were you still carrying troops at this point?

CK: No, we were carrying top brass, and a few correspondents, even then. It was multi-lingual, and it was done. When you are going on an invasion, there is radio silence. The only way to communicate back and forth was by flashing light, Morse code, or signal flags. Complete silence.

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

SH: Who were the brass that was serving on board before you went into Sicily?

CK: I don't remember other than the Free French, and some British, obviously. However, some of them were Marine Corps, some of them were Air Force, and some of them were all branches of Allied people, who had troops involved in the operation. They were really in command of their troops, but they weren't out ... on the front lines. They were on the *Ancon* , and so the communication was by radio back and forth, or by messenger, sending messengers back and forth.

SH: How did you send messengers back and forth?

CK: By boat. You know, once the beachhead is secured, they ran boats back and forth all day long.

SH: What about the press corps that you said was on board?

CK: That was mostly from Tokyo for the surrender, but there were some on for D-Day. We had a lot of them, but I don't remember if they were in Sicily. I don't know.

SH: Tell us about the Sicily campaign. What you could see? What do you remember?

CK: Well, that didn't last too long. The Italians didn't put up much of a fight, really. I mean, the Germans were there egging them on, but I think they had enough of the war. I think they had enough of Mussolini, too. So, that didn't last too long, but we did lose a sailor on liberty. When you're tied up in port, and you have liberty, the officer of the deck is not on the bridge. He's at the gangplank, and one quartermaster, for every four-hour watch. We were tied up at the wharf

in Palermo , and I was on the watch. I think it was midnight curfew, maybe one o'clock , I can't recall. Our crew, or enlisted personnel, and officers were coming back on board, and the ship wasn't hard against the quay. The gangplank had to go down in between. So, I can't remember, maybe we weren't anchored. ... I don't think we were. Anyway, they would have to walk to get on the bottom of the gangplank, and they're supposed to salute the colors, and ask permission to come on board. It was tradition, but some of these drunks, our own people, one of them fell between the gangplank and the side of the hull. He was never found. He went right on down, and we never found him. It was a sad situation, to lose somebody that way. At Palermo , we bought some souvenirs, and the natives were kind of friendly by then. They were glad to see us. I've got some, I don't know what branch of the Italian service it was, but some kind of a gray hat with a gold band in front of it. I bought it in the store. Maybe it was taken from a prisoner, I don't know. I got a sea chest with stuff that when we moved from Bethesda , which was 1980, twenty years ago, I haven't unpacked. I don't know what I've got, and my wife says, "You know, we have to go to a retirement home in about four, or five years. We've got to get rid of the stuff." She is not the pack rat that I am.

SH: After Sicily , what were your orders?

CK: We came back to the States, ... to New York . I'm quite sure that I have the sequence right. It was cold. It was February. One of the duties that quartermasters do is to douse the colors, which are flying from the aft yardarm, when you make port. So, when you get in the Narrows there, there was no Tappan Zee Bridge then, you wait until the ship clears to go in. I don't know whether we went in a civilian pier, I don't think we went into the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Anyway, February, it was cold, it was like twelve degrees and twenty mile per hour winds. I froze my butt out there. I was waiting for the ship to get in, so, I could douse the colors. Then, I guess, we went to Salerno . I'm a little mixed up. I can't be sure whether we made it back to New York then, or before Sicily .

SH: Did you get a chance to go home and see your family?

CK: Usually, they give you four, or five days, not a whole lot, really. Maybe we went from Sicily to Salerno , which was only a couple of hundred miles. You know, above the Italian boot on the west coast is where Salerno is. ... Mark Clark was the Army General in charge, and if there was anybody that needed to go back to war tactics, he was the one. We landed the troops, and there were a lot of ships this time, including cruisers, which were ships of the line as opposed to auxiliaries and the *Savannah* was among them. Anyway, landed the troops, and there were British troops, too. Mark Clark was in charge, and the Germans back ten, or fifteen miles, fight and run, and fight and run back. Mark Clark thought he had it won. What the Germans were doing was, here was the coastline, and they were in a U. They were going back like that, and then when they saw the right time to do it, they did the pincers from both sides, and our troops were cut off. We didn't know whether we were going to lose them all, or what. I mean, it was very hairy, and with a lot of reserves, and support, and air bombardment and other things, they finally broke the pincers. But the Germans were smarter than Mark Clark. ...

SH: What was your ship's responsibility at this time?

CK: Again, headquarter landing deck operations, and at that time, ... but, this was Dave's ship, the *Savannah* comes into play. About eleven o'clock in the morning, Salerno was also the place where the Germans would send over a single plane, harassment, to put everybody on general quarters. It was like being in the Sea Scouts, and coming home a zombie, everybody after forty-five minutes of air raids, supposed air raids. Sometimes no bombs, just one would pass by at high altitude. They never even shot him down. You go "Goo Goo." You haven't any sleep. ... You get in the bed, and you're out. Anyway, one day, five, or six days after the initial landing, a bright, sunny day, about eleven o'clock in the morning, I was up on the forward deck, ahead of the bridge, down on the main deck. I don't know why I was there, just goofing, I guess, and sometimes there's nothing to do except run to general quarters. We saw a plane coming from, we're about a mile offshore, again, and we saw a plane coming way up, like 20,000 feet, just a little bitty dot. A couple of other people were standing near me, and I said, "Look, he dropped a bomb!" The *Savannah* was just cruising along at ten, or fifteen knots. Calm waters, no wind, and she got about 300 yards off of our starboard quarter. That lousy bomb was the first time that Hitler had allowed them to use it. It was called a "glider bomb," and the bombardier could steer it. It went right through the number three gun turret in the *Savannah*, right through the bottom, killed everybody in that turret, and below. They had the watertight doors closed, I guess, or closed them immediately. It didn't sink, but leaned about fifteen degrees. Just like a wounded duck, she circled around and around, but she was safe. Guess what? They sent the ship back to the States for repairs. My brother was assigned as gunnery officer on the number three turret. Then, he belonged to the Savannah Association. She's in Savannah, Georgia, now as a historical thing. Some of the people in the Savannah Association, with the Freedom of Information Act, got in touch with the pilot and the bombardier of that plane to find out how they did it, and all that. Hitler had agreed that we'll teach them, over on the mouth of Salerno, by sinking the Headquarters Command ship, the *Ancon*. They mistook from 20,000 feet which ship it was. So, that's why I'm very happy to be here. My brother was a gunner at that time. What does the Navy do then? Admiral Kirk's son was assigned to the *Savannah* about the same time my brother was put on it, and they never sent the *Savannah* to combat again. They sent it to Yalta with Roosevelt. They went to South America, and they had these observation bi-planes that they'd shoot off the catapult, and the aviators on board had to have a certain number of hours every month. My brother would get in the cockpit, and other people, too, and just go flying for flying, to keep them in ship-shape. ... I never knew the *Ancon* was the target, until he found it out and sent me a publication. I don't know where it is. The publication showed the target that they had missed. They hit the *Savannah*. They tried to hit the *Ancon* to bring the operation to a halt.

SH: Did your ship take on any casualties?

CK: No, we had hospital ships. You don't hear much about them anymore. Sometimes they would even shoot them up. We had some strafing runs by the Luftwaffe, while we were there at Salerno, some people back on the guns on the stern, on the fantail were injured. So, they received a Purple Heart, shrapnel and stuff like that. ... I feel that with the prayers of my family, and my own, and being in the right place at the right time, I made it.

SH: After the *Savannah* was hit, what was the reaction on your ship? What could you see?

CK: Well, I don't think our ship, as such, made an attempt to help them. They kept their speed, and they just circled. But I think, other ships, destroyers, maybe tugs, came to their aid.

SH: What was your duty at this point in your career?

CK: I was first class quartermaster by then, I think. After D-Day, or before D-Day, was when I got to be chief.

SH: Is there more story involved with Salerno ?

CK: No, I don't think so. I'm a little fuzzy, really, on when we came back, when we didn't, and whether we went from Salerno to England . I think that's what we did. We were gone sixteen months. It's a long time. But I'm not a gambler, and I don't win things, however, a surprising thing occurred. They used to go around, and have an anchor pool. You got a number from one to sixty. You put in about two bucks, three bucks, a buck, whatever. Then, the quartermaster records the time that the anchor was dropped, and the nearest minute to that time gets the anchor pool, which is 150 dollars, and I won it. Then, they pick on you to join the next anchor pool. "No way." I sent the money home by money order. We had a post office on board the ship, which was big enough for that. I sent the money order home, and I sent the V-letters. ... I got a letter. The mail was very slow. Sometimes, it would be six weeks, or two months ... I got a letter from my mom and dad saying, "Our furnace quit. Your money order arrived just in time. We now have a furnace so we can keep warm." I said "Boy, timing." So, I was glad I joined that anchor pool.

SH: What were your duties in England ? Did you know you were preparing for another invasion?

CK: Well, we figured D-Day was coming. It was kind of common knowledge because the US had sent tanks. Also, there was a friend of mine, who lived in Fanwood , New Jersey , who was a carpenter's mate on the ship, and he had a friend, who was in the tank corps, who was in England before D-Day. We went and spent a weekend with him, and I learned how to run a tank. You pull this one, you turn left, and pull this one, you turn right. Boy, I wouldn't want to be in a box like that, but we spent a weekend. ... England was just saturated, like Norfolk was saturated, with sailors. England was saturated with military personnel, some French, and I think there was a scattering of Norwegians, or some people who had escaped. Everybody knew it was going to happen, but it was just the question of when. The thing that people don't know is Eisenhower was trying to time the weather correctly. It was a tremendous armada. I should get some pictures out to show you the barrage balloons, and things. I will do that. We moved from Plymouth where I was, and got out of the shipyard on the Tamar River . We moved over to (Portland Bill?), which is east, along the coast, and I can't remember the name of the town. ... We knew it was going to be an invasion once we were underway. We knew it was going to be D-Day. Then, the storm came. A big storm, and we had to go back, and do it the next day. There were an awful lot of seasick troops and sailors ... because of that storm.

SH: Who was on the *Ancon* at that time?

CK: We had Montgomery on board. The King didn't go with us. He stayed in England , but I don't think we had a visit from Churchill, just about everybody but him. All of the Allied forces

had far more personnel than we did in Salerno , Sicily , or North Africa . A lot of big stuff was going on. Would you be good enough to do the introduction of my wife? Her nickname is Gina. Virginia is her real name. She'll tell you how the weather improved, and we went across the Channel by night, and got there at dawn. In the meantime, all during the night, the British Spitfires, and all the US planes that we had, bombers and towing gliders, and all kinds of paratroopers were flying over the Channel. The ships had barrage balloons on them to prevent strafing by the German planes. I don't know if they were too effective, but the ships didn't move very fast. They were going eight, or ten knots. These things were on a winch back on the stern, so, they could run them up, or run them down, because if a plane tried to come through to strafe, and their wings hit the cable between the barrage balloon and the ship, they would crash. So, they didn't have to fire a gun for that. Of course, they had the guns, too. Anyway, we went over, and it was up and down the beach, before dawn, the heavy guns of the battleships. They had every ship that the Royal Navy could muster, and every French ship from the Free French, and every American ship that they could spare. ... The British had the eastern one, and then, there were four beaches over towards Cherbourg . The Mediterranean was for US forces to invade. We landed at Omaha Beach , which was our sector. We didn't have anything to do with the other beaches, just Omaha Beach , which turned out to be one of the roughest of all. So, they had a great idea for offloading supplies. We towed these concrete caissons, with tugboats, the second, or third day, from Britain , to sink them, and sink them side-by-side to form an artificial man-made jetty where the ships could pull up alongside, and off-load. Along came a storm about five days after D-Day. It blew and demolished those things, turned them over, and it blew so hard that the *Ancon* had to run both engines ahead into the wind to maintain position on the anchor. It was that hard, and a lot of troops on the shore didn't have any supplies. They were out of food and ammunition, and the boats could not travel back and forth. That was the only point in which it looked like the invasion might fail. The wind blew that hard for ... two days, and everything was in the balance! So, that was very nip and tuck, and the brass on board were beside themselves, "How are we going to continue the operation?" Then, the sun came out, and the wind went down. They tried to pull together the pieces, but they couldn't off-load supplies that way. Everything that had been off-loaded on the mulberries was gone. They lost them all in ... the Channel. So, we had this Gene Anthony, the photographer, go ashore unarmed to photograph stuff, and he brought back a lot of it. Rommel was the one who was designated by Hitler to fortify the channel. As you probably know, the trick worked because they leaked the fact that the invasion would really take place on the shortest distance between England and France , near Dunkirk . They let some stuff slip by, and they would listen to the dates to crack the German code. They listened to Hitler, and his staff's reaction to where the invasion would occur. Rommel had gone home for his wife's birthday, or something like that, the day before the invasion came. When he heard about it, he told Hitler that he wanted to move his Panzers up to the shoreline, and Hitler, who was really a maniac, said, "No." Which was good for us, and then, eventually Rommel was hit by shrapnel from a Spitfire, and died shortly after that. He was a real soldier's soldier. The Allies admire superior military men. They're in the same business. It is just like whatever your father does, I'm sure he has some associates that he admires, and they probably admire him. ... Even though they are our enemies, still, it is a cadre of who knows what they are doing, and how well they do it. ... So, anyway, we spent about two weeks there, and then, we went back to Plymouth , and met the girlfriends that we had said goodbye to, they all knew where we were going, and then, we sailed to America . Broke a lot of hearts. I left one there, too!

SH: Can you tell us what your specific duties were during the D-Day invasion?

CK: I was the helmsman. That was my battle station, to be at the skipper's direction, to steer the ship. ... He didn't have any headset phones on ... back up for a moment. Do you know what the engine order telegraphs are in ships? They are round, and they've got handles on them, and it says, "Ahead slow, ahead medium, ahead full," and then, reverse, the same thing. The orderly that worked with the Captain didn't rely on the order engine telegraphs in a general quarters situation. He was on the phone with the chief engineer in the boiler room to relay, just in case he didn't get the message, the same directions were given, because you could run the ship aground or hit another ship. So, that worked out very well. The one funny thing, but I can't tell you where this happened, and I have to laugh. The Captain, this is the first Captain, Paul Mather, who was a big guy. He had an orderly, and the orderly sat outside his cabin, which was right behind the bridge, night and day. He had some relief, other people would fill in, but he was the head orderly. He was a little guy. He probably was about 5'2" or 5'3". Now, in general quarters, everybody is wearing a steel helmet. ... The wheel is in the center of the bridge. You have wings out on each side. It is dark. You have some dim lights like that, but no lights are permitted, no cigarettes, flashlights, no anything. So, you have to kind of feel your way and, eventually, you get used to where things are, even in the dark. So, one time, the Captain bellowed, "Orderly! Orderly!" He was on one wing of the bridge. The orderly was on the other, and I'm on the wheel, steering. They had to pass behind me to go to either bridge. ... So, the orderly went running, and the Captain went fast, walking, big steps to try to get in touch with him. Right behind me, the front part of the steel helmet of the orderly hit the bridge of the Captain's nose and, boy, if you want to hear him yell. He really yelled, and he said, "Officer of the Deck, I have just been hit on the nose by my orderly." Everybody on the bridge, there was no decorum then, everybody was laughing their butts off, but he recovered.

SH: Did the orderly recover?

CK: Well, I don't know whether he put him in the brig for a couple of days, or what. It wasn't his fault. It was both of their faults. I was so close to the noise, and impact. I think he knocked the orderly down, as a matter-of-fact. I think he did knock him over backward.

SH: On the *Ancon*, were all the stewards either African-American, or Filipino?

CK: No, Filipino mess cooks. The Navy doesn't do that anymore. I don't know what the deal was. ... We had some Americans. We had a big freezer on the ship. We had meat, and we had some American sailor butchers, but the ones that prepared the food, and the ones that served the food in the chow line were all Filipino. ... Some of them had been in for generations. It is a good place of employment for them, and they had the same rankings as the enlisted people had, no officers, the same rankings as the signalman, radioman, sonar man, or corpsman had. They had those same degrees, and they would wear the clothing to match. They all spoke English, not very well, but they did speak it.

SH: With all the brass on board, were your accommodations and your food a little better than the sister ships?

CK: Well, the chiefs and the officers ate in a separate mess, but the enlisted personnel that came with the brass who were part of the “flag office,” ate where we ate. Finally, when we were in the Pacific, and I got to be chief, and I moved to the chief's quarters for sleeping, and the chief's mess, I didn't know I was on the same ship. The contrast was like night and day. So, I got a little recognition.

SH: What was the interaction between the different organizations of Allies?

CK: Well, we basically provided the platform. They took over our radios, ... communications independent of the ship things. Anything that they wanted to relay to the ship's company had to go through the Captain.

SH: What was their impression of you, being a very young man with the brass that you had? How did they treat you?

CK: They treated me all right. We had, in addition to the Captain, an Executive Officer, who didn't have a Navy, or military background at all. His name was Lt. Commander (Haines?), and I can't remember where he came from, New England , somewhere around there. The crew didn't particularly like him because, don't forget the *Ancon* was not built as a Navy ship, and it had some deluxe stairways, and the interior, to go from one deck level to the other. It had daily inspections. ... (Haines?) had a nasty habit. Since, he didn't have anything else to do, and they didn't give him much to do, really, just sort of extra baggage. I think political baggage, perhaps. He used to be the one that would chastise the enlisted people by saying things like, “Pick up those cigarette butts. Scrub this deck over here.” You know, just harassment because he didn't have anything else to do. So, I think that generally speaking, I served under either three, or four navigators. There was a pretty good relationship. Some of the navigators would stay when the captains would be reassigned. ... The food wasn't wonderful, but there was enough of it, so, you didn't go hungry. Routine schedule. The Naval Academy had to serve on the ships, too. They put 4,200 people through, two hours of mealtime, at lunchtime, tremendous amount at the academy.

SH: When you came back to the States, what did you think you were going to do? There was still fighting in Europe .

CK: We went on over to the Pacific.

SH: Straight from there?

CK: We went to Charleston , South Carolina when we came back from D-Day. The ship went in the yard for upgrading, and then we went to the Pacific. We sat in the Marianas for most of the summer, two islands, Saipan and Tinian . We were at Tinian and Saipan , which was where the B-29s flew to Japan Something that a lot of people don't know, although, I'm sure if it's still classified, is that we did a false invasion of southern Japan . Just like the real thing. ... The other transports put the boats over, and they ran in for about five miles, and then at 7:30 or 8 o'clock in the morning came back. Then, we faded away, but we got the chance to see ... Okinawa . We got the chance to pull into port there, and ... see the airfield, but this is after it had been secured.

SH: Where did you go from Charleston ?

CK: Down through the Canal, and we went to ... Long Beach , and then Hawaii , and then Guam , and into Tinian .

SH: Were you still traveling with the group?

CK: No, we were going solo. The Pacific, far out from Japan had been secured. We ran without escort.

SH: When did you leave Charleston for the Pacific?

CK: Well, I got home for leave, and the big news in our family was that my sister was engaged to a soldier that she had met, who turned out to be a schoolteacher in Nutley after he graduated from the University of Cincinnati My father said, "Your sister, Elizabeth, is getting married." I said, "What in the world is she doing that for?" He said, "Well, Frank has been assigned to Seattle and may be overseas after that." So, she was only eighteen when she got married. When I came home, after he had gone back to the University of Cincinnati , I had a nephew who was about maybe eighteen months old. My nephew lives in Cherry Hill , now. He worked for Sun Oil for a number of years. Now, he's got another computer job with somebody else. He was a funny little kid. ... The family used to think that I was a little bit overbearing when I got down on all fours with him. He would get on one end of the room, and I would get on the other end. We would put our noses close to the carpet, and we'd come to the middle of the room. Boom! Boom! It was not too hard, just to play. His name is Steven Todd Herbert, and I call him Steven Hodd Berbert.

SH: Let's talk about the Pacific.

CK: Okay, we went through the Canal. That was an experience. I enjoyed it. (Sarbanes?) our so called senator from Maryland was one of the ones that gave the Canal away to the Panamanians, which was ridiculous. Then, we went to Hawaii , and we had about ten days. The only place I would like to live ... in my Navy travel was Hawaii . Just terrific, but the Royal Hawaiian Hotel had been the R&R for the sub crews, and they had demolished it. You know, they had Navy personnel at the Berkley Carteret in Asbury Park during the war. They demolished that, too. Absolutely. You come back from a sub patrol, and just raise hell. Tear the place apart. Anyway, we spent ten days in Hawaii . I liked it very much, and did a little traveling. I got a chance to go deep-sea fishing, and sailing, stuff like that. One of the most notable things that I think any navigator that I worked with did was ... there is a little atoll in the Pacific ... we were supposed to come up as a point of reference, not stop there on Eneweitok atoll ... it's a very little thing, maybe five feet above sea level ... he hit it right on the nose, with his dead reckoning, and calculations. Even the skipper was impressed. It's kind of hit or miss, and if you miss by ten miles, you don't even see it. But, he did it. Then, we went to Tinian , and sat there in the heat of the summer. People would go over to the wrecked B-29s ... These planes came back riddled. A lot of them crash landed. They would just push them over with a bulldozer, and maybe they would use some parts. The people would bring back sheets of aircraft aluminum from the wings or fuselage. We didn't have much to do, so, we'd make wristwatch bands out of them, and put our

watches on them. So, I did one of those, too, but I'm not much of a scrimshaw person. ... We went to the Philippines , before we went to Japan , so, I picked up all this crazy paper money that they had. I still have some of it around, and some coins, too. In the Mediterranean , I got some coins, and I had a great charge out of hay pennies. You know what a hay penny is? You probably know what that is, half of a penny. In Britain they call it, "hay penny." It was an experience. I came back. I was twenty-six when I got home, and my family treated me as though I was a teenager. The gap. I could understand their point of view because they hadn't seen much of me, but when you're twenty-six, and spent almost four years in the Navy, you have seen most things, whether you want to, or don't want to. You kind of feel grown up. They adjusted, and I adjusted, but it wasn't the same as when I left.

SH: After you came back, did you go to Rutgers ?

CK: The government guaranteed your job back if you were a veteran. I went to reapply for my drafting job, but they had pretty much shut down Fort Hancock . So, I went to work at Squire Lab, over at Fort Monmouth , doing the same thing. I got out of the Navy around Thanksgiving, November of '45. My folks said, "Why, you've got the GI Bill. Why don't you go to Princeton , or Rutgers ?" ... By the way, my girlfriend had married ... while I was gone, married a soldier from Fort Monmouth I turned in the applications, and Princeton sent me a very nice, polite note saying I wasn't accepted. I had gone back, and talked to the Newark College of Engineering, too, ... but I didn't reapply there. So, here I was on the job, and mid-term was coming up in February. ... I was at work. I think that they were going to notify everybody by Friday, and the next week my mother called me at work and she said, "Get packing." I said, "What are you talking about?" She said, "You're admitted to Rutgers . We just got a telegram." I must have been at the lowest echelon. So, I had to quit my job right then, pack up, and get ready to go. ... I, initially, was in a dorm with a boy, he was a child. He was big physically, but mentally he was sixteen, and I'm twenty-six, a little difference there. I lived over in the dormitory behind Bishop that had been built since, I don't know when. It was built right on the Raritan , by the canal, a high-rise. I don't remember what it was called. ... It was behind Bishop. ... I struggled there for a year with that, and a girlfriend in England finally wrote to me, and she said, "Don't send me any more mail. I've gone back to my Major husband." That was two I lost. Anyway, I went to Rutgers , and I had a hard time. I didn't take any credits from Newark College of Engineering. I started over again, and I was twenty-six. I wanted to get the heck out because I was older than the people that were graduating. Then, my brother, Dave, who had been a Deke before the war, got me to get invited as a pledge, and that was my joy at Rutgers . I had a wonderful time at the Deke house, and my grades improved, too. They had mandatory study hours, and they had hall monitors. You better hit the books. It helped my grades. Everybody was studying and when there was somebody there to enforce it, or to jump on you if you didn't, and he was an Army sergeant, by the way, it worked. My senior grades were the best I had, in high school, or in college. But, I had a tough time as a freshman. I had been away from books a long time.

SH: Did they try to do any kind of initiation for you?

CK: Oh, yeah, and that was pretty rugged. You know, they make you eat these polluted oysters, or whatever they are. It made you want to throw up. Terrible taste. You go without sleep pretty much for five days before the initiation, and you're sleeping in class. Now, professors were very

kindly, and some of these young kids that were peppering me, seeing if I could take it. I finally decided that I was old enough and mature enough in my thinking not to let them put me down, or get to me. So, I tried to hold that uppermost. One of them, Dudley Anderson, was a snarly guy, big, tall, skinny, blond, I never made friends with him. The others I did, once I was a member. He just harassed me unbelievably, unmercifully. He had never been in the Army, or the service. It was just his way. I don't know whether he grew up with parents, or brothers and sisters like that, or not.

SH: Did you ever reconnect with the first dorm roommate?

CK: No. Then, I got to live in the Deke house, which was wonderful, and the food. We had our own cook, and we sang after dinner. ... It was very good camaraderie. They are finally going to get back on campus. They got thrown out. We went to one reunion. I went up with Gina. We parked in the lot next to the house, and here's a motorcycle up on our side porch. They had taken in a bunch of bummers, and finally, Rutgers threw them off campus.

SH: Who was your favorite professor when you were there?

CK: Economics professor, I can't recall his name, starts with an "E" maybe. ... He's definitely retired, probably passed by now, because he was considerably older than I was. He was very knowledgeable, and my brother got excellent, better grades with him than I did. I thought he was very good because he was capitalistic in his thinking. He knew a lot about the Federal Reserve, and he knew how business could succeed, or fail. So, it was an eye-opener for me, ... somebody with that kind of experience. I think he'd been at Rutgers since Holy Hill rang the chimes.

SH: Did you get involved in any of the other activities other than the fraternity house?

CK: Crew manager, yeah, back to the water. Chuck Logg was the crew coach, and a very good one. I tell you, my sailing on that Shrewsbury River, running a crew launch for Chuck Logg in that foul, chemical-ridden Raritan.

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

CK: Bob Burns Dorf was also a Deke. He had been crew manager, and he was a year, or two ahead of me. ... He encouraged me to get active with that, and I was a little bit in between, I wasn't quite 150 lb., to row with the lightweight crew. I enjoyed the boat, and all that. ... One year, he and I took that crew launch, which is an inboard sixteen, or seventeen foot powerboat. We took it, by water, up to Poughkeepsie, where they used to have the nationals. We got as far as Nyack, New York, and the water pump quit. So, Chuck Logg, and the crews are up there waiting for the launch, and they didn't know where we were. They thought we had drowned, or sunk. They finally found a water pump for it, and it took us an extra day. So, we made it. There was an interesting thing that transpired one night there. They had these big dormitories, same kind at Fort Monmouth, and the Navy participated, along with Cornell, Penn State, Princeton, and Syracuse. I don't know how many crews, maybe fifteen, or twenty crews. You rehearse for a week, and then, you had the regatta. One moonlight night, about eleven, I smelled smoke. So, I got up out of the bunk, ... and walked outside, and looked at the barracks that the Navy was in, a

lot of smoke was coming out. So, I woke up Bill Stevens, who was one of our Rutgers crewmen, ... and another fraternity brother, and I said, "Bill, come on, quick, we've got to save some lives." I dragged him out of the bed. I don't even think he put a shirt on. It was summertime, warm. We ran over there, and we ran in. On both levels, we yelled, "Fire! Fire!" as loud as we could. These guys were asleep. ... We just went up and down the rows, like the guy did with the fire extinguisher. We pulled them out on the deck, dropped them there, and yelled, "Fire!" at them. ... So, it turned out that the mess cooks, Filipinos again, had failed to bank the fire, and it was primarily smoke. I don't think that too much was burned. It was suffocating those guys. So, we got everybody out. When we went back to the Deke House, this was after school session was over, ... we had an elderly lady who was partially handicapped as house mother to Deke House, Miss Mary Slighter. The next fall when I went back to school, she called me aside, she said, "Oh, I want to talk to you about that fire in Poughkeepsie ." I said "Why?" She said, "Bill Stevens said that you were a man possessed," because I was so high on trying to get those guys out of there. I said, "Well, I just thought it was my duty to do it. I'm not looking for accolades." So, I was glad I was able to do that.

SH: You were involved with photography?

CK: Oh, yeah. There was a drugstore over on Easton Ave. ... They used to sell films, and they also had a local film processor. They had a little shop a few more blocks away where I could take the film over, and he would process it for me at whatever he would charge the drug store. As a low-income student, ... that was good. Then, one of the guys in the Deke house said, "Why don't you take pictures of the dances, like Senior Prom, Junior Prom, and all that?" He said, "We'll let you have a room in the gymnasium on College Avenue ." Anyway, I went to Howard Crosby, he had been a Deke before me. He said, "You can sell the pictures, two 5x7 prints in folders, for a dollar." Not much profit when you have to buy the folders, and have the printing processed. So, I went over to one of my cousin's friends ... at Douglass, and borrowed a Ciroflex camera, which is one where you look down to the ground glass, and you see the image. It has a shutter on one, and I had one. I don't know if I rented one, or what, but I wound up with four of them. I hired a couple of people to help me because we had the floor marked, "Stand there with your date" and the floodlights were on, no flash bulbs, just floodlights. So, this had to be between breaks in the dances. You didn't have a lot of time. We had them ready for them the next day at the Deke house. We had the fellows that worked in the photo lab. We set him up in one of the dorms where he could do his film processing during the night. It was really a mass production thing. I didn't make a lot of money, but I used to make around 150 to 200 dollars because they had a price ceiling on me. So, I did that for two years, ... maybe six, or eight dances. There is a place in New York that mailed the folders to me wholesale, and they had printed, "Junior Dance," on them, and the year on it. So, the girl got one, and the boy got one. So, I had fun with that.

SH: Now, did you also take pictures for the *Targum* ?

CK: Only a little bit. Right towards the end of my senior year, I took some of them. ... I had a summer job in Brielle, where I used to take pictures for a photographer. He had a concession for when they would catch the tuna fish, when they were coming in from the fishing boats, and then, he would sell them the prints by mail order, but it was cash only. ...

SH: Where do you think your interest in photography came from?

CK: A Brownie Box camera, way back, and my aunts were picture takers. ... We didn't take too many pictures in our family, but the older family members did take them on every occasion, so, I guess it started there. I'm not sure. ...

SH: Well, we appreciate you taking time to do this with us today.

CK: My pleasure.

SH: What was your most vivid memory of Rutgers.

CK: I have to side with Gina, Herman Hering the football quarterback. He was a star. I don't know whether he is still alive, or not, but he was super. ...

SH: How did you meet your wife?

CK: Well, Deke House had its dances, and weekends, and football games. She was working for the State of New Jersey, in Atlantic County, as a child welfare person, handling adoptions, and other people who had kids in foster homes, and all of that. So, not my kind of work, but she's very wonderful with children, just great, and the grandkids, when they come through the door, they pass by me, and run to her, which is fine. So, anyway, her brother, George, that lives in Williamsburg had a picture of Gina in his room, and I kept looking at it. I said, "You know, there's a football game coming up in a couple of weekends, why don't you ask Gina to see if she would come as my date?" So, she did. It took us a long time to get together because there were other people I was thinking about at that time, more than one. I was a slow starter. We didn't get married until 1950. We wanted to get married sooner. I went to work with a subsidiary of US Steel, American Steel and Wire, in the Newark district office. I told the boss that I wanted to get married, and he said, "No, you can't get married now." ... They sent me to Richmond, Virginia. ... So I went down there, with my steamer trunk, by train and replaced the fellow that they moved to New York. ... I loved the South. We became "northern southerners." To vote Democratic in the 1950s, and my oldest girl went to a segregated school, and it was wonderful. Am I prejudiced? Yes, I would say so. My kids don't understand it. They think I'm narrow-minded. But, there were a lot of benefits. We had a woman that helped Gina with raising the three kids. She came in, and did the cleaning, a wonderful black lady. We paid her carfare, and seventy-five cents an hour. Gina needed help. She was by herself. Richmond was great, and the kids were born in Stuart Circle Hospital. I learned states rights, which you never get in New Jersey. My brother told me that Robert E. Lee was a southern hero, a traitor to the North. He went to West Point, American Army. I said, "Dave, I have a different point of view, having worked for these people. They have been my customers. They are wonderful." The way Sheridan went up and down the Shenandoah Valley, and ousted people, women, kids, threw them out of the house, and torched the house. So, I think that the war was very unfortunate. I heard a report recently that because Lincoln was elected president, they fired at Fort Sumter because they didn't like him from Illinois. Whether or not, that's historically accurate, I don't really know, but I had not heard that before. Why, it reached that point where they would fire on him. I don't know whether you have any Southern relatives, but when we lived in Richmond in the '50s the War

Between the States was still an active topic of conversation. Can I tell you one joke? It's about when Richmond Confederates burned Richmond themselves to keep it out of Union hands. Then, the Union took over, and provided food to the people who were impoverished, and didn't have anything to eat. The story goes that this fourteen-year-old girl went to the sergeant the next day and said, "I'm starving. Give me some food, sir." He said, "I'm sorry, young lady, you have to swear." She said, "My mother told me, sir, never to swear." So, she went away, and she came back the next day and said, "I'm more hungry than I was yesterday. Please give me some food." He said, "I'm sorry, I can't do that. You have to swear allegiance to the United States." She didn't understand that. So, she came back the third day, and she said, "Please give me some food." He said, "Will you swear?" She said, "Well, I don't want to do it sir, but all right. I wish you damn Yankees would go home."

SH: Who was your roommate at the Deke house?

CK: George Fiske, Gina's brother. Not for the whole time because he, like my brother, ... graduated, and left me with a seventeen year old!

SH: Do you have any other questions?

CK: Could I show you one article from the newspaper about the barrage balloons at D-Day?

SH: Sure.

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

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